



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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

**Eighth periodic report submitted by Paraguay under
article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021*****

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.
** The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Republic of Paraguay hereby submits its eighth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The report provides information on the efforts made, action taken, and progress and gains made, as well as the remaining challenges and obstacles, on the basis of the follow-up to the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations on the seventh periodic report (CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7).¹
2. In order to comply with constitutional principles and its international commitments, the Government of Paraguay, through its competent institutions, takes action to fulfil its responsibilities with regard to achieving real and effective equality for women and eliminating discrimination against women through regulations and the implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects that have a particular impact on the everyday lives of women and serve to foster the social, cultural and economic changes that will help to build citizenship based on the exercise of rights.
3. The present document was prepared taking into account the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6), including the specific guidelines on the form and content of reports submitted to the Committee (chap. V), and guidance note CEDAW/C/74/3.
4. Although Paraguay has accepted the simplified reporting procedure, the Government decided to begin the process of preparing the eighth periodic report using the regular procedure, with the exception of the common core document. This decision was taken in order to avoid further submission delays.

II. Follow-up methodology, implementation and dissemination of recommendations, and preparation of the report

5. Paraguay has a standing inter-institutional mechanism (SIMORE Plus)² for the systematization, monitoring and coordination of activities to ensure the fulfilment and implementation of commitments and recommendations on human rights, including in relation to the Convention. It is also used for the preparation of reports. The present report is the result of inter-institutional consultations and data collection conducted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs using SIMORE Plus. To enhance participation, reports were requested from institutions that work specifically to advance the equality of women.

III. Follow-up to the Committee's main areas of concern and recommendations

Legal and institutional framework (arts. 1 and 2)³

6. The general framework for equality and non-discrimination is established in part I, title II, chapter III of the Constitution of Paraguay.⁴ In article 46 of the Constitution, it is clearly stated that all people in the Republic are equal in dignity

¹ The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Paraguay at its 1536th and 1537th meetings, held on 22 October 2017.

² See www.mre.gov.py/simoreplus/.

³ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, para. 11.

⁴ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9580/constitucion-nacional-.

and rights and that discrimination is not permitted.⁵ Equality between women and men and non-discrimination on the basis of sex are enshrined in article 48, which takes legal precedence over any discriminatory provisions that may exist in lower-level legal instruments.⁶

7. These constitutional principles guide initiatives that promote the appropriate conditions and mechanisms to make equality between women and men real and effective and to ensure all civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights for women, removing any obstacles that prevent or hinder the exercise of those rights and facilitating the participation of women in all areas of national life, taking into account the constitutional principle that protections established for unjust inequalities shall not be considered discriminatory, but egalitarian (art. 46, in fine).

8. Pursuant to article 45 of the Constitution, under the regulatory framework of Paraguay, the absence of an implementing law may not be invoked to deny or limit any right or guarantee.⁷ In this regard, although the challenge of enacting a law against all forms of discrimination remains, measures are taken under the Constitution, through various public policy instruments, to remove obstacles and prevent factors that maintain or promote discrimination (annex I).⁸

9. The National Equality Plan for 2018–2024⁹ sets out strategies for the achievement of substantive equality between men and women. It is aimed at removing obstacles that hinder or prevent the achievement of equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination.

10. In recent years, progress has been made in regulatory harmonization and improvement, including the adoption of laws related to the promotion and protection of the rights of women, the elimination of gender-based discrimination and the promotion of gender equality, the ratification of international instruments and institutional strengthening. Further details are provided in annex II.

11. In February 2018, the Ministry of Women's Affairs inaugurated the *Centro Ciudad Mujer* (Women's City Centre) to facilitate access to high-quality public services organized into six units, namely initial orientation, economic empowerment, education for equality, prevention of violence against women, childcare, and sexual and reproductive health, all with a focus on comprehensive care, delivered in a friendly manner, with the aim of promoting the development, autonomy, personal growth and empowerment of women.¹⁰ The Centre brings together the services of 13 institutions, with the coordination of each unit depending on institutional competencies.

⁵ Art. 46, on the equality of persons. All people in the Republic are equal in dignity and rights. Discrimination is not permitted. The State shall remove any obstacles and prevent any factors that maintain or promote discrimination. The protections established for unjust inequalities shall not be considered discriminatory, but egalitarian.

⁶ Art. 48, on the equal rights of men and women. Men and women have equal civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The State shall promote the conditions and establish the appropriate mechanisms to make equality real and effective, removing any obstacles that prevent or hinder the exercise of those rights and facilitating the participation of women in all spheres of national life.

⁷ Art. 45, on unenumerated rights and guarantees. The enumeration of the rights and guarantees in the Constitution should not be understood as a denial of others that, being inherent to humanity, do not expressly appear therein. The absence of an implementing law may not be invoked to deny or limit any right or guarantee.

⁸ Bill against all forms of discrimination, submitted on 23 November 2015 (file No. S-157013, available at <http://silpy.congreso.gov.py/expediente/106146>) and bill on the establishment of mechanisms to ensure equal rights for all inhabitants of Paraguay, submitted on 5 November 2015 (file No. S-156997, available at <http://silpy.congreso.gov.py/expediente/106088>).

⁹ See https://historico.mujer.gov.py/application/files/8315/5239/9481/IV_Plan_de_Igualdad_12febrero_-_final.pdf.

¹⁰ See www.ciudadmujer.gov.py/.

12. In 2021, the Government launched the “¡Vamos!” social protection system,¹¹ representing one of the most significant advances of Paraguay in terms of the integration of services to protect the population and promote access to economic, social and cultural rights.¹² The aim of the system is to develop, from a citizens’ rights perspective and throughout the life cycle, public sector intervention strategies. It has three core pillars: (1) social integration, linked to universal and targeted policies for people living in poverty; (2) entry into the productive labour market, related to the labour inclusion and regulation policies; and (3) social security, linked to contributory and non-contributory policies.¹³

Regression in the promotion of gender equality (art. 2)¹⁴

13. In accordance with the Constitution, the General Education Act and other related regulations, the Ministry of Education and Science – the body governing the national education system and responsible for setting national education policy – ensures access by all people, without discrimination, to comprehensive, high-quality education, as shown in its numerous education and science plans, programmes and projects, the development of which involves the participation of the educational community through forums and other participation mechanisms. Decisions taken by the Ministry are the result of a process of analysis, debate and evaluation based on the Constitution and the participation of the educational community.

14. Since 2020, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs has been coordinating the Gender Equality Seal for the Public Sector certification programme to foster and advance progress towards substantive equality between men and women, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme.

15. In 2019, the Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and the Human Environment ran a training programme on the identification and prevention of sexual abuse of children and adolescents for 35 public servants. In 2022 and 2023, a diploma course on gender and public policy was offered to public servants.¹⁵

16. As part of the participatory development of the National Equality Plan for 2018–2024, consultations were held with various public institutions and civil society organizations. Contributions were received from public servants, as well as from members of feminist networks and women’s organizations, which made it possible to incorporate different perspectives and approaches.

¹¹ Decree No. 4775/2021, establishing the “¡Vamos!” social protection system of Paraguay, approving the strategic framework for objectives and activities and the prioritization of strategic actions under the system for the period 2019–2023, declaring the system to be of national interest and providing for its implementation. See <https://decretos.presidencia.gov.py/#/home>.

¹² This milestone represented the formalization of a design process, initiated in 2017, that resulted in the production of the first sectoral note on social protection by technical unit of the Social Affairs Office, 2017), and led to the gradual participation of the institutions that make up the Social Affairs Office, the conceptual definition, and governance and instrumental structures. In that regard, two key documents related to the operation of the ¡Vamos! system were drawn up by the Social Affairs Office in 2021: on the management model and on the definition of the monitoring, follow-up and evaluation system.

¹³ See <https://gabinetesocial.gov.py/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/normativa.pdf>.

¹⁴ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 9 (a)–(c).

¹⁵ The diploma course was the fruit of a partnership with the Autonomous University of Encarnación, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, as well as the United Nations Development Programme.

17. The National Institute of Indigenous Affairs has developed the National Plan for Indigenous Peoples 2020–2030. Women and young people from the 19 Indigenous Peoples in Paraguay actively participated in the participatory and consensual development process.

18. The process of drafting a national care policy and its corresponding bill has involved the participation of different sectors, in particular the women's movement in different parts of the country.

19. The Constitution enshrines equality between women and men,¹⁶ which takes precedence over any discriminatory provisions of lower-level legal instruments. Although the bill against all forms of discrimination has not yet been considered by Parliament, progress has been made in establishing specific regulations to prevent discrimination, such as Act No. 6940, which establishes mechanisms and procedures to prevent and punish acts of racism and discrimination against people of African descent.¹⁷ In addition, significant progress has been made in the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons through the adoption of decrees, resolutions and protocols in various areas. Among the values set out in the National Health Policy for 2015–2030, which was approved by Decree No. 4541/2015 and is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, is the respect for diversity in which the concepts of “different” and “normal” do not exist in healthcare settings.¹⁸ In addition, under Strategy 1 of the Policy, the essential functions of public health should be strengthened, taking a rights-based approach to the definition, development and guarantee of basic services; social protection measures should also be strengthened, through a rights-based approach and with an emphasis on vulnerable groups at different stages of the life cycle (children, adolescents and older persons) and persons with disabilities, incorporating gender and intercultural perspectives. Along those lines, one of the basic principles of the development of the National Health Promotion Policy for 2021–2030 was that there must be no discrimination, stigma, stereotypes or prejudices.¹⁹ In addition, pursuant to Decision S.G. No. 695, dated 31 October 2016, which is currently in force, trans persons may use the name with which they identify themselves, in addition to the names and surnames stated in their civil identity document, when using the comprehensive and integrated health-service networks under the health system.

20. Strategies for the healthcare of LGBTI persons are set out in the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2019–2023. By its Decision No. 1287/2020, the Ministry of Public Defence approved the implementation of a care protocol for LGBTI persons in all its offices. The “Marandu” police information system, which is used as a source of data for public policies against discrimination, has been updated to include the variable “LGBTI” in the collection of complaints.

¹⁶ Art. 48, on the equal rights of men and women. Men and women have equal civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The State shall promote the conditions and establish the appropriate mechanisms to make equality real and effective, removing any obstacles that prevent or hinder the exercise of those rights and facilitating the participation of women in all spheres of national life.

¹⁷ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/10547/ley-n-6940-establece-mecanismos-y-procedimientos-para-prevenir-y-sancionar-actos-de-racismo-y-discriminacion-hacia-las-personas-afrodescendientes.

¹⁸ See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/9753ad-POLITICANACIONALDESALUD.pdf.

¹⁹ See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/2d822f-POLITICANACIONALDEPROMOCIONDELASALUD.pdf.

Access to justice

21. The National Anti-Corruption Secretariat has set up an anti-corruption complaints portal and a system for registering complaints and processing criminal cases, inquiries and investigations. In addition, a platform for monitoring compliance with active transparency obligations in the public sector has been established, and the National Integrity, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Plan for 2021–2025 has been adopted. Among the 44 action points to combat corruption set out during the Summit of Authorities in 2023 was the implementation of a system for registering complaints of violence against women, which would enable the real-time monitoring of such cases.

22. The judiciary has launched web platforms, including a system for the monitoring of court cases, in particular corruption-related complaints, and the judiciary's Complaints and Reports Office, which has facilitated the reporting of irregularities in judicial proceedings.

23. The Ministry of the Interior has set up the Corruption Risk Map Committee.

24. The Public Prosecution Service, as the body representing society, has set up an internal platform for anti-corruption complaints. A confidential platform has been set up on the Service's web page to enable complaints to be submitted against the service providers of the Service, acts of corruption or acts detrimental to the interests of the institution and society.²⁰ In addition, the Service has a Transparency and Access to Public Information Office, through which requests for public information by any interested person are channelled and requesters are provided with guidance and assistance.

25. In 2021, Act No. 6806/2021, declaring a national emergency on the grounds of femicide, was adopted. It was aimed at mobilizing resources, strengthening public policies and promoting tangible measures to prevent, investigate and punish femicide, as well as to provide comprehensive support to victims and their families.²¹

26. A bill on the prevention, punishment and eradication of gender-based political violence against women has been presented and is at the first stage of review.²²

27. The implementation of a virtual hearings system for judicial proceedings on violence against women or family violence has significantly improved access to justice, especially in cases where distance or personal safety are important.

28. The Public Prosecution Service has established a Gender Office to promote access to justice for women who are victims of violence. The Office provides guidance and support and promotes awareness-raising campaigns. In addition, the Service has a specialized unit to combat family and gender-based violence and is initially operating and has competence in the city of Asunción. It also has the competence to investigate criminal acts of family violence, as set out in article 229 of the Criminal Code and amended by Act No. 6934/2022.²³ Cases are handled by four specialized prosecutors who report to a Deputy Prosecutor. There are three specialized units to counter domestic violence in the Department of Alto Paraná and two such units in the Department of Guairá.

29. The National Houses of Justice Programme, implemented by the Ministry of Justice, facilitates access to justice for communities and persons in vulnerable

²⁰ See www.ministeriopublico.gov.py/denuncia/index.html.

²¹ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9680/ley-n-6806-declara-emergencia-nacional-por-feminicidios.

²² See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/123379>.

²³ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/10525/ley-n-6934-modifica-el-articulo-229-de-la-ley-n-11601997-codigo-penal-modificado-por-las-leyes-ns-34402008-46282012-y-53782014.

situations, including Indigenous and rural communities. In 2017, Houses of Justice were set up in the San Francisco neighbourhood of Asunción, at the first Women’s City Centre in Villa Elisa and in the city of Ybycui; in the city of Quiindy in 2018; and in the city of Caaguazú in 2020. Healthcare, identity and training services are provided in remote areas through the mobile House of Justice initiative. Between 2016 and 2023, a total of 88 mobile House of Justice days were held in various departments of the country, in particular in Indigenous communities and prisons.

30. Between 2020 and 2023, under the National Houses of Justice Programme, training sessions were held for the armed forces and municipal governments, with a total of 721 participants.

31. Under the Human Rights Network of the executive branch, 25 awareness-raising and training sessions were held on Act No. 5777/2016, on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence, in which 1,165 prison officers, persons in detention (men and women) and public servants from departmental and municipal governments participated.

32. Between 2019 and 2023, the Ministry of Public Defence conducted training sessions for the courts specialized in Act No. 5777/2016, with a total of 575 hours of instruction.

33. The Training Centre of the Public Prosecution Service regularly carries out training on the rights of women, including talks on family violence, during which topics related to investigation techniques, legal, psychological and psychosocial aspects, femicide, analysis of cases and court rulings are addressed. Academic programmes and guides related to women’s access to justice are also part of the course offerings. In 2023, the Training Centre promoted its first international congress of researchers, which included the theme of violence against women and gender-based violence.

National machinery for the advancement of women²⁴

34. A retrospective review has shown that there have been progressive efforts to strengthen the budget of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Following its establishment, between 2003 and 2008, the Ministry faced budgetary constraints. Beginning in 2009, its budget allocation was increased, in particular through funds from external cooperation, which was crucial for the effective implementation of its programmes. In 2017, a budget increase was obtained through the National Public Investment and Development Fund for the construction and configuration of the “Ñande Kerayvoty Renda” Women’s City Centre. In 2018, there was a budget increase for the National Programme for Prevention, Suppression and Support for Victims of Trafficking, in line with Act No. 4788/2012 on countering trafficking in persons. In 2019, around 26 billion guaranies were allocated to the Ministry’s budget, although the challenge of increasing that amount to enable the efficient implementation of strategic initiatives, such as the Women’s Monitoring Centre and the national Women’s City Centre programme, remains. Beginning in 2020, efforts to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic involved adjustments to the Ministry’s budget. However, the Ministry is currently on its way to recovering the affected budgetary resources.

35. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has designed, and is in charge of implementing, a methodological guide on linking national expenditure budgets to the Sustainable Development Goals and a methodological guide on analysing gender in the budget, with a view to advancing the realization of gender-responsive budgets.

²⁴ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 15 (a)–(c).

36. Efforts have been made to ensure that the National Equality Plan for 2018–2024 is adequately resourced. In addition, an evaluation is in progress to ensure that any necessary adjustments are made.

37. In 2016, the Ombudsperson’s Office was granted “B” status accreditation by the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Advances in institutional management led to the accreditation, following several years of suspension. The Office is currently in the process of reaccreditation by the Subcommittee. In that connection, all the required information has been submitted and approved, and the date for the interview with the Subcommittee was set for 1 May 2024.

Temporary special measures (art. 4)²⁵

38. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock financed productive investments in three projects aimed specifically at women,²⁶ benefiting 5,934 women in the country’s 17 departments. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, through the national training and work skills development system, reached 3,954 rural women through various training activities.²⁷

39. In 2023, the National Institute for Rural and Land Development reduced interest rates from 12 per cent to 0 per cent for women landholders. As a result of the measure, there was an increase of 114 per cent in definitive land titles obtained by women in January 2024.²⁸

40. At the legislative level, two bills have been introduced to address gender pay gaps and promote equality in the workplace. Bills S-199205²⁹ and S-2211034,³⁰ establishing equal pay for men and women in the public and private sectors, are at the first stage of review.

41. The National Secretariat for Culture estimates that 65 per cent of the people targeted by institutional programmes are women; 60 per cent of people reached by the 2018–2022 culture fund programme were women.

42. An India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund project on increasing access to, and coverage of, maternal and child healthcare in remote rural areas, Indigenous communities and border areas of the Chaco region is under way. The project will make it possible to adequately and predictably plan services and to identify weaknesses, both of which are prerequisites for enabling populations in the region to access universal health coverage and for implementing innovative and smart strategies to strengthen local health networks. In addition, the project will enable improvements in the quality of maternal and child healthcare services, including culturally appropriate family planning services, and in the human resource skills of providers, administrators and local authorities, as part of efforts to maintain essential

²⁵ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, para. 17.

²⁶ The projects covered the improvement of family, small-scale and Indigenous farming in the eastern region; the restoration of family-farming production systems; and improved market access in the eastern region.

²⁷ Seventh report on the application of Act No. 5446/2015 on public policies for rural women.

²⁸ See www.indert.gov.py/indert/index.php/noticias/titulacion-de-tierras-en-favor-de-las-mujeres-ilega-al-51.

²⁹ Bill establishing equal pay for men and women in the public and private sectors, submitted on 28 November 2019. Available at <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/119393>.

³⁰ Bill establishing equal pay for men and women in the public and private sectors, submitted on 4 August 2022. Available at <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/126328>.

healthcare services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also enable communities to become involved and actively participate in the area of healthcare.³¹

Discriminatory stereotypes (art. 5)³²

43. The Ministry of Education and Science, in coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, has conducted training on Act No. 5777/2016, on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence, for members of the educational community, with 704 participants. It has also added dates that are relevant to the concept of equality to the national educational calendar. These include 24 February, Paraguayan Women's Day; 8 March, International Women's Day; 5 September, International Day of Indigenous Women; 11 October, International Day of the Girl Child; and 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

44. In addition to offering public services exclusively for women, the Women's City Centre of the Ministry of Women's Affairs runs a series of talks to raise awareness on, *inter alia*, the prevention of violence, concepts of equality and the main inequality gaps in the country.

45. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has developed a unified protocol for comprehensive support, care and protection of women in situations of violence, approved by Decision No. 274/2022, along with accompanying curricular and methodological guidance for the training of, and ownership by, officials responsible for the implementation of the protocol.

46. With regard to the care of caregivers, through the technical cooperation of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization, as part of their labour policies for professionals who provide direct care to women in situations of violence, a workshop entitled "I take care of myself: I take care of you" was held, with the participation of professionals from the specialized care services of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

47. A handbook setting out a comprehensive men's healthcare model, with a focus on maternal and child health, was approved by Decision S.G. No. 271/2023.³³ It provides guidance on preventing, treating and raising awareness of the most common conditions among men in their different stages of life, with a particular emphasis on the period of the partner's pregnancy.

48. In order to combat gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices in both public and private media, legislative measures have been taken to establish an appropriate regulatory framework. In this regard, the Chamber of Deputies is currently analysing a bill that broadens the scope of Act. No. 5777/2016 to include digital violence.³⁴

49. In 2022, the Ministry of Women's Affairs relaunched a guide for communicators on the production and issuance of materials on violence against women in various formats. The new edition contains content related to digital media and social networks. Training workshops were held for communicators from Asunción and the Department of Itapúa, with the support of a project on promoting social and institutional awareness of gender-based violence against women in five municipalities of the Department of Itapúa.

³¹ The project has an operational technical committee with specific functions, as established in Decision S.G. No. 890/2023 of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

³² CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 19 (a), (b) and (c).

³³ See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/397b0e-gabineteef4ceaRESOLUCIONSG.N02712023.pdf.

³⁴ See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/121865>.

Gender-based violence against women (art. 5)³⁵

50. An evaluation of the National Plan to Combat Violence against Women for 2015–2020³⁶ was carried out to identify achievements, progress, obstacles, lessons learned and key recommendations for the development of the third National Plan.

51. In order to strengthen the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Violence against Women for 2015–2020, an initial draft of the first national policy to address and prevent violence against women of all ages, covering the period 2021–2032, was developed in collaboration with the Republic of Costa Rica. The draft policy is aimed at providing a comprehensive approach to addressing gender-based violence in all its forms.

52. The Women's Support Service, the regional women's centres and the shelters of the Ministry of Women's Affairs were strengthened through a project on the protection of women, children and adolescents against gender-based violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, interdisciplinary teams have been trained and facilities and equipment have been improved to provide more effective care to women in situations of violence.

53. In 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice adopted Resolution No. 1506/2021 on the establishment of a care protocol for cases of domestic and family violence against women, aimed at judges and officials of magistrates' courts and civil and commercial courts of first instance, with a view to achieving unified action and a uniform response in all magistrates' courts and facilitating the review, by judges throughout the country, of compliance with the Constitution and conventions.³⁷

54. The National Police has published a handbook on policing and coordination for comprehensive action against acts of domestic violence, implemented in line with Decision No. 368 of 5 May 2023.

55. The Public Prosecution Service's protocol for criminal investigation of the crime of femicide, which is currently in force, adapts the Latin American Model Protocol for the Investigation of Gender-related Killings of Women to Paraguayan law and the procedures and investigation mechanisms of the Service, in order to harmonize criteria and good practices in the criminal investigation of femicide.

56. By Decision No. 197/2021, the Ministry of Public Defence established an action protocol for public defenders specialized in Act No. 5777/2016, on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence. Furthermore, since 1999, the Ministry has maintained an office at the Women's City Centre of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, offering legal assistance and counselling to women who are victims of violence. Between 2020 and 2023, it provided support to 14,498 women in situations of violence.

³⁵ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 21 (a)–(e), and 43 (b).

³⁶ See www.cde.org.py/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2015-PLAN-NACIONAL-CONTRA-LA-VIOLENCIA-HACIA-LAS-MUJERES-2015-2020.pdf.

³⁷ See www.pj.gov.py/descargas/ID2-625_acordada_aprobar_protocolo_violencia.pdf.

Number of women in situations of violence supported by the Ministry of Public Defence³⁸

Year	Number
2020	1,818
2021	3,434
2022	4,632
2023	4,614

57. In 2020, the Supreme Court of Justice established an office to provide round-the-clock care to victims of violence at the magistrates' courts of the Central Department judicial district.³⁹

58. The unit for preventing and addressing violence against women of the Women's City Centre of the Ministry of Women's Affairs brings together seven institutions with direct responsibilities for the protection and care of women against all forms of violence, thus expanding reporting and care services through a comprehensive approach. Six years after its inauguration, the information, registration and monitoring system of the Centre has recorded more than 74,000 consultations, of which 12,625 were dealt with by the unit for the prevention of violence against women, with 37,338 services provided. The mobile Women's City service is responsible for making services available in remote communities.⁴⁰

59. Through a free 24-hour helpline (137), cases are logged and specialized care is provided by personnel trained in risk assessment and case referral, with the support of psychologists specialized in emotional support.

60. In 2023, comprehensive care was provided to 5,188 women in situations of violence, who received 11,985 psychological, legal and social services through the Women's Support Service, regional centres and the Women's City Centre. At the protection centres of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the Central and Canindeyú Departments, 164 women, 29 girls and 26 boys (children of victims) received a total of 921 comprehensive care services.

61. The Mercedes Sandoval shelter for women, located in the Central Department, offers accommodation, protection, psychological care, legal advice, medical care, occupational therapy and educational support to the children of women in situations of violence.

62. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is promoting the "Tapabocas 37" (face mask 37) campaign, through which women can use the keyword "Tapabocas 37" at more than 200 branches of the Puntofarma pharmacy. Using the keyword immediately activates a care protocol.

63. The regional centres of the Ministry of Women's Affairs provide social, psychological and legal services as part of the prevention, care and protection policies for women in situations of violence in the Departments of Alto Paraná, Amambay, Canindeyú, Boquerón and San Pedro.

64. The National Police has published a handbook on policing and coordination for comprehensive action against acts of domestic violence, approved by Decision No. 368/2023, in which it is stated that the specialized offices for victims of domestic

³⁸ Source: statistics from the Ministry of Public Defence.

³⁹ See www.pj.gov.py/notas/18778-oficina-de-atencion-permanente-a-victimas-de-violencia-en-circunscripcion-de-central.

⁴⁰ See www.mujer.gov.py/index.php/ciudad-mujer-movil.

violence or police stations may receive complaints, carry out subsequent referrals and adopt measures to protect victims.

65. The Gender Office of the Public Prosecution Service provides guidance and support to women who are victims of violence during the judicial process, collaborates with prosecution units and promotes information campaigns and awareness-raising workshops. It also has representatives to receive complaints at the Women's City Centre. General Instruction No. 9/2011 of the Public Prosecution Service provides for the immediate care of women who are victims of violence.⁴¹ From January to October 2023, 33 people were sentenced as a result of the efforts of the specialized unit responsible for combating family and gender-based violence.

66. Departmental committees for the prevention of violence against women have been established at four regional centres of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in the Departments of Alto Paraná, Boquerón, Amambay and Canindeyú. In that context, technical assistance has been provided for the use of a unified protocol for the comprehensive support, care and protection of women in situations of violence. In addition, training and technical assistance sessions have been held for representatives of the committees. In 2024, such committees were set up in the Departments of Cordillera and Guairá thanks to technical assistance from the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

67. In 2024, the departmental government of Boquerón set up a temporary shelter for women who are victims of violence. The Ministry of Women's Affairs provides ongoing training for the shelter's care team, as well as for members of the women's secretariat of the departmental government, on the implementation of the unified protocol for the comprehensive support, care and protection of women in situations of violence.

68. Since 2020, a national plan for the period 2020–2025, under which the national health system is responsible for efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, has been in force.⁴² The plan sets out the priorities for the healthcare sector, taking into account the collaboration of key actors and the different types of violence, namely family and domestic violence, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women, children and adolescents, including forced labour, trafficking in persons and child labour. One of the main instruments under the plan is the second edition of a handbook on the provision of comprehensive care in the health system to victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence.⁴³ The handbook contains guidelines and advice for the comprehensive care of women, children and adolescents who are victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, including forced labour, trafficking in persons and child labour.

69. The National Institute of Statistics, in liaison with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, conducted a national survey on the situation of women in Paraguay in 2021, with a sample size of 4,000 households throughout the country, which enabled the collection of data to be used for the implementation of public policies on the well-being of women, girls and adolescents in Paraguay. A methodology report describing the survey framework, the sample design, the data collection stage and the preliminary results of the survey was prepared. Subsequently, the need for a document containing further analysis of the quantitative data obtained, as well as a comparison

⁴¹ Protocol for gender-based investigation of domestic violence against women drafted by the Public Prosecution Service in liaison with the Ministry of the Interior, the National Police and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, available at <https://informacionpublica.paraguay.gov.py/public/1646697-escanear0128pdf-escanear0128.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiqmbzolNaFAxU3pZUCHWxgDuAQFnoECBAQ&usg=AOvVaw1FAFeiAzeHH6idzxVCl1wu>.

⁴² Approved by Decision S.G. No. 784/2020 of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

⁴³ Approved by Decision S.G. No. 638/2021 of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

of the study with similar international studies, was identified. According to the survey, 78.5 per cent of women had been victims of violence at some point in their lives, and 40.6 per cent in the previous 12 months. The data included the total number of women who had experienced some form of violence, whether psychological, economic, sexual or physical.⁴⁴

70. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare implements the national plan for the period 2020–2025, under which the National Health System is responsible for efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence,⁴⁵ and the second edition of the handbook on the provision of comprehensive care in the health system to victims of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence,⁴⁶ adopted in 2021. Training for healthcare professionals on violence prevention and care is carried out on an ongoing basis.

71. At the legislative level, Act No. 6281/2019, making it compulsory to include messages on violence against women in energy and water bills sent by public utilities, was adopted.⁴⁷

72. As part of the implementation of a socioeducational programme for men and positive masculinities, foreign specialists conducted a training course on men in favour of equality. A reflection group on the prevention of family abuse was also held. Male officials of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and the National Police participated in the events.

73. The Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs promotes the "#TodosSomosResponsables" (we are all responsible) campaign to prevent sexual abuse and violence against children and adolescents, as well as a project aimed at ensuring that children and adolescents are free from violence, both of which contribute to reducing violence against children and adolescents who are living in vulnerable situations in the Departments of Alto Paraná, San Pedro, Central and Caaguazú.

74. Pursuant to Decision No. 04/2021, the National Council for Children and Adolescents adopted an inter-institutional road map for a comprehensive response to the sexual abuse of children and adolescents, which was developed in a joint effort by government institutions and civil society organizations.⁴⁸

75. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has promoted various campaigns, such as the "Lazo Naranja" (orange ribbon), "Kuña, ñañopytyvõ ñaguahẽ hañua" (women, let's help each other to get there), "Noviazgo sin Violencia" (dating without violence), "Tapabocas 37" (face mask 37), "Hablemos a Tiempo" (let's talk in time) and "Violencia Visible" (visible violence) campaigns, to raise awareness of the seriousness of domestic violence and guide people who wish to file complaints. Since 2019, a campaign to combat femicide has been implemented with the aim of reaching those who know victims and encouraging people to speak out if they are aware of cases of violence.

76. Under a project on promoting social and institutional awareness of gender-based violence against women carried out in five municipalities of the Department of Itapúa and implemented by the Foundation of the Religious for Health with support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, in partnership with the

⁴⁴ The survey results can be accessed at <https://www.datos.gov.py/dataset/encuesta-nacional-sobre-situaci%C3%B3n-de-las-mujeres-en-paraguay-ensimup-2021>.

⁴⁵ See https://dirgen.mspbs.gov.py/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Violencia-de-genero_V4.pdf.

⁴⁶ See https://dirgen.mspbs.gov.py/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Manual-de-Violencia_WEB.pdf.

⁴⁷ See <https://www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8887/ley-n-6281-establece-la-obligatoriedad-de-incluir-sobre-violencia-contra-la-mujer-en-las-boletas-de-servicios-publicos-de-energia-electrica-y-agua-potable>.

⁴⁸ See https://www.minna.gov.py/archivos/documentos/RUTA%20INTERINSTITUCIONAL%20DE%20ATENCION%20INTEGRAL%20VICTIMAS%20DE%20ABUSO_lugavv6d.pdf.

Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, awareness-raising sessions on dating without violence were conducted in schools. Training for teachers and peace judges in Encarnación was also carried out. National Police officers were trained on Act No. 5777/2016, on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence, in Encarnación, Cambyreta and Coronel Bogado. The “let's talk in time” campaign was implemented to raise awareness of the issue of violence in all its forms and to disseminate and raise the profile of the institutional support and assistance tools available to Paraguayan women. As part of the campaign, a seminar on addressing gender-based violence against women in the twenty-first century was held to provide an overview of the situation of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean and the progress made in public policies.

77. With a view to taking coordinated action to ensure access to justice for transgender persons, public institutions and civil society organizations take part in a multisectoral committee on the human rights situation of transgender persons in Paraguay. The committee held meetings in 2022⁴⁹ and 2023,⁵⁰ with the participation of the Human Rights Commission of the Senate, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Justice, the Public Prosecution Service and the Supreme Court of Justice, as well as the non-governmental organization Panambí, which is a member of the Paraguayan Human Rights Coordinating Committee.

78. The judiciary has made progress in the development of a set of methodology sheets on indicators of violence against women.⁵¹ This process, which began in 2022, was essential to updating the records of cases filed in relation to family and domestic violence, as well as highlighting the numbers of cases filed and convictions for femicide and attempted femicide. Furthermore, in November 2023, an inter-institutional cooperation agreement was signed between the Supreme Court of Justice and the National Institute of Statistics, with the objective of developing a national system containing data, statistics and information on violence against women.

79. The Ministry of Women's Affairs promotes the Monitoring Centre on the Right of Women to a Violence-Free Life, which is intended to monitor situations and care services in cases of violence against women, including cases of femicide, at the national level. The Monitoring Centre collects data directly from prosecutors and/or the National Police, which ensures the reliability of the information it compiles. In addition, through Decision No. 297/2020, the Ministry approved the establishment of a network of monitoring centres on women, comprising 63 public and private institutions, academia and civil society organizations, in order to interlink records on violence against women in all their diversity, including data on victims, perpetrators, educational level, occupation, income level, case information, legal status and complaints.⁵²

80. Within the framework of a programme to promote sustainable development in Paraguay, funded by the European Union and implemented by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has begun work, in coordination with the National Institute of Statistics, on the development of a single and standardized registry to strengthen the collection and use of administrative records on services provided in cases of gender violence, as mandated by Act No. 5777/2016.

⁴⁹ See www.senado.gov.py/index.php/noticias/noticias-comisiones/10733-mesa-multisectorial-considera-situacion-de-los-derechos-humanos-de-personas-trans-2022-10-19-16-47-13.

⁵⁰ See www.senado.gov.py/index.php/noticias/noticias-comisiones/11581-en-mesa-multisectorial-abordaron-situacion-de-los-derechos-humanos-de-personas-trans-2023-06-07-17-08-56.

⁵¹ See www.pj.gov.py/contenido/537-observatorio-de-genero/2793.

⁵² See <https://observatorio.mujer.gov.py/index.php/red-de-observatorios-formulariosprueba>.

81. In March 2019, the Public Prosecution Service's crime monitoring centre was launched. It is focused on the preparation of reports related to criminal acts that have a social impact, including domestic violence and femicide, and criminal acts against minors and human rights.⁵³ Pursuant to Decision No. 5442 of the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Integrated Electronic Case Management System – Criminal Investigation Record Module which is a technological tool for improving efficiency and security in the management and follow-up of criminal cases, was put into operation.

82. The Gender Observatory of the General Secretariat for Gender Issues of the judiciary⁵⁴ is working on the development of statistical indicators, by collecting and updating data on reports of domestic violence cases received by magistrates' courts and the Office of Victim Support, on cases filed and sexual abuse and child pornography convictions, and on femicide convictions.

83. The Ministry of Public Defence has a care protocol in place for LGBTI persons who use its services.⁵⁵

Number of LGTBIQ+ persons supported by the Ministry of Public Defence⁵⁶

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
2020	44
2021	50
2022	60
2023	40

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution (art. 6)⁵⁷

84. The inter-institutional committee to combat trafficking in persons in Paraguay has a national plan for the period 2020–2024.⁵⁸ A project for the implementation of the National Programme for Prevention, Suppression and Support for Victims of Trafficking in Persons is currently under consideration by the committee.

85. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has developed a handbook of standard procedures to be implemented by institutions in the care of persons affected by trafficking. The handbook is intended to strengthen and enhance comprehensive care services for persons affected by trafficking in persons in all its forms.

86. In addition to providing for the care of victims of trafficking in persons, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in coordination with the National Commission for Stateless Persons and Refugees within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is engaged in the protection of migrants, refugees and stateless persons in Paraguay.

87. The Public Prosecution Service's specialized unit to combat trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is working on a draft inter-institutional protocol to address criminal acts against Indigenous children and adolescents and violations of their rights. The protocol is being developed as part of a project on improving the institutional response to trafficking in persons and related

⁵³ See http://observatorio.sinafocal.gov.py/application/files/8515/6751/4896/RedObs_2019_PRES_10._Observatorio_Politica_Criminal.pdf.

⁵⁴ See www.pj.gov.py/contenido/537-observatorio-de-genero/537.

⁵⁵ Approved by Decision D.G. No. 1287/20.

⁵⁶ Source: statistics from the Ministry of Public Defence.

⁵⁷ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 23 (a), (b), (c) and (d), and 25.

⁵⁸ See <http://biblioteca.mds.gov.py:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/835/ANEXO%20DE%20LA%20NOTA%20MDS%201280%20-%20MRE.pdf?sequence=13&isAllowed=y>.

crimes and is being implemented by the United Nations Population Fund, with financing from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. Its aim is to foster inter-institutional coordination in the approach and response to the violation of the rights of Indigenous children and adolescents. In addition, the manual on the criminal investigation of trafficking in persons and the manual on operating procedures will be revised and updated.

88. The specialized unit of the Public Prosecution Service, with the support of the International Organization for Migration, is the focal point for the implementation of the EUROFRONT project in Paraguay. In this connection, a training manual on trafficking in the tri-border area has been developed and includes human rights, gender, intercultural and intersectional perspectives. The development process included the conduct of training activities for border officials and the implementation of a road map approved by the institutions involved.⁵⁹ Efforts are also under way as part of the project to develop a bill on the smuggling of migrants with a human rights focus.

89. Multidisciplinary teams are in place for the care of victims of trafficking. It should be noted that the human resources responsible for taking coordinated action in situations of trafficking in persons are specialized in the rights of women, children and adolescents, as well as in human rights, labour rights, healthcare, education, the provision of care to victims of crime and public defence.

90. The Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs implements the Programme on Comprehensive Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation, under which institutional strategies for the prevention of trafficking and the protection and comprehensive care of children and adolescents are coordinated, with a view to contributing to the eradication of trafficking and sexual exploitation. As part of the Programme, a specialized protection centre has been set up to provide girls and adolescents who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation with comprehensive care.

Number of children and adolescents receiving support under the Programme on Comprehensive Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of the Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs⁶⁰

Type of case	Female			Male		
	2022	2023	Total (female)	2022	2023	Total (male)
Trafficking	5	7	12	2	4	6
Sexual exploitation	27	42	69	1	8	9
Other violations	4	1	5	–	–	–
Grand total	36	50	86	3	12	15

91. The efforts of the Ministry of Women's Affairs are aimed mainly at prevention, reporting and comprehensive protection of victims, through campaigns, training and awareness-raising workshops for stakeholders in the public and private sectors involved in the prevention or identification of possible cases of trafficking in persons; at coordination, through the inter-institutional committee on preventing and combating trafficking, in the establishment and strengthening of bodies at the departmental and district levels; and at the provision of comprehensive and specialized care for women affected by trafficking, through the regional reference centres, the temporary shelter for victims and the social reintegration programme for victims.

⁵⁹ See <https://programaeurofront.eu/0/novedad/oficiales-de-instancias-estatales-de-paraguay-son-capacitados-en-materia-de-prevencion-y-respuesta-a-la-trata-de-personas-en-la>.

⁶⁰ Source: statistics from the Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs.

92. The Public Prosecution Service's specialized trafficking unit has mechanisms to enable prompt action to be taken in situations of trafficking in persons, from the moment the complaint is filed, working in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs and the National Police. In addition, to ensure a specialized approach, there is a multidisciplinary technical team made up of psychologists, social workers and lawyers, who take a human rights-based approach to their work with victims. The team works to minimize revictimization and to facilitate access to justice by coordinating with other institutions.

93. Through the Victim and Witness Protection Programme, the Public Prosecution Service takes measures to assist and protect witnesses and victims, effective collaborators and other persons who are at risk or in danger for cooperating with the justice system as part of judicial proceedings. Absolute confidentiality is maintained in all cases under the Programme. In addition, the Public Prosecution Service runs the Victim Support Centre, which has been enhanced in order to offer victims privacy, security and a dignified space. Additional branches of the Victim Support Centre have been opened at the Caaguazú and Encarnación offices of the Public Prosecution Service, and spaces have been set up for the evaluation of victims at the Villarrica and Quiindy offices. Victims are therefore served in the area in which they live, removing the need to travel, in line with the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People and the Santiago guidelines on the protection of victims and witnesses.

94. Pursuant to Decision No. 837/2021, approving the procedure for addressing requests for preventive inclusion of persons or families who have been referred by other public institutions in the programmes and projects of the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry gives priority to victims of trafficking in persons. In addition, the Secretariat for Paraguayan Returnees and Refugees prioritizes victims of trafficking in persons when issuing repatriation grants.

95. The Statistics Department of the Public Prosecution Service gathers data on open cases related to trafficking in persons. As shown in the below table, women are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

Trafficking in persons			Share of male and female victims of trafficking in persons (Country total)				
Year	Complaints received	Cases taken up by judiciary	Prison sentences	Year	Sex		
					No data	M	Total
2017	110	33	4				
2018	103	19	3	2018	68.7%	26.0%	5.3% 100.0%
2019	134	19	3	2019	81.6%	16.2%	2.2% 100.0%
2020	114	21	1	2020	71.7%	27.7%	0.6% 100.0%
2021 (first half)	39	7	0	2021 January–July	89.3%	10.7%	0.0% 100.0%
Total	500	99	11				

Source: Directorate of Information and Communications Technology of the Public Prosecution Service.

Processing: Directorate of Planning, Department of Statistics.

Note: the data correspond to the time of the complaint; the classification of the act may have changed during the course of the investigation.

96. In the period 2021–2023, the Public Prosecution Service's specialized trafficking unit received 169 complaints and conducted 67 raids. As a result, 27 victims were protected in national operations and 11 in international operations, with 24 perpetrators convicted and 42 charged. The Trafficking Directorate of the Public Prosecution Service provided support to a total of 245 victims: 206 women (of whom 26 were girls or adolescents) and 39 men (of whom 9 were boys or adolescents).

97. Pursuant to Act No. 3940/2009, establishing rights, obligations and preventive measures in relation to HIV and AIDS,⁶¹ and the measures adopted to punish discriminatory treatment and stigma against women and girls living with HIV/AIDS, including sex workers, various measures are being taken to provide support and services to women sex workers. The Education Department of the National Programme to Control HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization *Unidas en la Esperanza* (United in Hope), is carrying out its work in line with the combined prevention strategy. Such work includes the provision of information on HIV, sexually transmitted infections and harm reduction, as well as testing for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B and C, and the provision of condoms in order to reach persons in need of healthcare services. In addition, efforts are under way to raise awareness of human rights and Act No. 3940/2009, with the aim of eliminating stigma and discrimination towards sex workers in healthcare settings. In this regard, a field strategy in which women sex workers are tasked with disseminating information and providing support to their peers has been developed. Its aim is to bolster prevention, access to healthcare services and the elimination of stigma and discrimination.

98. The country coordinating mechanism for Paraguay is a partnership body made up of the Government, civil society, the private sector and international cooperation agencies working in the field of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.⁶² It was established in Paraguay in July 2002. The mechanism is responsible for preparing and submitting grant proposals to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on the basis of agreed priority needs at the national level. Following the approval of grants, it is responsible for the strategic monitoring of both programmatic and financial aspects of projects. The mechanism is multisectoral and is made up of both governmental and non-governmental sectors, including civil society. Women sex workers are represented as a key population in those organizations.⁶³ Some of the projects implemented under Global Fund grants include projects on the expansion and sustainability of the response to HIV, on efforts towards the sustainability of the national response to HIV, and on narrowing gaps to reduce the incidence of HIV and AIDS-related mortality.⁶⁴

99. In addition, women sex workers have been trained as judicial facilitators to support their peers who are in conflict with the law or have issues with the National Police, in order to ensure their access to justice.

⁶¹ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/3192/establece-derechos-obligaciones-y-medidas-preventivas-con-relacion-a-los-efectos-producidos-por-el-virus-de-inmunodeficiencia-humana-vih-y-el-sindrome-de-inmunodeficiencia-adquirida-sida.

⁶² See <https://mcp.org.py/mcp>.

⁶³ See https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pMwhOIM8AcwSQpch2uoJSh6vkk6t1j_i/view.

⁶⁴ See <https://mcp.org.py/proyectos/1/vih>.

IV. Part II (arts. 7–9)

Participation in political and public life (art. 7)⁶⁵

100. A bill on democratic parity was submitted to the Senate in 2016, having been referred for review and opinion to the standing advisory committees on constitutional affairs, national defence and public security; on legislation, codification, justice and employment; and on equity and gender. During the legislative process, the Chamber of Deputies introduced amendments that obscured the essence of the bill. As a result, during the second round of review, the Chamber of Senators rejected the amendments. The executive branch then totally rejected the text. The rejection was accepted by the Chamber of Deputies, and the bill was shelved.⁶⁶

101. One of the core rights set out in the National Equality Plan for 2018–2024 is empowerment in decision-making. In order to promote political participation, in 2017, the High Court of Electoral Justice established a political participation unit⁶⁷ and a gender policy unit⁶⁸ (now the Gender Policy Directorate), which develop promotion, awareness and motivation programmes focused mainly on the political empowerment of women, the visibility of women and the production of statistical data. Among the training sessions held were events to facilitate political conversations among women leaders and talks on women in politics and the use of technology, which brought together leading political figures and experts on various topics related to the participation of women in political life. In 2022, 150 pre-candidate women were trained on topics related to the electoral contest, as well as on the rights and obligations that come with political roles. In 2023, women candidates were trained in the development of fundamental tools for the national and departmental elections to be held during that year. In total, there were 240 women candidates for elected positions in the elections held on 30 April 2023.

102. The following workshops, seminars and talks were held: a workshop on cultural stereotypes and leadership with a gender perspective; a seminar-workshop on political leadership with a gender perspective; training workshops on gender and elections and on women's leadership in the social and political spheres, held jointly with the Ministry of Justice under the National Houses of Justice Programme; a seminar on gender-based political violence for prosecutors, judges and electoral officials; and a talk entitled "Ronda de Tereré" to reflect on the importance of the political participation of women.

Women human rights defenders (art. 7)⁶⁹

103. In 2021, the Public Prosecution Service appointed, through a decision, the prosecutors that make up the Specialized Human Rights Unit,⁷⁰ which was set up to investigate criminal acts against journalists, and the Deputy Prosecutor's Office developed guidelines for the investigation of criminal cases involving alleged criminal acts against journalists and media workers in the course of their work.⁷¹ The Training Centre of the Public Prosecution Service promotes the training of

⁶⁵ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 27 (a) and (b).

⁶⁶ See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/106491>.

⁶⁷ See <https://tsje.gov.py/unidad-de-participacion-politica.html>.

⁶⁸ See <https://tsje.gov.py/unidad-de-politicas-de-genero.html>.

⁶⁹ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 29 (a), (b) and (c).

⁷⁰ Decision No. 1712/2021 of the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

⁷¹ Instruction F.A.DD.HH. No. 01/22.

prosecutors in the investigation of crimes against press workers, as part of a Public Prosecution Service project on the protection and safety of journalists.

104. Pursuant to a letter of intent signed between the Government of Paraguay and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2016,⁷² a multisectoral committee on the safety of journalists was established as part of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The committee articulates and designs plans and protocols and comprises representatives of the various branches of Government, the Public Prosecution Service and journalists' unions.⁷³ In that connection, a handbook for journalists at risk or under threat was prepared.⁷⁴

105. Through Decision No. 538/2017, the Ministry of the Interior approved a safety protocol for journalists in high-risk situations.⁷⁵

106. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs work together to address violence against Indigenous women. In that respect, a diagnostic report on gender violence against Indigenous women in Paraguay is under development, as is a document on addressing violence against Indigenous women, which contains all the agreements with the public institutions involved in the care procedure for women who are victims of violence, and a training manual for public officials on violence against Indigenous women.

107. The legislative branch has begun consideration of two bills, currently at the first stage of review, on the protection of journalists, communicators and human rights defenders.⁷⁶

Birth registration

108. The General Directorate of the Civil Registry carries out national registration campaigns on an ongoing basis, with a particular focus on Indigenous communities and rural areas. In addition, it has established inter-institutional agreements, such as with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to provide women in vulnerable situations with assistance with their documents and enable their access to birth registration. It also supports various government programmes by providing document-related and registry services.

⁷² See https://seguridadperiodistas.org.py/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CARTA-INTENCION-2016_page-0002.pdf.

⁷³ The Forum of Paraguayan Journalists, the Union of Journalists of Paraguay and the Association of Photojournalists of Paraguay.

⁷⁴ See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session38/PY/A_HRC_WG.6_38_PRY_1_Paraguay_AnnexV_S.pdf.

⁷⁵ See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session38/PY/A_HRC_WG.6_38_PRY_1_Paraguay_AnnexVI_S.pdf.

⁷⁶ Bill on the protection of journalists, communicators and human rights defenders, submitted in 2021, available at <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/124598>; and bill on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders, submitted in 2023, available at <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/128109>.

V. Part III (art. 10–14)

Education (art. 10)⁷⁷

109. The Ministry of Education and Science has invested economic resources in improving school infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Resources from the National Public Investment and Development Fund administered by municipal governments and departmental governor's offices were used to execute architectural and furnishing projects at educational institutions in all districts in the country.

110. As part of a project on improving accessibility in education, in 2021 the Support Centre for Multimedia Education in Paraguay (Digital Ministry of Education and Science) was established through a five-year strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and the Korea International Cooperation Agency. Under the project, high-quality multimedia content is disseminated on the education channel and on a virtual platform for the open upper secondary education programme. In addition, a project on upgrading and modernizing laboratories for industrial technical education at the secondary level is currently being developed, under which 17 laboratories for industrial technical education will be upgraded at 12 secondary schools.

Investment in infrastructure at educational institutions in the country⁷⁸

Year	In guaranies	In dollars	% invested in rural areas
2017	1 997 693 570	273 657	0
2018	15 099 373 745	2 068 407	32
2019	36 776 261 161	5 037 844	91
2020	3 765 000 000	515 753	100
2021	14 365 284 622	1 967 847	50
2022	15 402 344 466	2 109 910	45
2023	0	0	0
Total	62 889 843 286	11 973 419	–

111. Since 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science has been implementing the project entitled “Quality education for out-of-school children in Paraguay” with support from the Education Above All Foundation of Qatar and the United Nations Children’s Fund, which is aimed at expanding the provision of flexible educational services in order to reduce dropout rates and increase retention and completion rates in the three cycles of basic education. The project has a three-year execution period, and 30,000 out-of-school children aged 6 to 14 will benefit. The project is expected to be implemented in the departments of Central, Alto Paraná, Itapúa, San Pedro, Caaguazú and Concepción.

112. The programme of scholarships for lower and upper secondary education is an educational service administered by the Ministry of Education and Science as part of its compensatory programmes. The programme consists of economic support in the form of a scholarship for students in vulnerable socioeconomic situations to offer alternative options promoting access to, retention in and timely, high-quality completion of lower and upper secondary education in the national education system.

⁷⁷ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 33 (a)–(c) and 43 (c).

⁷⁸ Source: Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Scholarship Office has also provided benefits under equal conditions to students in lower and upper secondary education.

113. Over the period 2017–2021, the Ministry of Education and Science implemented programmes, campaigns and plans in the field of mathematics, working with the Multidisciplinary Organization for Supporting Teachers and Students to hold the National Mathematical Olympiad, the Kangaroo Mathematics Competition and the Aguarandu Olympiad in Informatics on an annual basis. In the field of science and technology, the Ministry administers the “Pierre and Marie Curie” national youth prize for science.

114. In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science, with support from civil society, implemented the “Jahasa” project on financial inclusion for rural young women, with a view to facilitating access to and use of financial and technology services.

115. Steps were taken to implement Act No. 4084 on the protection of pregnant students and students who are mothers,⁷⁹ including through the implementation of a guide for action in the education sector in the event of detection of sexual abuse or harassment of children or adolescents, prepared in February 2023 and adopted pursuant to decision 288/2023.⁸⁰ The guide contains guidelines to be followed at educational institutions at all levels, regardless of method of instructional delivery, governed by the Ministry of Education and Science. It also includes indicators for identifying sexual abuse or harassment of children and adolescents; procedures for care, clarifying the treatment of pregnant students by prohibiting schools from expelling such students; and several points related to combating school dropouts.

116. Through its programme of comprehensive care for children and families, the Ministry of Education and Science offers childcare services for students’ children aged 4 months to 8 years at 14 resource centres for lifelong learning throughout the country.

Employment (art. 11)⁸¹

117. At the national level, wage equality is enshrined in article 92 of the Constitution. The legislature is making headway in its consideration of a bill establishing wage equality between men and women in the public and private sectors.

118. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is developing specific oversight protocols addressing various issues related to gender equality in the workplace. Those protocols include a general protocol for gender-sensitive inspections, which will facilitate the compiling of precise indicators on various types of discrimination, including wage inequality.

119. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is undertaking measures to promote equal rights and decent working conditions for domestic work. With the adoption of Act No. 6338/19 amending article 10 of Act No. 5407/15,⁸² the wage for domestic work has been set at the same level as the legal minimum wage. The Ministry’s Labour Affairs Service receives complaints pertaining to failure to comply with labour regulations and offers free legal advice.

⁷⁹ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/3566/ley-n-4084-de-proteccion-a-las-estudiantes-en-estado-de-gravidez-y-maternidad.

⁸⁰ See www.mec.gov.py/cms_v4/documentos/ver_documento/?titulo=288-2023-ZARATE2.

⁸¹ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 35 (a)–(e).

⁸² See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8840/ley-n-6338-modifica-el-articulo-10-de-la-ley-n-540715-.

120. In the public sector, the Office of the Deputy Minister of Human Capital and Organizational Management of the Ministry of Economy and Finance promotes human development and management policies with merit-based processes for employment in the civil service. There are also laws such as Act No. 2479/2004,⁸³ which makes it compulsory to provide persons with disabilities access to employment in public institutions, amended by Act No. 3585/2008 and regulated by Decree No. 6369/2011, and Decree No. 3379/2020 regulating Act No. 4962/2013 on incentives for employers to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector. The regulatory harmonization process has led to noticeable improvements in the integration of persons with disabilities into the civil service.

Statistical data on persons with disabilities in the civil service, disaggregated by sex⁸⁴

<i>Persons with disabilities in the civil service, disaggregated by gender (percentage)</i>		
Year	Men	Women
2018	67	33
2019	65	35
2020	63	37
2021	63	37
2022	62	38
2023	62	38

121. The Office of the Deputy Minister of Human Capital and Organizational Management periodically prepares a report on the make-up of the civil service of the three branches of Government, disaggregated by sex, rank and income level. Findings from the 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 reports are available online.⁸⁵

122. With respect to the introduction of special measures to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in private employment, at the national level there is a law, Act No. 4962/2013, which introduces incentives for employers to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector.⁸⁶ At present, however, there are no enabling regulations in place, so implementation of the Act is pending. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is working in coordination with the Saraki Foundation on training and job placement procedures for persons with disabilities through the implementation of the “Empresas In” seal for inclusive companies. Through the initiative, the efforts made by private companies, civil society organizations and public institutions in the area of workforce inclusion

⁸³ Act No. 3585/2008 amending articles 1, 4 and 6 of Act No. 2479/2004, which makes it compulsory to provide persons with disabilities access to employment in public institutions. Available at: www.baen.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/1111/modifica-los-articulos-1-4-y-6-de-la-ley-n-247904-que-establece-la-obligatoriedad-de-la-incorporacion-de-personas-con-discapacidad-en-las-instituciones-publicas.

Act No. 6279/2019, which establishes the requirement to offer persons belonging to Indigenous communities access to employment in public institutions. Available at: www.baen.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8691/ley-n-6279-establece-la-obligatoriedad-de-la-incorporacion-de-las-personas-pertenecientes-a-las-comunidades-indigenas-en-las-instituciones-publicas.

⁸⁴ Source: Open data portal of the Office of the Deputy Minister of Human Capital and Organizational Management, available at: <https://datos.sfp.gov.py/visualizaciones/resumen>.

⁸⁵ See www.sfp.gov.py/sfp/articulo/15524-resolucion-n-342022.html.

⁸⁶ See www.baen.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/1165/establece-beneficios-para-los-empleadores-a-los-efectos-de-incentivar-la-incorporacion-de-personas-con-discapacidad-en-el-sector-privado.

and accessibility are recognized and promoted. In addition, through the “Sape’ a 2.0” programme, in partnership with Plan International Paraguay and with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the Ministry is working to expand access to professional training and decent work with an inclusive and differentiated approach.

123. Act No. 5508/2015 on the promotion and protection of motherhood and support for breastfeeding was amended and expanded under Act No. 6453/2019, through which its scope was expanded to include the judiciary, the Supreme Court of Justice, the Ministry of Public Defence, the prosecution service and institutions of higher education, and penalties were established for failure to comply with the requirement to set up lactation rooms.⁸⁷

124. The legislature is currently examining a bill on protecting vulnerable mothers, which is aimed at promoting care, support and protections for women who have difficulties during their pregnancies related to age, violence, abuse, illness, physical danger, poverty or indigence, family situation, employment status, social status, level of education or any other factor that could give rise to a vulnerable situation, by providing tools necessary for protecting mothers.⁸⁸

125. The national care policy,⁸⁹ which serves to acknowledge the importance of the redistribution of domestic and family responsibilities between men and women and co-responsibility for care among households, society and the State, is in the process of being adopted. The policy has been designated as a national priority, and significant progress has been made towards its implementation, including the establishment of an inter-agency commission on care and the development of an associated action plan.

126. In the field of employment, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is working to strengthen labour affairs services, with particular focus on paid household work and workplace violence. Efforts are under way to standardize protocols for service delivery and to confirm that workplaces have lactation rooms available. The Ministry is also implementing training and skills development programmes to improve women’s access to formal jobs, including managerial and decision-making positions. With a view to facilitating access to the labour market, the Ministry has launched strategies such as the “Emplea igualdad” (“Employ equality”) strategy and has set up online platforms such as the “EmpleaPy” (“Employ Paraguay”) portal.⁹⁰ The Ministry coordinates the economic empowerment programming offered at the Women’s City Centre, which includes a schedule of courses and training sessions, job placement and counselling, capacity-building activities for women entrepreneurs and events to raise awareness of the economic rights of women.

127. Act No. 5407/15 on domestic work⁹¹ sets a minimum age of 18 for domestic employment, thereby supporting the protection of the rights of children and adolescents. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security is taking steps to disseminate the Act and raise public awareness about conditions for girls who perform domestic work and their rights. In cooperation with the Ministry for Children’s and Adolescents’ Affairs, an awareness-raising programme for focal points at Departmental Councils for Children’s and Adolescents’ Affairs has been

⁸⁷ Act No. 5508/2015 on the promotion and protection of motherhood and support for breastfeeding.

See <https://digestolegalivo.gov.py/files/9034%20.pdf>.

See <https://digestolegalivo.gov.py/files/11065.pdf>.

⁸⁸ See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/116930>.

⁸⁹ See <https://mujer.gov.py/que-es-la-politica-nacional-de-cuidados-del-paraguay/>.

⁹⁰ See <https://bolsa.mtess.gov.py/buscador/login.php?return=true&>.

⁹¹ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/4392/ley-n-5407-del-trabajo-domestico.

implemented throughout the country. In addition, virtual training sessions have been held for focal points from Departmental Council for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs offices throughout the country.

128. The bill criminalizing dangerous child labour and unpaid domestic child labour (*criadazgo*),⁹² submitted by the executive branch in 2016, was sent to the advisory committees on legislation, human rights, gender and equity, and social development for analysis. The committee on gender and equity has issued its opinion, and the technical opinion of the Coordinator for the Rights of Children and Adolescents and the National Commission for the Eradication of Child and Adolescent Labour is also available.

129. As part of the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour and for the Protection of Adolescent Workers in Paraguay 2019–2024,⁹³ several steps were taken to monitor the employment of adolescents and promote decent work for adolescents who are involved or at-risk of becoming involved in certain forms of child labour. Training sessions on the registry of adolescent workers were held for representatives from Departmental Councils on Children's and Adolescents' Affairs in several districts in the country. In addition, inspections were conducted at companies to detect child labour or unprotected adolescent labour, and steps were taken to suspend employment contracts and fine companies for violating the rights of adolescent workers.

130. The Ministry for Children's and Adolescents' Affairs is promoting the #HayPromesasPeligrosas (#ThereAreDangerousPromises) campaign to prevent and build awareness about the trafficking of children and adolescents for purposes of sexual or labour exploitation.

131. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, using general and specialized inspection procedures, verifies complaints of incidents of workplace violence, including mandatory pregnancy or HIV testing during the hiring process. The Ministry has also adopted Decision No. 388/19 establishing the Office for Addressing and Preventing Workplace Violence and stipulating the procedure to be followed in cases of workplace violence, mobbing and sexual harassment in company workplaces,⁹⁴ and it is working to develop a specific protocol for the inspection and oversight of cases of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the workplace, which will help to enhance the monitoring of regulatory compliance and the issuance of the associated fines, including in situations of mandatory pregnancy or HIV testing in work environments.

Health (art. 12)⁹⁵

132. While Paraguay does not have a specific law on sexual and reproductive health, the State recognizes and safeguards the right to health and sexual and reproductive rights as fundamental rights of all people, as established in the national legal framework. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, as the lead agency in the health sector, has an obligation and is committed to enforcing the provisions of the national legal framework by developing and implementing public policies, plans, programmes and regulations that are based on the latest scientific evidence. In that connection, the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2019–2023 is based on legal and regulatory frameworks that promote high-quality care with a rights and

⁹² See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/108028>.

⁹³ See www.mtess.gov.py/application/files/9715/6926/1549/Estrategia_Nacional_-para_impresion.pdf.

⁹⁴ See www.mtess.gov.py/index.php/documentos/resolucion-mtess-n-3882019.

⁹⁵ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 37 (a)–(f) and 43 (a).

gender perspective. The Plan is used to coordinate considerations related to management, systematic production processes, refresher training and resource allocation, enabling the development of strategies for improving priority indicators for sexual and reproductive health in the country, and thereby serving to support progress towards universal access to health and sustainable development. Efforts are currently under way to develop a new national sexual and reproductive health plan.

133. In 2024, the budget allocated to the Directorate for Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare amounted to 15,262,550,285 guaranies. In all, 95 per cent of that budget is used to purchase contraceptive methods and medications or supplies for delivery kits, thereby fulfilling strategic objective 4 of the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan (securing supplies and medications for sexual and reproductive health).

Budget for sexual and reproductive health⁹⁶

Year	Allocated	Executed	% executed
2017	199 174 724 753	190 344 043 742	96
2018	201 653 871 938	172 044 152 723	85
2019	259 925 558 523	175 658 221 606	68
2020	258 423 793 734	243 710 170 142	94
2021	265 582 507 364	248 181 585 307	93
2022	262 129 852 103	228 504 249 076	87
2023	276 667 382 397	244 851 087 068	89
2024	280 799 634 819	35 089 717 843	12

134. Between 2019 and 2023, training was provided to 2,747 healthcare professionals on family planning, to 2,888 professionals on the “Code Red” strategy, to 2,557 professionals on prenatal care and to 200 professionals on delivery care and management.

135. As part of its sexual and reproductive health programming, coordinated by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Women’s City Centre offers gynaecological services, family planning services, pap smears and colposcopies, mammograms, bone density scans, nutrition services, dental services, vaccinations and breast ultrasounds, placing emphasis on preventive and comprehensive healthcare for women. Of all the programming offered at the Centre, sexual and reproductive health programming is the highest in demand and has the highest levels of attendance: in the first six years that it was offered, 39,532 women used the services, and 177,898 services were provided.

136. Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare regulations are developed for all persons without any discrimination. A project to expand access to and coverage of maternal and child healthcare in remote rural areas, Indigenous communities and border hubs in the Chaco region is currently being implemented. In addition, a project to prevent adolescent pregnancy is being developed by an inter-agency team involving the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry for Children’s and Adolescents’ Affairs and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security. The aim is to prevent pregnancy among girls and adolescents and situations of sexual abuse or violence by scaling up inter-agency strategies for outreach, communication and education in non-school settings and implementing the comprehensive healthcare model for adolescents and the inter-agency

⁹⁶ Source: Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, Administration Department.

road map for comprehensive care of sexual abuse affecting children and adolescents, which will serve the Indigenous population in rural and urban areas.

137. Under current regulations, free prenatal, perinatal and post-partum care is offered at all Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare health centres. Efforts are under way to strengthen comprehensive and integrated health-service networks by reducing service delays and improving the capacity of health teams in accordance with the level of care.

138. Primary care establishments offer a portfolio of services for people of all ages with a comprehensive and intercultural approach, providing health promotion services, preventive services, outpatient care, emergency care and diagnostic support for women of childbearing age, including pregnancy groups; family planning services; vaccination services following the standard vaccination schedule of the expanded immunization programme; breast exams; collection of samples for pap smears; comprehensive care for women; preconception, prenatal and post-partum care; comprehensive sexual and reproductive care; consultations; emergency care; and, at expanded health units, comprehensive care for low-risk vaginal delivery, as well as other services set out in the organizational manual for primary care, adopted by means of Decision S.G. No. 560/2022.⁹⁷ Through that decision, a licensed obstetrician was added to the family health team (i.e. every family health unit must have a licensed nurse and a licensed obstetrician on staff).

139. There has been a notable increase in the number of family health units: since 2017, 136 new units have been established, bringing the current total to 936 units across the country's most vulnerable areas. A key objective is to continue to establish additional family health units, thereby increasing the coverage of primary care, which currently stands at 37 per cent.

Expansion of family health units since 2017⁹⁸

Health region	Number of new family health units established, 2017–2024								Total
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
01 Concepción	1	1	1						3
02 San Pedro	1	1	1		1		4		8
03 Cordillera				1				1	2
04 Guairá									0
05 Caaguazú	1			1		8	10		20
06 Caazapá							2		2
07 Itapúa			1			11			12
08 Misiones									0
09 Paraguarí		1						3	4
10 Alto Paraná				11	10	4	8	1	34
11 Central				32	6	1	2	2	43
12 Ñeembucú									0
13 Amambay									0
14 Canindeyú			1						1

⁹⁷ See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/508623-ManualdeOrganizaciondelPrimerNiveldeAtencion.pdf.

⁹⁸ Source: Department of Standards/Directorate of Primary Care, Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

<i>Number of new family health units established, 2017–2024</i>									
15 Presidente Hayes				1		2			3
16 Boquerón				1		3			4
17 Alto Paraguay									0
18 Capital									0
Total	3	3	4	46	17	28	28	7	136

Total number of family health units⁹⁹

<i>Health region</i>	<i>Number of family health units</i>
Concepción	52
San Pedro	76
Cordillera	45
Guairá	56
Caaguazú	64
Caazapá	51
Itapúa	71
Misiones	36
Paraguarí	50
Alto Paraná	111
Central	151
Ñeembucú	25
Amambay	22
Canindeyú	49
Presidente Hayes	21
Boquerón	15
Alto Paraguay	8
Capital	33
Total	936

140. Decision S.G. No. 146/2012 requiring access to quality health services and care without discrimination, with full confidentiality and medical secrecy remains in force. The medical record used for managing health service delivery (developed pursuant to Decision S.G. No. 527/2010) states that all the information contained in the file must be handled in a manner that ensures absolute respect for the privacy of patient data.

141. Article 4 (“On the right to life”) of the national Constitution reads: “Every human being has the inherent right to life. Its protection is guaranteed, in general, from conception”. Article 109 of the Criminal Code provides for indirect death in case of necessity during childbirth: “It shall not be unlawful for a person to bring about the death of the fetus indirectly through acts related to childbirth if, in the light of medical knowledge and experience, such acts were necessary and inevitable to avert a serious risk to the life or health of the mother”.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

142. Paraguay has enacted laws aimed at strengthening activities for the prevention, early detection, treatment and provision of psychological support for women and girls with cancer. Act No. 6266/18 on comprehensive care for people with cancer¹⁰⁰ ensures that all persons with cancer have timely and quality access to dignified and comprehensive health care. The Act addresses several aspects of oncological care, including health promotion, disease prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, mental health and palliative care. Similarly, Act No. 6949/22¹⁰¹ amending articles 11 and 13 of Act No. 3331/2007 establishing the National Programme for the Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment of Cervical and Breast Cancer promotes more effective measures for the prevention and early detection of those types of cancer.

143. As part of its sexual and reproductive health programming, the Women's City Centre conducts campaigns to promote early detection services, referrals for cancer diagnoses and prevention services, with information provided by qualified professionals.

144. Cervical cancer remains one of the neoplastic diseases with the highest rates of incidence and mortality in the country; it is a public health problem despite the fact that it is a preventable disease. Paraguay is taking steps to mitigate the toll caused by the disease, which lays bare outstanding gaps and inequalities. For example, Paraguay has set specific targets, such as the introduction of the human papillomavirus (HPV) test as the primary screening method in the country pursuant to Decision S.G. No. 1104/2021, which is aimed at expanding coverage for women in at-risk age groups using a highly sensitive test. To provide cutting-edge tools to professionals working on the prevention, early detection and treatment of cervical cancer and its precursor lesions, the manual of rules and procedures for the prevention and control of cancers of the female lower genital tract was updated in 2022. Furthermore, a vaccine that prevents the disease is available and is included in the standard vaccination schedule. The HPV vaccine is safe, reliable and effective and recommended for girls aged 9 to 14. Doses are administered at Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare educational and immunization units. Implementation of HPV sampling and testing is expected to be launched in 2024 in departments with high rates of cervical cancer prevalence and mortality, such as Alto Paraná and Central. Under the project for a national plan for early breast cancer detection, efforts are also under way to procure more mammogram machines and to provide training to imaging professionals.

145. The National Cancer Institute set up several cancer centres within Paraguay to facilitate the shipping and administering of cancer medications, with a view to ensuring that patients do not have to travel long distances or relocate while also lowering their out-of-pocket costs. Those centres are located in Encarnación, Ciudad del Este, Pedro Juan Caballero, Villa Hayes and the city of Pilar. A medical oncology clinic was also established in Pilar. In the Central department and the Capital district, centres were set up within the National Hospital of Itauguá, San Pablo Hospital and the Children's Paediatric Hospital of Acosta Nu, and agreements were signed with the clinical hospital and the Social Security Institute.

146. Act No. 6993/2022 on the free provision of period products¹⁰² was issued in 2022. The Act establishes a national requirement to ensure that period products are provided free of charge to girls, adolescents and women in public educational

¹⁰⁰ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8708/ley-n-6266-de-atencion-integral-a-las-personas-con-cancer.

¹⁰¹ See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/ley/143942>.

¹⁰² See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/10893/ley-n-6993-provision-gratuita-de-productos-de-gestion-menstrual.

facilities, public health facilities, detention facilities and day and/or night shelters for persons experiencing homelessness.

147. The National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015–2030,¹⁰³ which includes measures to ensure that women and girls with disabilities have access to appropriate and discrimination-free health services, is being implemented.

148. The specialized care model of the Women’s City Centre provides for a care protocol for women with HIV/AIDS and differentiated accessibility protocols for women with disabilities.

149. The plan for the implementation of self-administered HIV testing in Paraguay was adopted by means of Decision S.G. No. 50/2024. The adoption of the self-testing model for HIV was proposed as a response to the need to offer a variety of testing options to different populations, in particular the key populations for HIV (men who have sex with men, transgender persons and women sex workers). Similarly, the National Strategic Plan for Responding to HIV/AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections 2019–2023 was adopted by means of Decision S.G. No. 346/2020, and the clinical protocol and therapeutic guidelines for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as a part of combination prevention for priority populations were adopted by means of Decision S.G. No. 558/2022.

150. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare leads the Health and Social Welfare Subcommittee of the National Commission on Disability. In that connection, the document entitled “Technical guidelines for healthcare workers on adequate and respectful care for persons with disabilities: first edition (2023)”¹⁰⁴ was recently adopted by means of Decision S.G. No. 867 of 20 December 2023. The document was the outcome of a participatory drafting process. It is focused on adequate and respectful care for persons with disabilities, with the clear aim of supporting equality of conditions and opportunities and preventing all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities, contributing to a culture of adequate and respectful care that will, in turn, help to build trust, reduce fear and build awareness among healthcare workers for their interactions with persons with disabilities, thereby facilitating access to the right to health for persons with disabilities.

151. A long-awaited reform of the mental healthcare system was launched with the issuance of Act No. 7018/2022 on mental health.¹⁰⁵ The Act is aimed at protecting mental health with humane, person-centred care that is also focused on the patient’s psychosocial background, in full enjoyment of human rights. With the entry into force of Act No. 7018/2022 and its enabling regulations, Decree No. 9811/2023, the National Directorate for Mental Health is working to update the National Policy on Mental Health and the National Plan for Mental Health, which contain strategies and measures to increase decentralized coverage and the availability of a variety of mental health programmes.

152. With respect to sexual and reproductive health, it should be mentioned that the “Towards inclusive care” guide to sexual and reproductive healthcare for adolescents with disabilities is in use. The guide is a tool for health professionals who, in their day-to-day work providing service and care to the public, have expressed a need for a support guide to improve the quality of care for adolescents, in particular those with

¹⁰³ See https://senadis.gov.py/index.php/download_file/391/223&ved=2ahUKEwitwvOCgdaFAXuspZUCHZpcAjIQFnoECCsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw22HeLM-5Mkx5gsGsqYW77n.

¹⁰⁴ See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/6ceb9e-LineamientoTratoAdecuadoTrabajadoresSaludPCD.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/11069/ley-n-7018-salud-mental.

disabilities, that takes into account the fact that health professionals must be clear and specific in their interactions with adolescents so that information can be understood by adolescents, their family members and the general public. The use of the guide demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that the population has access to health services, continuing the ongoing process of promoting respect for rights and quality of care in the various components of healthcare, in particular adolescents' sexual and reproductive health.

153. In the past five years, there has been an increase in the comprehensive care services for adolescents provided by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare throughout the country, from 24 services in 2019 to 107 services in 2023. In addition, the technical standard for comprehensive health services for adolescents¹⁰⁶ is in use as part of the comprehensive care model for adolescents in health facilities. The standard provides for programming on mental health, life planning, healthy habits, nutrition, oral health and other areas key to the well-being of adolescents.

154. In addition, the framework of procedures for integrated management of adolescents and their needs has been revised and updated based on the specific needs of that age group. A guide has also been developed for family health unit teams on the implementation of clubs for adolescents to promote and prevent risk factors among adolescents.

Economic empowerment of women (art. 13)¹⁰⁷

155. With support from the United Nations Development Programme, a working group on women and financial sustainability has been established to analyse and propose measures to ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated appropriately into the national strategy for financial inclusion.

156. Under the Agricultural Loans Facility, specialized services are provided for sectors with limited access to financing sources, in particular to women, through various initiatives aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and rural producers. As a result, the population of women with access to loans has steadily grown. Notably, the "Kuña ñamombarete haguá" financial product for women was developed to promote the economic empowerment of women by providing project financing for women entrepreneurs in the formal sector, and it has a Guarantee Fund for Women. Training days were also held to raise awareness of the provisions of Act No. 5446/15 on public policies for rural women, through which rural women have been able to learn about their rights and obtain information about financing opportunities.

157. The Ministry for Women implemented training and skills development courses in various sectors at its four regional centres, in coordination with other public and private sector institutions and organizations. Similarly, as part of the celebrations for the International Day of Rural Women, exhibitions, product fairs and informational talks on the services offered by the Agricultural Loans Facility were held at the regional centres.

158. One of the services offered under the "Seamos ciudadanos" ("Let's be citizens") programme of the Ministry of the Interior is the issuance of national identity cards, with an emphasis on children, adolescents and older adults, in coordination with municipal governments and departmental governor's offices.

¹⁰⁶ Adopted by means of Decision No. 018/2017, available at:

www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/fe12e9-2017018RESOLUCIONSG0182017.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 39 (a)–(c).

159. In collaboration with the Development Finance Agency, the Guarantee Fund for Women was established with the aim of improving access to credit for women entrepreneurs and business owners, as well as for women who want to start a business. From July 2022 to July 2023, loans amounting to \$338.66 billion were issued, with women accounting for 38 per cent of loan recipients. The Agency has also implemented the “ProMiPymes (Mujer)” (“Pro-micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Women)”) programme, under which preferential interest rates are offered to facilitate access to credit for women entrepreneurs. The Agency has modified the general objective of its institutional strategic plan to include women heads of household as beneficiaries.

160. Partnerships between various institutions, including the Banco Nacional de Fomento (National Development Bank), have been established to promote access to credit and entrepreneurial training for women. Through programmes such as the “Kuña Katupryry” credit line, financing and training have been provided to thousands of women entrepreneurs from both urban and rural areas. In addition, there have been specific training and awareness-raising activities on gender-related issues for financial institutions, trade unions and interest groups.

161. In collaboration with institutions such as the Banco Nacional de Fomento and the Federation of Production Cooperatives, technical and financial assistance programmes for producers and organizations have been implemented with a view to improving their socioeconomic conditions. Those programmes played a fundamental role in supporting business and production plans, particularly in the agricultural sector, where the share of women participants was high.

162. Progress was made towards implementation of Act No. 5446/15 on public policies for rural women, through such initiatives as the Sustainable Rural Development Project and the National Livestock Development Programme, under which technical assistance, training and financial support are provided to rural families, with a focus on the economic empowerment of women. Efforts have also been made to advance initiatives on environmental education and on enhancing business skills, with a focus on inclusion of women in all levels of the production chain.

163. Through its financial education programmes, the Agricultural Loans Facility provides training on income and expense management, benefiting 59,000 people in recent years, and promotes a culture of savings, including among children and adolescents. Marketing support initiatives, such as fairs and other forums for direct sales, have also been implemented with a view to increasing profit margins, particularly for women producers.

Rural and Indigenous women (art. 14)¹⁰⁸

164. The Senate is currently analysing a bill establishing equal pay for men and women in the public and private sectors.¹⁰⁹ The primary objective of the bill is to eliminate wage inequality gaps and promote gender equity in the workplace, in accordance with constitutional principles of equality.

165. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security implemented job skills training courses specifically for rural women, which are focused on sectors where productivity and demand for labour are high. In the most recent period (2022–2023),

¹⁰⁸ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 41 (a)–(d).

¹⁰⁹ See <https://silpy.congreso.gov.py/web/expediente/126328>.

3,954 rural women benefited from training activities and counselling aimed at improving their job skills and opportunities.

166. Under the “Sape’á 2.0” project, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security provided capital to 100 rural women entrepreneurs in the departments of San Pedro and Caaguazú. In addition, the Ministry issued certifications and provided technical assistance and support for the formalization of business ventures, benefiting hundreds of rural women throughout the country. The Ministry has also worked to bring jobs in rural areas into the formal sector through daily services at regional labour directorates aimed at creating incentives to encourage the signing of labour contracts and the incorporation of workers into the social security system. Such services include training, legal aid and the resolution of labour disputes with a view to ensuring that rural women have fair and equitable working conditions.

167. Data show that a total of 54,196 women, including 497 Indigenous women, received training from the national training and work skills development system over the period 2018–2023. Training sessions are held throughout the country, in both rural and urban areas.

Training sessions conducted by the national training and work skills development system¹¹⁰

Year	Men	Women	Total
2018	4 767	6 562	11 329
2019	5 624	9 007	14 631
2020	5 069	8 620	13 689
2021	7 203	14 604	21 807
2022	4 653	9 129	13 782
2023	3 324	6 274	9 598

168. A streamlined land titling process for women heads of household has been rolled out and has resulted in a significant increase in the number of land titles issued to rural women. Over an 18-month period in 2022 and 2023, 44 per cent of land titles were issued to women, compared with 54 per cent issued to men. This strategy is based on Act No. 1863/2002 (the Agrarian Act), which provides for the preferential treatment of women in the issuance of land titles. The National Institute of Indigenous Affairs is promoting a programme focused on community strengthening to improve quality of life for Indigenous men and women while respecting their rights and decisions. The programme is aligned with the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization and with the protocol for the consultation and free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples living in the territory.

169. The Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and the Human Environment supports the right to housing through several programmes and projects involving activities in rural areas, giving priority in access to housing to Indigenous Peoples, women heads of household, and persons with chronic illnesses or with disabilities.

¹¹⁰ Source: National training and work skills development system. Course management system.

Women who have gained access to housing in rural areas

Programme	Period	Housing units finished	Women housed	Women heads of household housed	Single mothers housed
National Fund for Social Housing (FONAVIS)		694	No data	360	121
“Che Tapyi”	July 2020–July 2021	140	No data	106	58
“Sembrando Oportunidades” (“Sowing opportunities”)		198	396	N/D	N/D
FONAVIS	July 2021–July 2022	1 267	2 000	577	262
FONAVIS	July 2022–July 2023	5 348	8 245	2 747	1 501
FONAVIS	August 2023–December 2023	1 658	2 426	922	452
Total		9 305	13 067	4 712	2 394

170. Gender indicators have been added to the national agricultural census, which will enable a more comprehensive analysis of conditions for women in the agricultural and rural sector.

171. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has implemented a strategy to mainstream gender in the planning of policies and measures to address climate change, including through the evaluation of equality of opportunities between men and women, with an intercultural approach, in projects developed by the Ministry. Under that framework, the Ministry is implementing a platform for women leaders in the sustainable commodities production chain with a view to promoting the effective participation of women leaders in dialogue, planning and decision-making forums in the soybean and meat production chains.

172. The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is implementing the National Plan for Gender and Climate Change to 2030, which sets out measures and activities to address gender issues in the context of climate change, including issues related to agriculture and the use of phytosanitary products.

173. The prosecution service carries out joint projects with the Deputy Prosecutor’s Office, prosecutors specialized in environmental crimes and the Directorate of Environmental Crimes. Specialized units work primarily in five focus areas (water, soil, forests, biodiversity and air) and take action mainly against crimes classified as illegal waste processing, air pollution, the pollution or alteration of water, waterworks that alter water sources or courses, the misuse of soil, violations of the Fishing Act, violations of the Wildlife Act, the felling or burning of forests, the trafficking or illegal sale of forest products, and sound pollution. In 2023, the specialized unit collected more than 585 million guaraníes in reparations for social harm.

174. The Ministry of Education and Science has a protocol for the protection of educational institutions from the risk of fumigation and intoxication by pesticides. Under the protocol, four phases are set out (prevention, preparation, response and outreach/intervention), and forms for evaluating risk and reporting incidents are provided.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Adopted pursuant to Decision No. 215 of 16 February 2023.

Adolescent girls

175. The World Day for the Prevention of Unintended Adolescent Pregnancy is an educational campaign primarily aimed at building awareness among young people so that they are familiar with health precautions and can make informed decisions about their health. Emphasis is placed on sexual and reproductive health with a view to preventing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

176. The public health system currently has offices for comprehensive healthcare for adolescents where services are offered only to persons aged 10 to 19, a care model that is also implemented at other facilities as needed. The aim of offering adolescent services at family health units and hospitals is to optimize efforts focused on the youth population by addressing life planning, mental health, disease prevention and the promotion of healthy habits. Care is also provided in such fields as paediatrics, psychology, nutrition, vaccination, counselling, legal advice, gynaecology and obstetrics. Adolescent health services, such as comprehensive care clinics, make it possible to offer multidisciplinary care with particular emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention strategies. Under the model, a more comprehensive assessment, in which the setting, a friendly bedside manner and confidentiality are viewed as essential, has been put into practice.

177. The reorganization of adolescent health services at healthcare facilities is part of the health policy set out in the National Plan for Adolescent Health, which is aimed at offering more comprehensive and more personalized care. See the directory of comprehensive care services for adolescents.¹¹²

178. The prosecution service's specialized unit to combat trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, in coordination with the training centre and the deputy prosecutors' offices, conducted training and awareness-raising workshops for officials working in the prosecution service. The unit also visits primary and secondary schools to give awareness-raising workshops and talks on child pornography and trafficking in persons.

Women in detention

179. The Ministry of Justice has a total of 998 women in detention, of whom 627 are awaiting trial and 371 have been convicted. The Ministry has three correctional facilities for women: Casa del Buen Pastor, Serafina Dávalos (Coronel Oviedo) and the Juana María de Lara Rehabilitation and Workforce Reintegration Centre in Ciudad del Este. There are also women's wards at the regional correctional facilities in Encarnación, Misiones, Pedro Juan Caballero, Concepción, San Pedro and Villarrica. The Ministry plans to build another women's ward with a capacity of approximately 150 beds at the Serafina Dávalos (Coronel Oviedo) correctional facility for women.

180. To relieve the overcrowding of correctional facilities for women, the Ministry of Justice oversees and monitors the procedural status of women in detention through cross-sectoral efforts coordinated by working groups with the public defenders' office, the judiciary and the public prosecution service. Along those lines, the Ministry, in coordination with the judiciary, is implementing a plan to ease overcrowding, which is aimed at expediting judicial proceedings by conducting hearings, including preliminary hearings and review hearings, via videoconferencing

¹¹² See www.mspbs.gov.py/dependencias/portal/adjunto/2f5995-DirectoriodeServiciodeAtencinIntegralparaAdolescentes.pdf.

at nine correctional facilities. It is also implementing a pilot plan to expedite proceedings at the Casa del Buen Pastor correctional facility for women.

181. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Justice have in place an agreement on inter-agency cooperation in the area of health.

182. In 2019, the judiciary and the Ministry of Public Defence launched a case clearance initiative, allowing for less onerous measures for persons in detention who are ill, older than 60, pregnant or breastfeeding and pardons for those who have served half of their sentences.

183. In 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice established a technical bureau for corrections and issued Resolution No. 1511/21,¹¹³ through which it has set out guidelines for the exceptional application of preventive detention and has promoted the use of an *ex officio* review of precautionary measures as a tool for reducing the prison population.

184. On the legislative front, Act No. 6350/2019 was issued, amending article 245 of Act No. 1286/1998 (the Code of Criminal Procedure)¹¹⁴ as amended through, *inter alia*, Acts No. 4431/2011 and 2493/2004, thereby amending the provisions of the Code on preventive detention and empowering judges to issue less onerous measures as alternatives to detention.

185. As part of the plan to ease overcrowding, the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary have expedited judicial proceedings at nine correctional facilities. The judiciary's Bureau of Inter-agency Affairs is focused on reducing judicial delays by supervising hearings at the preparatory and intermediate stages, and the Supreme Court of Justice conducts visits to correctional facilities to monitor the length of criminal proceedings, reporting on cases in which the time limit has been exceeded. In addition, approval has been given for the implementation of electronic legal proceedings.

186. The Ministry of Public Defence, acting through public defenders' offices specialized in the various jurisdictions, promotes measures aimed at reducing the number of people in detention, with a focus on those who are the most vulnerable, including older adults, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and adolescents. Over the period 2021–2023, such efforts resulted in the release of 572 women from detention; an annual breakdown is provided below.

Releases secured for women in detention

2021	201 ¹¹⁵
2022	192 ¹¹⁶
2023	179 ¹¹⁷

187. The prosecution service has general guidelines for the use of preventive detention that are consistent with the principles of necessity, exceptionality, proportionality and presumption of innocence, and the service conducts monitoring visits at detention centres.

¹¹³ See www.pj.gov.py/images/contenido/acordadas/acordada1511.pdf.

¹¹⁴ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8902/ley-n-6350-modifica-el-articulo-245-de-la-ley-n-12861998-codigo-procesal-penal-y-sus-modificatorias-las-leyes-ns-44312011-y-24932004.

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Public Defence, *Informe de gestión 2021* (Management Report 2021).

¹¹⁶ Ministry of Public Defence, *Informe de gestión 2022* (Management Report 2022).

¹¹⁷ Ministry of Public Defence, *Informe de gestión 2023* (Management Report 2023).

188. During the period 2018–2023, the Ministry of Justice held training days for a total of 745 correctional officers in order to increase staff awareness of the Bangkok Rules, the service protocols for the correctional system, the Nelson Mandela Rules and Act No. 5777/16 on comprehensive measures to protect women from all forms of violence. Compendiums of instruments on human rights and humanitarian principles have also been distributed.

189. The Ministry of Justice has implemented comprehensive healthcare programmes at correctional facilities, ensuring that multidisciplinary health teams are available. Those teams deliver care using a biopsychosocial approach, addressing conditions that are prevalent among women in detention, such as gynaecological disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy monitoring and mental health. Medical care is also provided to women who are detained along with their young children, ensuring that they receive all necessary check-ups. The Ministry has a logistical support unit that is responsible for distributing and monitoring the personal hygiene products and supplies required by women in detention. Its work includes ensuring that women in detention and their children have access to basic hygiene items.

190. Ministry of Justice Decision No. 121/2004 regulating visits to inmates at correctional facilities and prisons in Paraguay is in force. Through that decision, the Ministry has established the procedures and requirements for social visits, ensuring that all people in detention, including women, have access to partner visits and visits from family members. With respect to intimate partner visits for women in detention and, more generally, for all people in detention, Decision No. 72/2012 is applied.

191. To strengthen monitoring mechanisms, the Ministry of Justice launched a virtual human rights system in 2020. The system includes a digital form, WhatsApp messaging and a telephone number for receiving complaints, reports and requests, so that inmates' family members have a communication channel for filing reports of potential human rights violations in the correctional system or at education centres. Thanks to the initiative, all persons in detention had access to safeguards of their fundamental rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2020 and August 2023, a total of 431 complaints were filed using the system.

192. The Ministry of Justice has a complaint protocol for cases of torture, adopted pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 871/15. The Directorate General of Human Rights, acting through the Department for the Receipt and Disclosure of Complaints and the Department for the Monitoring of Detention Facilities and Education Centres, and with the informed consent of the inmates, receives complaints of torture and/or human rights violations and, pursuant to that protocol, forwards them to the Internal Affairs and Anti-Corruption Directorate.

193. The prosecution service, acting through the Directorate of Human Rights, conducts monitoring visits at detention centres throughout the country to verify conditions for detainees. Where cases of violations of human rights are confirmed, the service's specialized human rights unit is asked to take action.

194. The Ministry of Public Defence adopted Decision S.G. No. 620/2021 on the use of the mobile telephone app and website for the “Defensores” (“Defenders”) complaint system, making it compulsory for public defenders working in criminal, juvenile and sentence enforcement courts to report alleged incidents of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Through Decision S.G. No. 351/2022, mechanisms were established for taking action in the event of complaints of alleged incidents of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Accordingly, from 2018 to 2023, the Ministry of Public Defence submitted 251 complaints of torture or other incidents to the Public Prosecution Service's specialized human rights unit.

VI. Part IV (art. 15 and 16)

Access to justice (art. 15)¹¹⁸

195. The National Anti-Corruption Secretariat has made significant progress in the fight against corruption and in promoting transparency and accountability, for example through the creation of an anti-corruption portal,¹¹⁹ which includes a system for registering complaints and processing criminal cases, inquiries and investigations,¹²⁰ and a platform¹²¹ for monitoring compliance with active transparency obligations in the public sector. The National Integrity, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Plan 2021–2025¹²² (Decree No. 4458/20) has also been approved. It was promoted by the National Integrity and Transparency Team, which was established through Decree No. 3003/19.

196. The judiciary's Complaints and Reports Office, as a platform for whistleblowers, promotes transparency with a view to combating corruption and impunity by conducting investigations that involve the Office of the Superintendent General of Justice and the Council of Superintendents. Since 2006, the number of complaints filed has increased by 5,000 per cent, demonstrating that the transparency and anti-corruption programme is reaching a growing number of people.

197. The Judicial Ethics Office promotes and monitors compliance with the Code of Judicial Ethics and provides technical support to the Judicial Ethics Court and the Judicial Ethics Advisory Council, including by issuing rulings on complaints received.¹²³ It also holds dissemination and awareness-raising campaigns, such as the “Judicialmente éticos” (“Judicially ethical”) campaign aimed at judges.

198. Courts specialized in economic crimes and corruption have been established pursuant to Act No. 6379/19.¹²⁴ These courts, which have the power to hear, rule on and enforce decisions in cases of bribery, malfeasance and other offences, have been further strengthened through Act No. 6430/19 on preventing, criminalizing and punishing transnational bribery.¹²⁵ Furthermore, since 2019, the police information system has included the data category “acts involving fraud, deceit or corruption”, which is further broken down into subcategories including allegations of usury, bribe-taking, fraud, illicit enrichment, influence peddling, bribery and corruption.

199. Act No. 6814/21 regulating the procedure for the prosecution and removal of judges, prosecutors, public defenders and bankruptcy trustees¹²⁶ establishes the procedure for the prosecution and eventual removal from office of members of appeal courts, judges, deputy prosecutors, prosecutors, chief public defenders, deputy public defenders and public defenders.

200. The judiciary's General Secretariat for Gender Issues, in close alignment with the judiciary's institutional policy on gender mainstreaming, works to promote

¹¹⁸ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 13 (a)–(c).

¹¹⁹ See www.denuncias.gov.py.

¹²⁰ See <https://paneldenuncias.senac.gov.py/#/>.

¹²¹ See <https://bit.ly/panel-transparencia-senacpy>.

¹²² See <https://nube.senac.gov.py/s/jRWRY6nH8iKmMx#pdfviewer>.

¹²³ See www.pj.gov.py/etica-documentos/99-resoluciones.

¹²⁴ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9225/ley-n-6430-previene-tipifica-y-sanciona-los-hechos-punibles-de-cohecho-transnacional-y-soborno-transnacional.

¹²⁵ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9363/ley-n-6379-crea-la-competencia-en-delitos-economicos-y-crimen-organizado-en-la-jurisdiccion-del-fuero-penal.

¹²⁶ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9752/ley-n-6814-regula-el-procedimiento-para-el-enjuiciamiento-y-remocion-de-magistrados-judiciales-agentes-fiscales-defensores-publicos-y-sindicos-de-quiebra-y-deroga-la-ley-n-37592009-que-regula-el-procedimiento-para-el-enjuiciamiento-y-remocion-de-magistrados-y-deroga-las-leyes-antecedentes-y-sus-modificatorias.

equality and non-discrimination within the judicial system. Under that framework, several mechanisms have been implemented to improve access to justice, such as a policy on access to justice for older adults and persons with disabilities, an action protocol for intercultural justice, the “Guía legal” (“Legal guide”) digital app, the Judicial Information and Guidance Office, the Judicial Facilitators Programme and the guide for safeguarding access to justice for all without distinction of any kind.

201. A Gender Bureau has been established within the Public Prosecution Service to promote access to justice for women victims of violence, provide guidance and support during the judicial process and promote awareness-raising campaigns.

202. The Ministry of Public Defence provides free legal assistance to persons who lack sufficient resources to access justice, particularly in cases of violence against women. The Ministry of Justice is implementing the National Houses of Justice Programme, through which it facilitates access to justice for vulnerable, Indigenous and rural communities and persons in correctional facilities, including through the deployment of the mobile House of Justice to reach remote areas.

203. Over the period 2020–2023, under the National Houses of Justice Plan, the Ministry of Justice conducted training days for the armed forces and local and departmental governments, with a total of 721 participants.

204. Between 2019 and 2023, training sessions were held at courts specialized in Act No. 5777/16 on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence, with a total of 575 hours of instruction. The training sessions were focused on improving services and protections for people in vulnerable situations, including women victims of violence.

205. The Supreme Court of Justice implemented the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions Programme, earning a silver seal. An educational cooperation agreement for external internships at the judiciary’s General Secretariat for Gender Issues was established, and consulting services were engaged to support gender mainstreaming in the administration of justice. Since 2011, the judiciary’s General Secretariat for Gender Issues has been monitoring gender-sensitive judicial decisions involving the application of international human rights conventions, with particular focus on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Act No. 5777/16 on comprehensive protection for women against all forms of violence. The Supreme Court of Justice also promoted the prize for excellence in mainstreaming the right to equality and non-discrimination in judicial decisions.

206. The National Secretariat for Emergencies has taken steps to prevent and raise awareness about gender-based violence in emergency and disaster situations, has developed a strategy for preventing sexual violence at shelters during emergencies, and has participated in several campaigns aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and in awareness-raising campaigns on gender-based violence.

Marriage and family relations (art. 16)¹²⁷

207. A study prepared by the United Nations Population Fund and Plan International Paraguay with support from the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences and technical assistance from the Ministry for Children’s and Adolescents’ Affairs was presented in 2021.¹²⁸ The study contained evidence and findings that serve to guide

¹²⁷ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, paras. 47 (a)–(c).

¹²⁸ “Invisibles a plena luz: uniones tempranas y forzadas en Paraguay”, available at: <https://paraguay.unfpa.org/es/publications/invisibles-plena-luz-uniones-tempranas-y-forzadas-en-paraguay>.

public policies aimed at addressing child marriage and early and forced marriage in Paraguay.

208. In 2020, Act No. 6506 was adopted in order to amend several articles of Act No. 5415/2015, which established the register of child support debtors.¹²⁹ The amendment was aimed at strengthening mechanisms for enforcing child support obligations and protecting the rights of children.

209. The Ministry of Public Defence offers assistance and free representation for DNA testing for people who do not have the financial means to cover the associated costs. Act No. 1914/02 provides for the benefit of no-cost litigation, which can be accessed through the public defender's office. From March 2019 to March 2024, waivers of the fee for expert DNA testing were requested for 946 DNA tests ordered for paternity suits.

210. The Supreme Court of Justice also has a regular budget to cover DNA testing for those who cannot afford the associated costs. Under Resolution No. 1668/2022,¹³⁰ authorization is given for the implementation of the procedures for requesting, authorizing, monitoring and paying for DNA studies for paternity suits with the benefit of no-cost litigation. That resolution serves to facilitate access to justice and safeguard children's right to identity.

211. The judiciary has issued judicial decisions recognizing the rights of spouses to inherit marital property that is considered intangible, such as pensions and retirement funds. The judiciary's gender observatory has judicial decisions¹³¹ from civil suits in which that recommendation was taken into account.

Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention¹³²

212. The Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention has been adopted by means of Act No. 6047/2018.¹³³

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (art. 2)¹³⁴

213. The National Equality Plan 2018–2024 is focused on making headway towards legal equality, equality of opportunities, substantive equality and equality of outcomes. The Plan serves to set clear targets and objectives and identify obstacles to achieving them and to implementation in various policies and sectors. It is aligned with the five rights-related focus areas (non-discrimination, empowerment in decision-making, bodily autonomy, economic empowerment and access to justice) and the four cross-cutting focus areas (equality between men and women, the human rights approach, elimination of discriminatory stereotypes and the intercultural and bilingual approach) set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Ministry for Women is the State's lead agency for the Plan. It works to mainstream gender in all spheres of society, including in areas such as poverty, education and training, health, violence, economy, power and decision-making, human rights, media and the environment.

¹²⁹ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/9287/ley-n-6506-modifica-los-articulos-2-3-4-6-7-8-9-y-10-de-la-ley-n-54152015-que-crea-el-registro-de-deudores-alimentarios-morosos-redam.

¹³⁰ See www.pj.gov.py/descargas/ID1-501_acordada_n1668.pdf.

¹³¹ See www.pj.gov.py/contenido/537-observatorio-de-genero/2385.

¹³² CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, para. 48.

¹³³ See www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/8561/ley-n-6047-aprueba-la-enmienda-del-articulo-20-parrafo-1-de-la-convencion-sobre-la.

¹³⁴ CEDAW/C/PRY/CO/7, para. 49.

214. Ninety-two per cent of the National Development Plan is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. To promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in 2016 Paraguay established its Interdepartmental Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals, which is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the Goals. In 2020, the Commission was reorganized under Decree No. 3581, through which the involvement of the Ministry for Women in managerial, operations and technical forums was strengthened. A subcommittee on Goal 5 (gender equality/women) was established, under the leadership of the Ministry for Women and with the participation of other State agencies associated with gender issues. The subcommittee's duties include coordinating with other sectors to compile data on activities related to gender equality, collaborating with the National Institute of Statistics to develop national indicators and promoting and coordinating activities related to Goal 5. One important project completed by the subcommittee was its multisector report on Goal 5, which serves as a baseline for evaluating the country's performance with respect to the targets for Goal 5 and for finding alternative options for making progress towards their achievement.

215. As part of efforts related to Goal 5 (gender equality), "dialogues for equality" have been held to promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned between the Governments of Paraguay, Spain and other countries, with a view to advancing the 2030 Agenda.
