



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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

Replies of El Salvador to the list of issues and questions in relation to its tenth periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



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Context and women, peace and security

1. El Salvador has faced various challenges throughout its history: armed conflict, insecurity, structural inequalities, violence and social exclusion, which for decades have primarily affected women and girls. Against this backdrop and taking into account the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and women's differentiated needs, a comprehensive security strategy known as the Territorial Control Plan has been implemented. The Plan involves all the government institutions in order to combat head-on the violent criminal groups that have caused the people of El Salvador to live in anxiety for more than three consecutive decades; it is designed to restore peace and hope, including through the following measures.

- The second phase of the Territorial Control Plan, called "Opportunities", began in 2019. The aim of this phase is to create better conditions for young people, women and girls with a view to preventing human rights violations, through the provision of scholarships and the construction of schools, sports centres and urban centres for well-being and opportunities, as energizing spaces for local training, recreation and self-help, which enable young people and women to develop their skills and abilities.
- In addition, under the territorial activation strategy, psychological, health, legal and other kinds of services are available, and channels for filing complaints have been established to ensure emotional support and access to justice, as well as a respectful and safe environment for families in communities that were besieged by gangs for years.
- Through the "Integration" phase, the Act on the National Integration System was adopted, establishing the Directorate for Integration. The Directorate implements programmes and plans that contribute to reducing poverty and improving people's quality of life through training, culture, art and sport initiatives that enhance social integration.

2. El Salvador reaffirms its commitment to peace and security and emphasizes that women play a key role in their consolidation. To that end, it established the National Committee for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and Subsequent Resolutions, composed of government institutions and civil society organizations. The Women Guardians of the Peace Project, which fosters women's influence in transitional justice and peacebuilding processes through capacity-building and empowerment, is being implemented in the framework of the second national action plan for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). Their initiatives include the "Bringing generations together for peace" initiative, the inauguration of a memorial garden to commemorate the disappeared children of the armed conflict in El Salvador, and "circles of healing".

3. With the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), a course on the women and peace and security agenda has been developed in order to provide training on that global agenda and on the national action plan for the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). In addition, progress is being made on the evaluation of the second action plan. The evaluation will inform the formulation of the third plan, which will be aligned with the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

4. In addition, the Women Peacebuilders Programme of the Office of the Counsel General of the Republic supports women leaders to develop their technical skills to become community mediators and human rights defenders, thereby promoting their participation, as well as respect and conflict-prevention.

5. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women carried out a project called “Altars” on the recovery of historical memory. The project supported individual and collective healing processes, including through the song “Women’s Hands”, which was written and composed by women survivors. Four short films entitled “Voices in the silence”, “After the fire”, “Remembrances” and “The last time I saw her”, have also been produced. In addition, the book and documentary “Altars: Life stories of women killed in the massacre of El Mozote and surrounding areas: reconstructing the lives of 15 women massacred in 1981”, has been published, to honour and remember the murdered women.

Visibility of the Convention

6. The Government, in accordance with its responsibility to protect, safeguard and uphold women’s rights, is making significant progress on the legal front by promoting progressive regulations in line with the Convention. These include the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act and the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, which provide guidelines on the development and strengthening of national measures for the protection of women’s rights.

7. As part of the efforts to raise awareness of the Convention, training has been provided for judges and other judicial actors. The training has focused on preventing violence against women and has included specialized workshops aimed at strengthening those actors’ capacity to identify, respond to and punish violence, in compliance with international commitments in this area.

8. Conscious of the obligations stemming from the articles of the Convention and the recommendations of the Committee, El Salvador is taking those as the basis for the establishment of national policies and programmes. These include:

- The Caring Births Act, the Growing Together Act and the Loving Nutrition for the Promotion and Protection of and Support for Breastfeeding Act, which have transformed the maternity experience through modern, high-quality services, thus improving maternal and newborn care.
- The implementation of a development and social protection plan and its accompanying poverty eradication strategy, which had resulted in a 6.7 per cent reduction in inequality by 2022, and in economic growth of 3 per cent for 2024.
- The holding of virtual workshops on a culture of equality and women’s right to a life free of discrimination and violence.
- A course on the basics of substantive equality, which covers issues related to international regulations on women’s human rights and the Convention.
- A course entitled “Essential services package for women and girls facing violence”, aimed at strengthening the capacity of judicial actors to offer care and respond to violence against women.
- A specialized course on women’s human rights for staff of the Office of the Counsel General of the Republic.

9. In the area of migration, efforts have been made, in coordination with various entities, including local government institutions, to take measures in priority regions to promote the recognition of migration as a right and the importance of it taking place in a safe, orderly and regular manner, in accordance with the provisions of domestic law. This has included the provision of assistance to women migrants, especially those whose rights have been violated.

10. In the area of disability, the National Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities has implemented a strategic plan called “Eliminating barriers”, aimed at strengthening institutions, modernizing services and expanding comprehensive care for persons with disabilities in order to ensure their full participation in society. The plan covers key areas, including health, education, justice and accessibility.

11. In compliance with the judgments issued by the national courts, specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women were established, in accordance with the principles and responsibilities enshrined in the Convention. This is in line with the aims of adopting all appropriate measures to facilitate the provision of specialized and comprehensive services and ensuring that the competent courts provide simple and effective remedies to protect women against violations of their rights. In addition, international standards are in use in the rest of the courts having jurisdiction in criminal matters, as well as in the courts dealing with labour law, family law, and cases relating to children and adolescents.

12. The judiciary has published a compilation of judgments with a gender and human rights perspective, entitled “Compilation and analysis of case law on a life free of violence for women and girls”. In addition, the National Council of the Judiciary provides professional training for the judiciary and law enforcement officials in the form of ongoing training and capacity-building on women’s human rights.

Legislative framework and definition of discrimination

13. In article 3 of the Constitution of the Republic, El Salvador provides that no one shall be discriminated against and establishes the equality of all persons before the law. Also, in fulfilment of its international commitments, it has developed a robust legal framework to guarantee equality of opportunity.

14. Through the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act,¹ the Government affirmed its commitment to the constitutional principle of equality and to complying with the obligations deriving therefrom, which apply to the actions of government institutions. In accordance with the Convention, the Act prohibits any kind of unequal treatment, whether implicit or explicit, that limits the full exercise of women’s rights.

15. It is in this context that article 4 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act² sets out guiding principles, which include an intersectoral approach. That approach underpins the coordination of the programmes, actions and resources of the various sectors and actors at the national and local levels for detection, prevention, response, protection and punishment, as well as measures for the provision of reparations for victims.

16. In addition, the Government has implemented the National Equality Plan 2021–2025, which establishes the commitments and guidelines that shape public and strategic policies on equality and the fight against all forms of discrimination against women, serving to guide the national-level action of government institutions.

17. The National Policy on Access to a Violence-Free Life for Women and its Action Plan 2021–2025 are designed to change sociocultural patterns that perpetuate

¹ Available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/F6C5840E-2A8F-431B-8943-F7718B83B0D0.pdf>.

² Available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/4DA44183-58F2-4745-A1D0-1B634D6DB339.pdf>.

violence and discrimination against women through the implementation of public prevention policies that address the causes of the various forms and types of violence.

18. In line with its commitment to uphold the international regulations issued by the International Labour Organization, El Salvador has ratified international instruments that safeguard and protect women's labour rights, including the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

19. In the area of education, El Salvador has ratified the Convention against Discrimination in Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in which UNESCO reaffirms that education is a fundamental human right and underscores States' obligation to guarantee free and compulsory education, in order to promote equality of opportunity.

20. As a mechanism for access to justice for women whose rights have been violated, El Salvador has specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women, which are equipped with multidisciplinary support teams. The teams conduct investigations with a gender perspective and provide recommendations, which can relate to the restructuring of women's life plans, as well as satisfaction and non-repetition measures.

21. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women has led the roll-out of a strategy to mainstream the principles of equality and equity, the eradication of discrimination against women and women's right to a violence-free life in public administration, as well as implementing the strategy's accompanying institutional guidelines for mainstreaming equality, non-discrimination and a life free of violence for women in government institutions, of 2022. The strategy and guidelines are serving to promote the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of procedures, mechanisms and regulations at all levels of public administration, in a gradual and coordinated manner.

Access to justice and legal complaint mechanisms

22. As an exceptional measure to combat the violence generated by organized criminal groups, El Salvador proclaimed a state of emergency, in accordance with article 29, paragraph 2, of the Constitution, under the conditions established in article 30 thereof. The state of emergency has not limited people's enjoyment of their rights, especially women's enjoyment of their rights; but, on the contrary, it has had a positive impact on the full enjoyment of those rights through the establishment of safe environments and programmes that protect holistic well-being.

23. In addition, the rights which have been suspended in accordance with the constitutional rules governing states of emergency do not include freedom of movement (art. 5 of the Constitution) or freedom of expression and information (art. 6 of the Constitution), which have never been suspended and have remained in full effect. Furthermore, the right to peaceful assembly has been in effect since the adoption of Legislative Decree No. 476 of 17 August 2022.

24. In addition to all those actions, there are government policies that protect people's human rights, and specifically the human rights of women throughout their lives, with an emphasis on, *inter alia*, early childhood, comprehensive educational reform, an integrated healthcare system and a policy of joint responsibility for care. When combined with prevention, territorial control and social development strategies and public policy tools in other areas, these policies are transforming El Salvador.

25. Also, the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women has put in place a mechanism called “Comunitarias”, through which specialized services, such as legal, psychological and social counselling and healthcare for women, are provided in areas where previously there was no access due to high rates of crime. In addition, national bodies have joined forces to promote women’s economic independence.

26. In accordance with article 25 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, special support units for women have been established to provide comprehensive services in a hygienic, private setting, and high-quality and warm care, with priority given to crisis care. Through these units, women also received advice on their rights, measures relating to their protection and safety, emergency services and shelter, including the place where these services are provided, and the status of legal or administrative proceedings concerning their complaints.

27. The Specialized Prosecutor’s Office for Women of the Office of the Counsel General of the Republic, through the special support units for women, has a procedure for addressing discrimination against women, which includes parameters for identifying, by actively listening to victims’ stories, the type of discrimination suffered, its context, the level of risk, the most recent event suffered, and, depending on the case, requesting protection measures or providing psychological and social follow-up. In 2024, the Office of the Counsel General of the Republic provided women facing violence and discrimination with more than 60,000 services through the special support units for women, in application of specialized protection laws.

28. The Attorney General’s Office has established a specialized unit to assist women, children, adolescents and other vulnerable groups who are victims of criminal and sexual violence in El Salvador. The unit is seeking to harmonize procedures to improve victim care and optimize results in the courts.

29. Also, the multidisciplinary teams that support the specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women follow up on reparations measures for victims that involve restoring the life plans of women and their families.

30. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women, through its territorial strategy, operates help desks to disseminate guidelines on women’s human rights; support the protection of women; facilitate access to specialized services such as legal advice, comprehensive healthcare services and services in support of economic independence and empowerment; and also to identify cases that call for a comprehensive approach involving multidisciplinary teams.

31. The Office of the Counsel General of the Republic institutionalized a set of instructions for facilitating self-help groups for the use of civil servants who support vulnerable women, thus standardizing care procedures at the national level.

32. The School for Prosecutors of the Attorney General’s Office has a curriculum on violence against women and femidal violence. It offers initial, continuing and specialized training programmes to teach, or refresh the knowledge of, personnel who respond to, investigate and prosecute cases involving harm to women and other vulnerable persons.

33. The Criminal Division of the Supreme Court carries out specialized coordination of cases involving vulnerable groups and hate crimes, and of relevant case law on the protection of women’s human rights. It monitors settlements and the enforcement of judgments in key jurisdictions in order to identify the use of an approach based on human rights and the right to equality.

34. Reforms were made to harmonize national laws with a view to strengthening protection from violence against women, such as femicide and political violence, and to set up specialized programmes. An important milestone was the approval of the

Protocol for the investigation and criminal prosecution of violent deaths of women and cases of femicide or coerced or assisted suicide of women victims of violence, and the approval and institutionalization of the Protocol for cases of femicide of the Office of the Human Rights Advocate.

35. With the reform of article 63 of the Constitution, the Government has formally recognized the existence of Indigenous Peoples in the country, which has facilitated the development of regulations, plans and public policies for the protection of their rights, including full access to justice. In a complementary manner, articles 2 and 5 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act also mandate the protection of women's rights without any distinction, including on grounds of ethnic origin.

36. The national policy for Indigenous Peoples sets forth a strategic framework designed to protect the rights of, and support the inclusion and development of, the country's Indigenous communities. One of the primary focus areas of the policy is intercultural measures to assist women from Indigenous communities who are victims of violence.

37. In addition, El Salvador has 12 municipal ordinances on Indigenous rights, for the municipalities of Nahuizalco, Izalco, Panchimalco, Cuisnahuat, Conchagua, Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Cacaopera, Yucuaiquín, San Antonio del Monte, San Juan Nonualco, Chalchuapa and Tacuba, aimed at upholding Indigenous communities' rights by protecting the exercise of civil and political rights.

38. In terms of inclusion, El Salvador is working to strengthen the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Special Act through a reform process aimed at modernizing the application of the Act and ensuring the efficient implementation of the national system for the inclusion and protection of persons with disabilities. It is also reinforcing access to justice, as a fundamental right that must be protected through the provision of reasonable accommodations and an approach that is gender-sensitive and inclusive of persons with disabilities.

39. In addition, with respect to the rights of older persons, the Protection of the Rights of Older Persons Special Act and the establishment of the National Council on Comprehensive Care for Older Persons were approved. The National Council protects the welfare of older persons in areas including health, education, social security and access to public services, and acts as an intermediary to facilitate their access to justice.

National machinery for the advancement of women

40. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women, as the lead institution, develops public policies to protect the rights of women throughout their lives, including by fostering their economic empowerment and social, political, cultural and technological participation in the public and private arenas.

41. It also provides specialized advice to public institutions on mainstreaming the principles of equality, non-discrimination and a life free from violence for women in all policies, regulations, procedures and actions developed in their respective areas of responsibility. In addition, local government institutions are provided with support for the development of municipal plans on equality and prevention of violence against women, and there is a national coordination and monitoring system for women's rights.

42. Women whose rights are violated receive specialized care, including counselling and psychological, legal and social support, and medical care and play activities are

provided for their daughters and sons, with the aim of ensuring high-quality and warm care. Women are thus empowered to exercise their rights, as they are provided with the tools necessary to move beyond their vulnerable situations.

43. El Salvador is noteworthy for its comprehensive approach to budgetary policies, with cross-cutting human rights, gender-sensitive and whole-of-life approaches shaping all institutional programmes and plans. During the period from 2019 to 2022, public institutions spent more than \$245,477,098 on various strategies to promote gender equality and eliminate violence against women, with 40.4 per cent more spent in 2022 than in 2019.

44. A special fund for women victims of violence was set up under the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, and it was established that the funds obtained from financial penalties would be allocated to projects that contribute to the restitution of women's rights (art. 35).

45. As a result of the implementation of the national gender statistics strategy, the document "Evaluation of gaps in data and capacities for better gender statistics, El Salvador 2020", which serves as the basis for the strategy, was prepared. In addition, a national survey on the use of time was conducted in 2022 and model guidelines for mainstreaming gender in the 2022 population and housing censuses were prepared.

46. In the context of the above and in accordance with the Government's strategic commitments, Legislative Decree No. 472 of 16 August 2022 was adopted, reforming the Act on the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women to expand the Institute's authority in accordance with the national regulations on equality. The Institute was given responsibility for the Women's City Programme (previously assigned to the Ministry of Local Development), which now includes specialized women's centres. The centres are based on a public management model and employ affirmative actions aimed at improving women's quality of life through initial care services and, in cases of violence, comprehensive healthcare, economic independence, childcare and territorial management services.

47. In addition, the Legislative Decree stipulates that the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women shall establish a women's care and protection network, to be comprised of non-profit organizations and foundations.

48. The Institute updated the National Equality Plan 2021–2025,³ which establishes, in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, the guidelines for government policy and the general strategy for promoting respect for women's human rights and eliminating discrimination. It also guides the measures taken by government institutions to surmount the gaps that limit the full exercise of those rights.

49. Likewise, the National Policy on Access to a Violence-Free Life for Women and its Action Plan 2021–2025 were updated to protect women's right to live with dignity and free from harm, throughout their entire life, through the establishment of a set of guidelines, objectives, strategies, working arrangements and public inter-institutional and intersectoral coordination mechanisms.

National human rights institution

50. With regard to pluralism and diversity, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate has an institutional policy on equality and non-discrimination for the period 2025–2029 (the fourth such policy since 2009). The policy is designed to guide institutional

³ National Equality Plan 2021–2025, available at:

<https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/instituto-salvadoreno-para-el-desarrollo-de-la-mujer/documents/otros-documentos-normativos>.

work to ensure respect for and uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination between women and men and to contribute to the consolidation of substantive equality, the elimination of violence against women and the promotion of full respect for the human rights of women and other vulnerable populations and groups.

Temporary special measures

51. El Salvador has made progress towards women's equality and empowerment, with a reduction in the gender inequality index from 0.342 to 0.319 at the national level in 2022, representing a decrease of 6.7 per cent. The index covers aspects related to health, education, and political and labour market participation, measured, respectively, using the maternal mortality rate and the adolescent fertility rate; the rate of completion of at least the ninth grade of basic education; and the number of seats held by women in the Legislative Assembly, through which inequalities between women and men are identified.

52. By means of Legislative Decree No. 553 of February 2020, the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act was amended to provide for the establishment of institutional gender units in public institutions. As a result, by 2021, 52 public institutions were implementing at least two instruments on equality and the elimination of discrimination.⁴

53. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women has an institutional strategy to promote women's independence and economic empowerment for the period 2022–2024, aimed at progressively eliminating inequalities and restoring economic rights. The strategy has a particular focus on women whose rights have been violated in order to create the material conditions needed to break the cycle of violence.

54. The Institute also supports strategies, tools and innovative marketing spaces, including through the MercaMujer initiative, which promotes marketing spaces free of violence and discrimination, in order to facilitate the diversification and expansion of the market for products and services offered by women entrepreneurs and businesswomen.

55. In addition, the mission of the National Commission on Micro-Enterprises and Small Businesses is to promote the creation, protection, development and strengthening of micro- and small businesses, to strengthen competitiveness in order to boost the job-creation capacity of such businesses. To that end, it has established a “women and business” diploma and a women's business acceleration scheme, through which participants receive personalized support that allows them to develop and validate their own business models, which they can adapt to meet the needs of the current market.

Gender stereotypes and harmful practices

56. As part of the Government's measures to promote equitable representation in the media, the Directorate of Public Entertainment, Radio and Television, attached to the Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Development, assesses, oversees and classifies free-to-air television, radio, cinema, advertising and public and private print

⁴ Reforms to the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act, available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/7F75BFD2-FB75-4CDB-9F42-3DAFAEE62DDD.pdf>.

media content. Between January 2022 and December 2024, it did not identify any content that might be damaging to the image or integrity of women.

57. These actions reflect the Government's commitment to building communication for equality, and to ensuring respect for the dignity of people in the media, in compliance with the Constitution (arts. 6, 32 and 35), the Equality, Equity and Elimination of Discrimination against Women Act, the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, the Growing Together Act and the Consumer Protection Act (art. 31 (a)–art. 43 (g)).

58. In addition, the National Civil Police has trained operational and administrative personnel in leadership and men's joint responsibility, with the aims of modifying behaviour, eliminating gender stereotypes, responding appropriately, preventing revictimization and reducing violence against women and girls.

59. The Education General Act establishes basic guidelines for education in the country and applies to education at every level. In this context, the Government enacted the Growing Together Act, which strengthens education and contains an emphasis on the importance of free and accessible education for all. In addition, the Growing Together Act promotes the integration of the arts and sport as essential components of students' education, such that everyone, regardless of their condition, can actively participate in education.

60. As part of this commitment, the Salvadoran Government guarantees free access to all levels of education in the national public system. It is also implementing a set of comprehensive educational reforms, known as "My new school", with a view to promoting primary education on the basis of six pillars: improved infrastructure, early childhood, teacher training, refreshed curricula, technology, and health and nutrition; ensuring equal opportunities for girls is at the heart of the reforms.

61. The secondary education completion rate, particularly for women, has increased significantly as a result of a flexible education programme. In addition, teachers have been trained in equal educational opportunities and the prevention of sexual violence, with a total of 7,971 teachers (5,256 women and 2,715 men) trained between 2022 and 2024.

62. Measures adopted to address cyberviolence include the criminalization of violence against women and girls in digital environments. In September 2021, the Legislative Assembly, by means of Legislative Decree No. 149,⁵ amended articles 50 and 51 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act to increase penalties and define the scope of the offences more broadly.

63. In the same vein, in December 2021, amendments were made to the Cybercrimes and Related Offences Special Act by means of Legislative Decree No. 236,⁶ which contains several articles aimed at protecting children, adolescents and persons with disabilities against crimes of a sexual nature, including harassment, committed using information and communication technologies. Severe penalties are established for anyone who commits an illegal act to the detriment of those groups.

⁵ Reforms to the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/5777FA91-1EE5-4439-BF31-F6EB422E31BC.pdf>.

⁶ Reforms to the Cybercrimes and Related Offences Special Act, available at: <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/sites/default/files/documents/decretos/6141982C-4614-4CF7-B658-D455A9A79616.pdf>.

Gender-based violence against women and girls

64. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women updated the National Policy on Access to a Violence-Free Life for Women and its Action Plan 2021–2025⁷ in compliance with the provisions of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act and the country's international commitments in the area of women's human rights, in particular under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará).

65. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women provides services to women at all stages of their lives whose rights have been violated, through mechanisms to expand services and bring them closer to women for comprehensive and specialized remote and in-person care. These mechanisms include the support hotline “126” and a virtual support platform called “126 Guidance without borders”, which gives vulnerable women access to legal, social and psychological counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

66. In addition, the Supreme Court has specialized courts for a life free of violence and discrimination for women. There are five specialized courts of investigation, distributed nationwide as follows: two in San Salvador, and one in each of Cojutepeque, Santa Ana and San Miguel; as well as three specialized trial courts located in San Salvador, Santa Ana and San Miguel. In addition, a specialized chamber with nationwide jurisdiction been established in San Salvador.

67. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has established mechanisms to prevent and respond to violations in educational settings. In compliance with the Growing Together Act, educational institutions are required to report risk situations and refer cases to the competent authorities. The Alert System for Violence in Education in El Salvador was set up as part of this strategy.

68. In addition, tools have been developed for teaching staff, whose response capacity has been bolstered with a school counselling programme. These initiatives, alongside the activation of the protocols of the national comprehensive protection system, have made it possible to restore girls' and adolescents' emotional well-being.

69. In February 2023, by Legislative Decree No. 664, the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act was reformed to eliminate the statute of limitations on the exercise of criminal action in cases of femicide and aggravated femicide.

70. The National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence, as the primary body of the comprehensive protection system, registers, accredits and supervises child and adolescent care programmes conducted by private entities. The implementation of such programmes is therefore monitored to ensure their compliance with standards related to human rights, continuous improvement and a focus on equality. To achieve this, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate and the judicial branch carry out verifications and monitoring of those entities.

71. In addition, there are institutional care centres for victims of rights violations, and social integration centres which are targeted at adolescents who have committed crimes; which are equipped with personnel specialized in psychology, social work

⁷ National Policy on Access to a Violence-Free Life for Women and its Action Plan 2021–2025, available at: <https://www.transparencia.gob.sv/institutions/instituto-salvadoreno-para-el-desarrollo-de-la-mujer/documents/otros-documentos-normativo>.

and law; and which provide immediate support and referral to other entities if necessary.

72. The Office of the Counsel General of the Republic has provided 61,069 women with legal, psychological and social assistance services, 1,141 women with legal representation and 2,276 women with support in judicial proceedings. Damages of \$155,452.00 and alimony of \$45,466.00 have been awarded.

73. Conduct that violates liberty and the security of person is punished under the Salvadoran legal framework. In this regard, a distinction is made between the disappearance of persons and the enforced disappearance of persons, which are covered in articles 148-A and 364 of the Code. In addition, El Salvador has taken steps to professionalize the approach to and investigation of cases of missing persons, taking into account, during investigations, technical and scientific aspects and aspects of the psychology of the victims and their family members. The Attorney General's Office also has an urgent action protocol and strategy to search for missing persons, an instrument that allows the competent authorities to take expeditious and immediate action in cases of disappearance and that is predicated on the efficiency and commitment of all public entities involved.

74. In compliance with articles 30 and 31 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Central Reserve Bank implement the National System of Data, Statistics and Information on Violence against Women in order to make decisions and design and carry out public policies based on respect for and the protection of women's human rights. In addition, the Government prepared seven annual reports from 2015 to 2022 and five semi-annual reports from 2018 to 2022⁸ in order to promote the continuous generation of statistical evidence, pursuant to Legislative Decree No. 468 of 9 August 2022. Similarly, the Statistics and Censuses Special Act was approved under Legislative Decree No. 904 of 8 December 2023 in order to comply with the Decree and strengthen the functions assigned to the Central Reserve Bank, as the entity responsible for the National Statistical System. In accordance with articles 13, 30 and 31 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act, the reports were standardized and aligned with the system of indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

75. Article 54 of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Special Act establishes the commitment of El Salvador to protecting all persons against the crime of trafficking and activities related to the handover, capture, transfer, receipt or harbouring of persons outside or within the country, as well as all forms of human exploitation. The article therefore contains a comprehensive definition of trafficking in persons in the country, combining provisions of the Combating Trafficking in Persons Special Act, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other related regulations.

76. The country continues to effectively implement relevant provisions in accordance with national needs. In that connection, El Salvador has ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, known as the Palermo Protocol, which establishes as aggravating circumstances, *inter alia*, the use of force, fraud or coercion.

77. Steps have been taken to provide training to and raise awareness of the Action Protocol for the Care of Victims of Trafficking in Persons among first-contact staff,

⁸ Report on violence against women, available at www.seguridad.gob.sv/dia/informe-de-hechos-de-violencia-contra-las-mujeres.

with the aim of enhancing the capacity of officials to successfully recognize the signs of human exploitation and abuse, particularly among women and girls, thus enabling a faster and more effective response to possible cases of trafficking.

78. In addition, protection and rehabilitation mechanisms have been implemented through the National Network for the Care of Victims of Trafficking in Persons, which provides officials with guidance on the process of referral to specialized services, ensuring immediate protection of and comprehensive support for victims, including medical, psychological, legal and social care.

79. The National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence manages the Regional Shelter for the Care of Trafficking Victims, a specialized centre that ensures the safety, well-being and recovery of girls and adolescents. The shelter operates under strict protection protocols and in coordination with child and adolescent protection boards and the Attorney General's Office to guarantee that protective measures are taken in accordance with high standards for rights protection.

80. Furthermore, the protection boards and the 119 hotline provide free and confidential support, allowing victims and complainants to communicate in complete confidence and without fear of reprisals, ensuring their protection and respect for their rights throughout the care process.

81. El Salvador has strengthened its capacities through international cooperation, facilitating training and technical assistance to eradicate trafficking in persons, specifically in women in migration contexts. At the national level, the child and adolescent protection boards of the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence have optimized their coordination with the Attorney General's Office and the National Civil Police, ensuring comprehensive protection measures and timely access to justice.

82. In the area of migration control, surveillance at borders, ports and airports has been strengthened, enabling more effective detection of foreign nationals travelling under irregular conditions and contributing to the prevention of trafficking linked to organized crime. Similarly, as part of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, coordinated measures have been taken in conjunction with the General Directorate for Migration and Foreign Nationals to enhance cross-border transit between El Salvador and neighbouring countries.

83. Moreover, El Salvador participated in Liberterra II, the largest operation of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) against trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, involving 116 countries. This operation resulted in the rescue of 3,222 possible victims, the identification of 17,793 migrants in an irregular situation and the detection of new trafficking patterns.

84. The College of the National Council of the Judiciary conducted workshops to strengthen the capacities of criminal court clerks and assistants in the prevention, detection and referral of cases of trafficking in persons, thus ensuring effective access to justice for victims. In addition, the Attorney General's Office, through its School for Prosecutors, provided training sessions to assistant prosecutors, coordinators and heads of office at the national level. Topics covered included practical aspects of trafficking in persons, referral mechanisms, victim support and a human rights- and gender-based approach.

85. The National Public Security Academy, in its curricula for initial training, promotions and specialization for police officers, included the topic of trafficking in persons in the courses related to State and law, applied law, human rights, police intervention and police doctrine, with training for both prospective and existing members of the National Civil Police.

Participation in political and public life

86. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women has developed a strategy on municipal mechanisms for citizen participation through the advisory committees for women's rights and woman defenders of women's rights, which aim to enable women to become full citizens by democratizing information, protecting their rights, and creating consultation mechanisms and proposals for the promotion of citizen participation, through coordination between the Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women and other bodies within the municipalities.

87. The Network of Salvadoran Women in Diplomacy is an initiative to empower and promote the participation of women in the foreign service, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to ensure equality and advance the empowerment, participation and positioning of women as role models and leaders within the Salvadoran diplomatic service.

88. El Salvador has also implemented a range of measures to investigate, prosecute and provide redress for acts of violence, harassment and intimidation against women participating in politics, including digital violence. As part of these efforts, the National Civil Police, through its teams focused on criminal investigation into violence against women, ensures due diligence in carrying out its investigations.

89. Article 10 of the Violence-Free Life for Women Special Comprehensive Act was amended by Legislative Decree No. 829 to incorporate paragraph (d), which defines and establishes institutional responsibilities to address situations that limit the participation of women in politics. In addition, the Protocol for prevention and support for women victims of political violence in El Salvador was implemented to guarantee the full exercise of their rights.

90. With regard to electoral matters, in 2024, the Supreme Electoral Court assisted politically active women in filing complaints and in the various stages of the electoral process. The temporary electoral bodies and the various divisions of the Supreme Electoral Court received training on issues related to equality, awareness-raising and inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons.

91. Under the Growing Together Act, childcare has been improved through the professionalization and standardization of the related criteria, and early childhood care centres have been established as the main form of infant and child care, which helps mothers to enter the labour market without limitations.

92. In addition, El Salvador has libraries for young children in different areas of the country, which promote early stimulation and reading in order to enhance the cognitive and social development of children and reinforce their learning in the education system. The libraries are open to the public for children up to 7 years of age.

93. In coordination with the Office of the First Lady of the Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has introduced 37 breastfeeding rooms in the Salvadoran diplomatic and consular network, which aim to provide a space where women can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk, ensuring a favourable working environment.

Education

94. As part of its efforts to provide comprehensive care services, El Salvador has implemented the national intersectoral strategy for the prevention of teenage pregnancies by conducting rights fairs, workshops involving children and

adolescents, informational days and talks where awareness is raised about sexual violence, protection rights, institutions and support pathways.

95. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology fosters civic values based on human rights, promotes life skills and guarantees equal educational opportunities for women and men, contributing to the comprehensive training of students.

96. Between 2022 and 2024, there was a gradual increase in the enrolment of both boys and girls in early education, resulting in an enrolment rate of 9.2 per cent for girls and 8.7 per cent for boys in 2024. In preschool education, the rates also increased steadily, to 65.1 per cent for girls and 62.2 per cent for boys. Enrolment in basic education also increased, reaching 85.0 per cent for boys and 86.4 per cent for girls in 2024.

97. In preschool education, the rates are also increasing steadily, having reached 65.1 per cent for girls compared with 62.2 per cent for boys in 2024. In addition, in basic education (first and second cycles), the rates are significantly higher because of increases among both sexes, with the rate for boys having reached 85.0 per cent and that for girls having reached 86.4 per cent in 2024.

98. In the third cycle of basic education, there is a similar upward trend, with rates having reached 70.5 per cent for girls and 65.8 per cent for boys in 2024. Lastly, the rates for secondary education are also gradually increasing, with those for girls (52.7 per cent) being higher than those for boys (45.5 per cent).

99. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has also implemented measures to reduce school dropout due to early pregnancy and the stigma attached to it. The Protocol for the retention in school of girls and adolescents who are pregnant or are already mothers is in place to reduce the school dropout rate among girls and adolescents who are pregnant or have become mothers, in order to ensure that they remain in educational institutions and successfully complete their studies.

100. In addition, the “Getting to zero” initiative developed by the United Nations Population Fund in coordination with municipalities and institutions in El Salvador is aimed at eliminating and drastically reducing pregnancies among girls and adolescents through a multisectoral and participatory approach, promoting their empowerment and contributing to the creation of a fairer and more equitable future.

101. El Salvador also has an action pathway for addressing sexual violence in educational communities, which is a practical and useful tool for addressing certain specific cases of sexual harassment, assault and rape.

102. Safe and protective learning spaces have been promoted in schools as part of monitoring the retention in school of victims of violence and protecting their physical and psychological integrity. As a result, more than 27,477 members of the educational community have received training in detection, support and protection, and in the prevention of rights violations.

103. With regard to data on the participation of women in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, the area with the highest enrolment among women in 2022 was technology, with 5,448 women students at the technical, undergraduate and graduate levels, followed by engineering, with 3,880. In 2023, the field of technology continued to be the most in demand, with 5,524. In 2022 and 2023, engineering and technology were the fields with the most women graduates, reflecting a growing interest among women in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, providing considerable career opportunities for women in non-traditional fields.

104. In addition, as part of its strategy to promote and guarantee the right to education of young people, El Salvador, through the Directorate for Integration, has awarded

more than 8,000 scholarships to students in rural and urban areas, facilitating their access to technical and university education.

105. To avoid stereotypes that reproduce inequalities between women and men in curricula, the principle of equality of opportunities was reviewed and mainstreamed into educational materials from 2022 to 2024. The principle was mainstreamed into a total of 219 materials.

Employment

106. In order to create opportunities for the population, the Young People General Act was amended to expand the age range for those considered young to cover 15 to 35 years. This change significantly broadens the scope of public policies, allowing more women to gain access to programmes and services aimed at youth.

107. In this regard, the Social Housing Fund has the Young Home Programme, which offers young women and men the opportunity to receive financing of up to 100 per cent of the cost of new or used homes priced at up to \$150,000.

108. In addition, to guarantee access to decent employment, El Salvador is implementing a programme to integrate persons with disabilities, including women, into the labour market, facilitating job placement and managing certification through institutions such as the Salvadoran Institute for Comprehensive Rehabilitation.

109. The “Employment tour” initiative has also provided an immediate response for women in search of decent employment in various national sectors such as the rural sector, women with disabilities, Indigenous women and women of African descent.

110. In addition, the Work Migration Programme is aimed at assisting people and providing them with access to jobs abroad that match their abilities, which allow for growth and the full development of decent and productive work in specific sectors such as trade, agriculture and business services, guaranteeing social benefits as part of decent work, which encompasses regular, orderly, circular and safe migration.

111. Through the National Commission on Micro-Enterprises and Small Businesses, a special line of credit for the development of women’s entrepreneurship was established to finance women entrepreneurs who are natural or legal persons and are leaders of micro- and small enterprises that operate in various productive sectors, if they meet any of the following conditions:

- The company is legally represented by a woman.
- Women make up more than 50 per cent of the shareholders.
- More than 50 per cent of the company’s employees are women who are registered in the payroll of the Salvadoran Social Security Institute.

112. In 2024, loans totalling \$305,430.00 were granted to women-led micro- and small enterprises, generating 90 jobs, of which 59 per cent are held by women. A total of 94 per cent of the loans granted have been backed by the Guarantee Programme for Micro- and Small Enterprises.

113. As part of the fundamental guarantees relating to the workplace, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has implemented a plan for monitoring women’s labour rights, which is aimed at eradicating discrimination against women in the field of employment and verifying compliance with the special regulations set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention of Belém do Pará. In addition, a specialized labour inspection unit has been created for reporting labour violations and abuses.

114. In addition, the plan for monitoring women's right to breastfeed promotes, protects and maintains the right of all women to breastfeed by providing them with breastfeeding breaks during the workday and adapting the physical space to ensure appropriate conditions in accordance with the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), of the International Labour Organization.

115. In order to provide women with direct access to their labour rights related to maternity leave, paid sick leave and disability and old-age pension benefits, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has made available reporting systems that encompass the informal economy. There is also the SOS Women Workers platform for reporting violations of women's labour rights under the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization.

116. El Salvador recognizes that care is a fundamental right of all people and an essential element of the social protection system. In 2022, the National Policy on Joint Responsibility for Care 2022–2030 was approved with the aim of developing venues and expanding services to meet fundamental care needs comprehensively, which involves the creation of safe, hygienic and high-quality spaces to care for the most vulnerable.

117. El Salvador has also committed itself to implementing related regulations such as the Caring Births for the Promotion of Decent Childbirth and Loving and Sensitive Care for Newborn Children Act, which is aimed at protecting the rights of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period, as well as the rights of newborns, through the establishment of an integrated national health system, and the "Growing Together" National Policy to Support Early Childhood Development 2020–2030, which is a comprehensive and intersectoral national tool requiring universal, differentiated, specialized and high-quality services.

118. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has taken a series of steps to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). In that connection, the Ministry set up a forum for discussion between the ministries involved in the application of the Convention and, in accordance with the law, submitted the Convention to the Legislative Assembly so that it could consider ratifying it.

Health

119. Under its Constitution, El Salvador recognizes and guarantees the right to life from the moment of conception. In conformity with this constitutional principle, the Growing Together Act stresses the importance of the family as the core of society and provides for shared responsibility between the family, society and the State.

120. To ensure comprehensive healthcare, the Integrated National Health System is implemented with a people- and life course-centred approach, providing services free of charge in all facilities of the Ministry of Health, according to the needs of each woman and man. Various protocols and guidelines, including those indicated below, have been developed to guarantee comprehensive healthcare for women specifically:

- Protocol for approaching care in the conception, prenatal and post-partum stages
- Strengthening of the technical competencies of health personnel
- Technical guidelines for referral, counter-referral and consultation
- Technical guidelines for professional secrecy in the Integrated National Health System
- Provision of modern contraceptive methods for women and men in all health facilities

- Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer

121. The Caring Births Act and its regulations guarantee comprehensive and high-quality care for women during the preconception, pregnancy and post-partum stages, and for newborns. Pursuant to that Act, 1,796 professionals have received training through the Higher Council on Public Health. As a result of the Act's implementation, by 2023 the ratio of women receiving all types of relevant care had increased to 92.3 per cent, the ratio of women receiving high reproductive risk-related care had increased by 84.9 per cent and maternal mortality had decreased by more than 50 per cent.

122. The Salvadoran Institute for the Advancement of Women has a comprehensive health module aimed at improving the quality of health and life of women, particularly by preventing breast and cervical cancer, decreasing maternal mortality and reducing teenage pregnancies.

Economic empowerment of women

123. The public security strategy includes the recovery of territory by the State and the appropriate use of assets, such as goods and properties misappropriated by criminal organizations. In this context, the housing system has recovered approximately 9,000 homes with an investment of \$115 million, which represents an asset for Salvadoran families.

124. From 2022 to 2024, the housing system invested approximately \$617,132,000.00 in loans, housing construction, deeds and resettlement, which benefited more than 37,126 Salvadoran families, with women constituting 55 per cent of the beneficiaries.

125. In addition, the Social Housing Fund contributes to the economic empowerment of women through the Casa Mujer Programme, which is aimed at women heads of household; single mothers; widows; divorced women; women in the process of obtaining a divorce, subject to verification; and women who are in vulnerable situations and receiving support. Under this programme, \$48,180,000.00 have been spent for the benefit of women.

126. The National Development Bank of El Salvador contributes to the economic empowerment of women through inclusive lines of credit and guarantees aimed at facilitating their access to financing.

127. During his second term, President Bukele launched an economic plan, one of whose phases, entitled “Food”, requires the implementation of agricultural markets (*agromercados*) and supply stations, which directly benefit Salvadoran women in the 14 departments, providing job opportunities for women entrepreneurs, as well as economic relief by promoting purchasing and consumption at low prices.

Rural women

128. In relation to general recommendation No. 34 (2016), concerning women living in rural areas, El Salvador has the Rural Progress Programme, under which more than \$17 million has been invested in rural areas to sustainably increase the incomes of poor and vulnerable rural families. The beneficiaries are organizations in which at least 40 per cent of the participants are women and in which at least 20 per cent of the participants are young people, and Indigenous people's organizations. The Programme also includes young people (50 per cent of whom are women), who

receive technical training for purposes of employment of Indigenous women and young people.

129. The Salvadoran Agrarian Reform Institute issued 2,560 allocations to Salvadoran families; 55.66 per cent of the beneficiaries were rural women and their families.

130. To guarantee the human right to water, El Salvador is implementing the Water Resources General Act and has established the Salvadoran Water Authority, which takes an equality-based approach to all its initiatives, plans and institutional programmes, ensuring the active and responsible participation of women in water resource management. Currently, 70 per cent of the people involved in these activities are women, who play a crucial role in water supply, management and protection.

131. In addition, to help provide access to means of economic empowerment for rural women, various categories of home gardens have been established, such as poultry, fish and livestock, which have contributed to ensuring food security for women and their families.

Indigenous women

132. A section on ethnic groups was incorporated into the 2024 population and housing census in order to include Indigenous Peoples. The results of the census showed that 1.2 per cent of the population identifies as Indigenous. Indigenous Peoples contribute significantly to the cultural, historical and social richness of the country.

133. In 2022, the Ministry of Health implemented a strategy to increase access to health services by organizing 33 comprehensive care days targeted at older persons, Indigenous Peoples (Nahua-pipil, Lenca and Kakawira) and people of African descent, which benefited more than 9,500 people.

134. In 2023, in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organization, El Salvador implemented guidance to prevent and control tuberculosis among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and held a comprehensive healthcare day for older persons.

Women with disabilities

135. In order to include girls and women with disabilities in relevant policies and strategies, the National Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities coordinates across institutions in order to promote the learning of Salvadoran Sign Language.

136. In addition, El Salvador is implementing the Links to Education Programme, which reduces the digital divide by providing computers designed for visually impaired students, with a total investment of \$3.2 million in items such as Braille keyboards and document-scanning cameras. Moreover, the National Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities provided laptops with ZoomText and Dragon (voice recognition) software for students with limited vision from preschool to high school, as well as tablets with applications such as Cboard, TEAyudo and MITA.

137. There are territorial support systems for educational inclusion, which ensure the provision of support and assistance to students in guidance and resource centres, as well as the development of a comprehensive educational assistance plan to support the learning process.

138. Medical health days have been developed for persons with disabilities, and a guide on the prevention of sexual violence for mothers, fathers and caregivers of

persons with intellectual disabilities has been prepared to assist caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities.

139. In addition, through the Solidarity Fund for Micro-Entrepreneur Families, a line of credit has been created exclusively for persons with disabilities in order to generate opportunities and support economic recovery.

Women human rights defenders

140. El Salvador rejects any action that constitutes an assault or attack on the free exercise of freedom of expression. El Salvador has institutions that are duly set up to guarantee the free exercise of the defence of human rights, including by journalists and reporters. Relevant crimes are therefore prosecuted rigorously by the Attorney General's Office.

141. Currently in El Salvador, there are totally independent online and printed newspapers and other media in circulation, some of which are critical of the Government, as part of the social oversight required in a democratic State that is governed by the rule of law and has a very close relationship with freedom of thought and expression.

Women in detention

142. There is a specialized prison system with two penitentiaries for women prisoners, one of which is exclusively for pregnant women and women who have children under 5 years of age with them, ensuring an affective bond in infancy and childhood, in accordance with article 249 of the general regulations of the Penitentiary Act.

143. The prisons provide comprehensive care such as gynaecological, dental, geriatric, nutritional, psychological and psychiatric services, as well as pharmacies with basic supplies for women. In addition, the prisons have breastfeeding rooms and a comprehensive health service for children.

Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex women

144. In El Salvador, equality and non-discrimination are essential principles recognized in the Constitution, which establishes that “all persons are equal before the law” and prohibits restrictions on the exercise and enjoyment of rights for any reason, thereby guaranteeing that there are no legal, administrative or other barriers limiting the active participation of the population.

145. El Salvador is firmly committed to the family as the basic unit that determines the values and principles of society, as it is considered essential for holistic development because it is the first teaching- and support-focused milieu in which the principles of respect, solidarity and coexistence are imparted, in order to promote a safe and stable environment for all families, regardless of their characteristics, with the aim of strengthening the social fabric and ensuring a future filled with opportunities for all.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

146. El Salvador updated its nationally determined contribution to prioritize efforts in the sectors of energy, agriculture, forestry, other land uses, infrastructure, health, transportation, biodiversity and ecosystems, cities, water resources and hydroelectric generation, in order to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and move towards a low-carbon economy.

147. In addition, to create a resilient and ecologically balanced country, El Salvador has a national environmental policy centred on managing water resources, transitioning to a low-carbon economy, integrating biodiversity into economic and social development and shifting the focus of environmental management towards protection.

148. El Salvador recognizes the need to promote economic development through environmentally friendly projects. The Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources has therefore launched the National Programme of Environmental Incentives and Disincentives, which includes incentives for the restoration of ecosystems and agroecosystems, with an emphasis on sectors such as coffee, basic grains, livestock and forestry, and also promotes environmental progress in the tourism sector.

Marriage and family relations

149. The Salvadoran State has made significant progress through legislative reforms and the adoption of new regulations to protect the rights of children and adolescents. The Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure have been amended to increase the penalties for rape and incorporate new aggravating factors in cases where the victim is an elderly woman or a child.

150. In addition, article 26 of the Growing Together Act indicates that the State is responsible for designing and implementing public policies and specific programmes focused on prevention and care for pregnant girls and adolescents. The article also requires that institutional services be adapted to protect their rights.

151. Guidelines and protocols have been implemented in the health and education sectors to identify cases of early unions of children and adolescents and to refer them to the protection system, especially to the protection boards and the Attorney General's Office.

152. El Salvador has taken steps to comprehensively support victims of early unions, not only by allocating resources but also by providing specialized services, such as legal advice, psychosocial care and medical care.

153. With regard to the measures adopted to protect de facto unions between adults, articles 2 and 118 of the Family Code establish that de facto unions are recognized and that the members of such unions shall fully enjoy their rights free of any discrimination.