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Consideration of reports of States parties

Replies of Rwanda to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports*

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Introduction

1. The Government of Rwanda is pleased to present to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the responses and observations on the list of issues drawn by the Committee on Rwanda's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
2. Rwanda ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 24 January 1991, the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 23 April 2002, and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 14 March 2002.
3. The Government of Rwanda continues to ensure that all Rwandans enjoy the fundamental human rights secured by the Constitution and other national and applicable international human rights laws, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Rwanda is a State party since 1991.

Part I

Responses to the list of issues

Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues

4. Law No. 71/2018 relating to the protection of the child determines specific crimes against children and their penalties and determines special rights of the child, subject to other rights provided for him/her by other laws and also provides modalities for the protection of the child and offences and penalties.
5. The law no. 68/2018 of 30/8/2018 determining offences and penalties in general provides for other offences and penalties against the child that are not provided for in the law relating to the protection of the child.
6. Article 6 of the law 54/2011 on the protection of the child relating to 'the best interest of the child' of was not included in the law 71/2018, to avoid duplication. The principle is provided in article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Rwanda is a State party. The Convention has the binding force in accordance with Article 168 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 as revised in 2015 (The Constitution).
7. Regarding consultation with Civil Society Organizations in the revision of laws concerning children, including Law no 71/2018 and law no 68/2018, Rwanda Law Reform commission has received directly or through the Ministry of Justice, different ideas from civil society organizations.

Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues

8. In 2018, NCC with the financial and technical support of UNICEF conducted the evaluation of the first ICRP Strategic plan. The evaluation was consultative in nature. Various key stakeholders from both the public sector and non-government organizations as well as individuals took an active role in the process.
9. The evaluation had two complementary objectives: (1) assessing the progress made since the adoption of the 2011–2016 Strategic Plan against stated outputs, outcomes, objectives and planned actions, and (2) informing a new strategic Plan (2019–2024) for further realisation of children's rights. A new five-year ICRP Strategic plan (2019–2024) was approved in June 2019.
10. Overall, the evaluation showed that significant progress has been registered in the seven key areas of the child rights. However, the situation analysis points to persistent gaps and challenges that require revised and improved strategies and approaches to achieve the above objectives.

Identity and Nationality

11. According to the Demographic Health Survey 2014/2015 birth registration stood at 56% in 2015. However, birth registration has satisfactorily increased since the implementation of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system in 2016. The Evaluation of the ICRP Strategic Plan 2011–2016 conducted in 2018 shows that the birth registration stands at 88.7% while the Civil Registration Officers estimate that by birth registration is around 90%.

12. Moreover, once a birth is registered, a certificate can now be obtained online from Irembo services.¹

Family and Alternative care

13. Alternative care has particularly attracted the attention of NCC. Through the Tubarerere Mu Muryango (TMM) Programme, 3,151 children out of a targeted 3,323 (about 95% of the target) have been placed in families from institutions during the period of the ICRP Strategic Plan (2011–2016) and beyond. The programme catalysed and also benefited from a skilled workforce of 68 social workers and psychologists in addition to a cadre of 29,674 Inshuti z’Umuryango (Child and Family Protection volunteers) identified in 2015, who together, make up a significant portion of the child protection system in Rwanda today.

Child survival, health and living standards

14. With regard to health, survival and standards of living, significant progress has been achieved. Existing reports show that 99% of children under five are immunised and that 84% of households are covered with a health insurance scheme, the Mutuelle de Santé (MUSA). However, the nutritional status of children, particularly those from poor settings is still a serious issue. Efforts to address malnutrition are under way, including the introduction of ECD centres coupled with perennial community sensitization on child nutrition. NECDP is responsible for reducing malnutrition and stunting of children, promoting optimal child development, increasing children’s preparedness to primary education, enhancing positive parenting and community participation in child protection, eliminating physical, moral, and psychological abuse of young children, and enhancing equal access to early childhood development services by children with special needs.

15. Access to safe water and sanitation services and safe environment: EDPRS II targeted 100% access to clean water and safe latrines. Available data show progressive level of water access as defined in terms of proximity to improved water source (improved 500m in rural and 200m in urban area). This stands at 47% for rural and 61% urban respectively.

16. Malnutrition: According to CFSVA² the rates of chronic malnutrition in Rwanda have fallen significantly in the last recent years but still remain stubbornly high, especially in rural areas where child malnutrition is at 40% compared to 27% in urban areas. The levels of stunting among children under 5 dropped to 36.7% in 2015, down from 43% at the time of the last analysis in 2012.

Education

17. Education has experienced good achievements, particularly at the primary level. Net enrolment has drastically increased as a result of sustained reforms and pro-poor policies reaching 97.3 % for boys and 98% for girls.

18. With regard to the nursery education, the Net Enrolment Rate level stood at 20.6% in 2017, which indicates that access continues to be an issue. These rates are still very low compared to the SDG target of 100% by 2030.

¹ The Kinyarwanda word Irembo is synonymous with Access, Service and Openness. Irembo is the one-stop portal for e-government services. (<https://irembo.gov.rw/rolportal/en/home>).

² MINAGRI, 2015; Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA).

19. Nursery, primary and secondary schools with improved drinking water are 19%, 45.5% and 58.5% respectively, while 24%, 64.8% and 70.6% have hand washing facilities.

20. Only 11.9% and 12% of nursery and primary schools respectively participate in school feeding system and 9.9% and 41% have nutrition garden.

21. Rates of repetition of year of school and drop out continue to be a big challenge. Repetition at the primary level stood at 16.4% in 2016 and dropout rates at 5.6% the same year.

Child protection

22. In relation to child protection, an impressive legal, policy and institutional framework has been established. Child protection systems including community structures to improve protection of children from abuse and other forms of exploitation are increasingly becoming effective.

23. Violence against children persists despite numerous measures to curb it. From the VACYS report, 37% and 60% of females & males experienced physical violence before the age of 18; 12% of females and 17% of males experienced emotional violence while 24% and 10% of females and males respectively experienced sexual violence before the age of 18.

Justice

24. The Government and its partners have established a child-friendly legal service at district level across the country, known as Maison d'Accès à la Justice (MAJ). Each MAJ office employs three legal service providers, of which one is specialized in child protection and gender-based violence. Children in conflict with the law receive free of charge legal assistance through Rwanda Bar Association (RBA) that avails pro bono lawyers to assist the children. Since 2012 an annual Legal Aid Week (LAW) is organized to deal with outstanding caseload for children while in court houses, special chambers in every intermediate court for children exist to ensure legal procedures are occurring in a child-friendly manner and a Justice for Children Policy and accompanying Strategic Plan was adopted by the government in 2015.

Participation

25. Rwanda is committed to promote children's participation in decision-making in the government actions, community and family.

26. Child participation in government actions: from lower level, platforms from which children can share their ideas and views were established. At high level, an annual summit is organized in order to have inclusive opinions of all children across the country.

27. Child participation in family: sensitization campaigns promoting positive parenting have been organized, where parents are asked to ensure a positive upbringing of their children and meet their responsibilities.

28. Child participation in Community: at community level, the Government of Rwanda had committed through the ICRP-SP 2011–2016 to establish children centres in each district, equipped with library, playground and spaces for holding meetings, however, the target was not met.

Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

29. In relation to its mandate, the NCC has been working to coordinate and oversee national policies and programmes on the rights of the child.

30. In 2017, NCC established a coordination mechanism for child protection systems which clarifies key components and institutions involved. The mechanism describes also how these actors and components will communicate and coordinate, both horizontally and vertically. The structure is designed to align the various parts of the system together into a coherent whole.

31. NCC monitors compliance with child rights and commitments by all relevant ministries. It supports ministries with ideas, information and resource mobilization. It is responsible for mainstreaming child rights concerns in the budget and planning process.

32. In order to coordinate and monitor progress made, the Advisory Council comprised of Permanent Secretaries from all ministries involved in the implementation of NCC Strategic Plan as well as other relevant ministries meet regularly to assess the activities of NCC.

33. NCC also coordinates a task force on teenage pregnancy comprised of institutions dealing with teenage pregnancy (MIGEPROF, MINIJUST, MOH, RIB, RNP, and NPPA) which meets on a quarterly basis to discuss activities, issues related to teenage pregnancy and approaches to be used.

34. Lastly, NCC has put in place a child protection sub-cluster that gathers all actors in child protection (GoR, Civil society and National and International Development partners) to assess the progress of NCC activities, child protection issues, give updates and share recommendations on child protection issues. It serves as a coordination meeting where NCC ensures coordination and implementation of activities on child protection system.

35. The mechanisms include the Gender and Family Cluster, a coordination mechanism that aims at supporting the Government of Rwanda (GoR) in promoting gender equality and family protection through utilizing partners' synergies to improve gender and family interventions and avoiding duplication. The Cluster has four (4) sub-clusters two (2) of which are particularly designed for child rights (i.e. the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sub-cluster chaired by the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) and the child protection sub-cluster chaired by the National Commission for Children (NCC).

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

36. NCHR is in charge of determining the organizational structure and recruiting employees of the Child Rights Observatory (CRO). As of January 2018, the Child Rights Observatory was composed of 3,122 volunteers countrywide.

37. The volunteers submit monthly reports to the NCHR and the latter organizes periodic meetings at national level to discuss the issues raised by them. The CRO helps the NCHR to receive and handle cases of child rights violations: 283 child rights related cases were reported in 2013–2014, 587 cases in 2014–2015, 440 cases in 2015–2016 and 592 cases in 2016–2017. This makes a total of 1902 cases of child rights violations that have been handled between July 2013 and June 2017.

38. The budget allocated to the NCHR increased from Frw 1,155,439,445 in fiscal year 2014/2015 to Frw 1,217,030,660 in the year 2016/2017 representing 9.5% increase.

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

39. The Constitution of Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, states that the right to freedom of association is guaranteed and does not require prior authorization. Freedom of press, of expression and of access to information are also recognized and guaranteed by the State.

40. The Constitution provides that the promotion of human rights is a responsibility of the State. This responsibility is particularly exercised by the National Commission for Human Rights. This Commission is independent.

41. The State takes any allegation seriously and acts on it accordingly. Any reported case of threats and intimidation is thoroughly investigated.

Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

42. Various initiatives and advocacy measures to combat stigma and discrimination faced by children with disabilities and other vulnerable children have been undertaken and addressed by the GoR. Awareness campaigns to the population are organised at all levels targeting the community.

43. Mobilization campaigns are also conducted through TV & Radio programs to raise awareness and contribute to the implementation of relevant policies and strategic plans to eliminate discrimination and stigma faced by vulnerable children.

44. NCC regularly conducts awareness campaigns to eliminate discrimination and stigma faced by vulnerable children through messages delivered in celebration of different international days of children such as the International Day of the Girl Child, Day of the African Child, etc.

Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

45. Children's forum committees were established from Village to District level and are now represented by 104,622 children across the country. These forum committees meet regularly during school holidays, twice a year. They serve as a platform to enable children to express their views and opinions which are then incorporated into government plans of action and also considered during the development of various policies and programs.

46. The Government of Rwanda continues to strengthen the capacity of the executive and the judiciary on child rights and child protection with the special focus on the principle of the "Best interest of the child" to ensure that this principle is taken into account during judicial and executive decision-making processes in all matters affecting children.

47. Ongoing trainings are conducted countrywide with the view to reach a wide range of law practitioners. For example, the National Commission for Children trained 12 Prosecutors, 12 Investigators and 12 Lawyers on Justice for children in February 2019. These trainings gathered prosecutors, investigators and lawyers from Nyarugenge, Gasabo, Nyagatare, Ngoma, Muhanga, Huye, Nyamagabe, Rusizi, Karongi, Rubavu, Gicumbi and Musanze operating at intermediate level in all 4 provinces and in the city of Kigali.

48. In partnership with the Supreme Court, USAID/Land Project and Haguruka NGO, conducted a training of 22 primary court judges from the Eastern Province to strengthen their capacity in protecting and promoting children's rights in cases related to divorce, inheritance, succession and land.

49. The Institute of Legal Practice and Development (ILPD) in partnership with NCC and UNICEF, is developing a six months' specialization course on Justice for children which justice for children practitioners will be exposed to.

50. Also, in 2018, local leaders from district to village levels in all districts received intensive training on child protection. The program will continue for the remaining districts.

51. Lastly, besides being witnesses before courts of law, children over 12 years of age are also allowed to give their views in civil matters affecting them. Law N°71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child stipulates that the child has the right to attend any proceedings aimed at separating him/her from his/her family or his/her guardian and give his/her opinion. The hearing of the child may be done directly or indirectly through a psychologist, a psychosocial assistant or any adult of his/her choice.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

52. The Government of Rwanda does not endorse corporal punishment as an approach to developing values and respect in students. Instead, positive discipline is promoted, and the use of corporal punishment is unlawful not only in schools but also in families and other community settings.

53. Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 Governing Persons and Family repealed provisions of the Civil Code Book I which gave parents the right to correct their children through physical punishment. Positive discipline is promoted, and the use of corporal punishment is unlawful in schools and the penal system.

54. Also, law n°71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child explicitly prohibits corporal punishment. Article 28 of the law criminalizes and punishes any person who harasses a child or imposes severe or degrading punishments including corporal sanctions on him/her. Upon conviction, he/she is liable to a term of imprisonment of no less than 2 years and a fine of no less than two hundred thousand Rwandese francs.

55. The Government, through the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), has abolished caning and other corporal punishment in schools. With a view to enforcing this decision, MINEDUC adopted, in 2017, Ministerial Instructions NO. 001 of 10/05/2017 establishing guidelines for setting up general or TVET, Nursery, Primary or Secondary Scholl's internal rules. Article 26 of the Instructions explicitly and strictly prohibits corporal punishment, any kind of inhuman and degrading treatment, ill treatment, abuse and humiliation.

56. Besides policy and legal frameworks, public education, awareness and community mobilization initiatives have been widely undertaken around the issue of physical and psychological effect of corporal punishment by the Government and different stakeholders including NGOs. Campaigns and mobilization efforts are planned to continue creating awareness and tackling social norms and practices that support corporal punishment in all settings.

57. Trainings on positive parenting skills were conducted by the National Commission for Children to 14,837 local leaders and 29,674 Inshuti Z' Umuryango (friends of Families) countrywide in March 2018.

58. Trainings have also been conducted to 2,528 caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 years in November to December 2018 on Integrated Early Childhood Development services, including positive parenting.

59. Across the country, there are 120 certified Trainers of Trainers (ToT) who have been trained on Integrated Early Childhood Development services including positive discipline.

60. MIGEPROF has also put in place a booklet called "Noza Imibanire" which educates parents on prevention of family conflict.

61. With regards to measures in place to eliminate child abuse within refugee camps, the Ministry of Management of Emergency in partnership with different stakeholders is implementing a number of projects aiming at fighting sexual exploitation of refugee children and early pregnancies in refugee camps:

- With the partnership of Save the Children, Legal Aid Forum, American Refugee Committee; children in refugee camps are protected against SGBV by ensuring that children can confidentially report incidents and have timely and non-discriminatory access to services and support, including medical, psychosocial, legal and material assistance, as well as safe spaces where needed.
- There is a project on partnership agreement signed with Legal Aid Forum, Save the Children, American refugee Committee on Sexual Gender Based Violence prevention in refugee camps.
- There is also a project partnership agreement signed with Plan International Rwanda and Save the Children International for child protection in refugee camps.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

62. The National Action Plan on Violence against Children was incorporated into the ICRP Strategic plan (2019–2024).

Reply to paragraph 10 (a) of the list of issues

63. Below is a summary from the Findings of the Violence against Children and Youth Survey (2015–2016) conducted by the Ministry of Health in 2017.³

Any form of violence

64. Half of the women aged 18–24 who were interviewed about violence during childhood had experienced some form of violence before the age of 18, compared to 65% of males.

³ For more details on the findings: [https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media/181/file/Violence%20against%20Children%20and%20Youth%20Survey%20\(2015-16\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media/181/file/Violence%20against%20Children%20and%20Youth%20Survey%20(2015-16).pdf).

65. Of those aged 13–17, 36% of girls and 48% of boys had experienced some form of violence in the past year. There are gender disparities in this age group too: overall the most common forms of violence were physical violence against boys, followed by physical violence against girls. Then, in decreasing order of prevalence, came sexual violence against girls, emotional violence against boys, emotional violence against girls and sexual violence against boys.

Physical violence

66. Around four out of 10 young women and six out of 10 young men had been exposed to physical violence as children. Forty-two (42%) per cent of boys aged 13–17 and 26% of girls in the same age group had experienced physical violence in the past year.

67. Boys experience physical violence at a younger age than girls. Boys and young men most commonly reported that their first incident of physical violence happened when they were aged 6–11. For girls and young women, physical violence in childhood more commonly started when they were aged 12 or over.

Sexual violence

68. Girls are more likely to experience sexual violence than boys, with two out of every 10 young women having been exposed to sexual violence before the age of 18, compared to one in 10 young men. Twelve per cent of girls aged 13–17 and 5% of boys in the same age group reported exposure to sexual violence in the past month.

Emotional violence

69. Emotional violence is the second most common form of violence towards boys in Rwanda (after physical violence), and is the least common form of violence suffered by girls.

70. 8% of girls and 13% of boys said they had experienced emotional violence in the past year.

Reply to paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues

71. The impact of the campaign on sexual violence against children will be measured through the next DHS which will be published in 2020.

Reply to paragraph 10 (c) of the list of issues

72. Since 1994, the GoR and government-affiliated national and international organisations have focused on supporting genocide survivors to recover from trauma; many programs were introduced such as;

73. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) program, where The Genocide Survivors Support and Assistance Fund (FARG), Association des Etudiants et Éléves Rescapés du Genocide (AERG), and AVEGA-Agahozo and the government support genocide parents' survivors.

74. The MHPSS support thoroughly covers survivors' livelihoods, providing psychological counselling, medical services, financial support for education, income-generating activities, housing and legal services. This assistance has supported victims to survive and recover from the genocide against Tutsi trauma.

75. The most common social groups that were reported to be therapeutic were church-based groups, mutual-saving groups, and kinship and neighborhood groups. Church-based and mutual-saving groups are based on neighborhood relationships; participants generally took part in multiple groups, rather than belonging to only one.

76. Talking for Reconnection program: One important healing practice in local communities is talking about traumatic memories and trauma-related problems in life. They aim to transform the traumatic memory by talking, so that it can be integrated into a personal life history. Talking for reconnection was mainly referred to as “gusura na kuganira”, meaning “visiting and talking” to others.

77. Living Together Program: Social reconnection as described above enables people to experience more profound healing and reconciliation through sharing and helping each other in everyday life. One important common theme of local healing practice is “sharing” things, such as food and drink, everyday life, ceremonies, life-stories and memories with family members, neighbours and friends.

78. Unity and Reconciliation program: reconciliation is the most crucial part of the healing process life in a village requires residents, whether victims or perpetrators of genocide, to continue to live together and help each other for survival and to build country.

79. Therapeutic groups were initiated in collaboration with the Genocide Survivors Students association (GEARG) and Association of Genocide Widows (AVEGA) in 23 districts. The purpose of this initiative is to create and share deeply with one another the thoughts and feelings about their life situation.

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

80. There is no child marriage in Rwanda. The minimum legal age for marriage is twenty-one (21) years according to the law n°32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family in its article 168. Rwandan law defines a child as any person under eighteen (18) years of age.⁴ Any sexual intercourse with a child below 18 is child defilement and punished by the law.⁵

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

81. Since the adoption of the Law governing Persons and Family in 2017, intercountry adoption has been reopened.

82. NCC, through its project called Tubarere Mu Muryango (TMM or “Let’s raise children in families”) facilitates the implementation of the Family law and relevant ministerial orders governing adoption and foster care. As of today 68 social workers are allocated in different districts. The budget allocated to TMM the past three years is the following: 2016/2017: 849,426,349 RWF, 2017/2018: 846, 694, 6304 RWF and 2018/2019: 873,505,667 RWF.

83. The GoR is also introducing e-birth registration in all health facilities so as to enhance birth registration and data collection and production of vital statistics from health facilities through the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) web-based system. This is also being established in all refugee camps in Rwanda.

84. Intensive training of Civil Registrars and officers in charge of civil registration on the new web-based e-registration system was organized and conducted in all 416 Sectors countrywide. In addition, capacity building has been conducted for data managers of health centers and good governance officers at district level on civil registration and specifically on the importance of birth registration.

85. Moreover, extensive sensitization on child registration has been conducted from 2017, 2018 and 2019 allowing 622,386 children to be registered.

Reply to paragraph 13 (a) of the list of issues

86. In 2011, the Ministry of Health put in place a national policy which guides reproductive interventions for adolescents and young adults aged 10–24, whether in or out of schools. For adolescents and young adults in schools, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Rwanda Education Board, has recently integrated the content on reproductive health into the new competency-based curricula taught in primary and secondary schools.

87. With regards to adolescents and youth out of school, they benefit from a number of interventions meant for the promotion of healthy reproductive health, using behaviour change communication approaches. These interventions are implemented in collaboration

⁴ Law n°71/2018 of 31/08/2018 Relating to the Protection of the Child, article 3.

⁵ Law N°68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general.

with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, the Ministry of Youth and ICT, as well as non-governmental stakeholders.

88. National Family planning/Adolescent sexual Reproductive Health (FP/ASRH) strategic plan 2018–2024 defines key strategies and interventions to provide confidential, objective and age-appropriate reproductive and sexual health services and information to adolescents.

89. Youth friendly services are integrated in existing services (Family Planning, Antenatal Care, HIV and others STIs). At least each Health Centre in Rwanda has one healthcare provider trained on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH). Half of health centers have been equipped with appropriate ASRH Information Education Communication tools including TV sets and desktop computer. There is also the establishment of 44 Isange One Stop Centers in all districts to provide care and support to sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) victims.

Reply to paragraph 13 (b) of the list of issues

90. Rwanda is committed to eradicate high rate of teen pregnancy, especially violence against children, and the following are measures that have been put in place:

- Systematic awareness campaigns conducted by MIGEPROF, MOH, NCC, GMO, and RIB in partnership with stakeholders to address the issue of sexual violence and teenage pregnancy. In these campaigns each stakeholder is shown its role in the prevention of child abuse particularly sexual violence;
- Psychological support and medical assistance from Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC) to the victims of sexual violence;
- Series of initiatives to empower young girls to unlock their leadership potential.

91. Awareness campaigns and mass education with special focus on:

- Transit and rehabilitation centers;
- Schools;
- Youth centers;
- School-aged groups;
- Sensitization through media;
- Sensitization sessions within the charge of mental health services in health facilities;
- Distribution of sensitization tools in schools and school-aged groups;
- Celebration of the International days of child and National day with the message on eradicating teen pregnancy.

92. The National Public Prosecution Authority based on its competence provided for by the Law, has also put more efforts to conduct investigations and prosecutions on sexual violence cases especially child defilement, to guarantee strict punishment and ensure justice for the victims:

- People responsible for teenage pregnancies are prosecuted and tried in court;
- Forensic evidence is used where necessary (DNA);
- Increase in the number of Gender Based Violence cases handled, and conviction rate, especially with regard to sexual violence case;
- Speeding up the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence cases;
- Improving the quality of cases of sexual violence filed with the courts;
- Working closely with other institution on this issues;
- Persecutor's in charges of SGBV are trained on investigating and prosecuting offences relating to Sexual violence in order to improve their capacity;

- The NPPA handled 2,962 cases of child defilement in 2017–2018 and 3,350 cases in 2018–2019.

Reply to paragraph 13 (c) of the list of issues

93. Rwanda HIV program has a comprehensive guideline of HIV prevention and management that includes a section dedicated to the management of children living with HIV whether on clinical management of nutritional assessment, counseling and support:

- 32 District level youth centers under the Ministry of Youth provide HIV counseling and testing, condom distribution and life skills training;
- HIV program through its annual quantification and forecasting exercise takes into account HIV drugs and commodities for children;
- HIV program organized trainings countrywide of healthcare providers with special emphasis and consideration of HIV pediatric management;
- Currently, 7780 HIV positive children aged below 15 years, are enrolled in the program and are on antiretroviral therapy;
- HIV positive children of school age and adolescents have support groups aiming at enhancing adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART).

In addition to the above, it is worth to note that since 2015 the GoR has adopted “Test and Treat” approach thanks to which any person diagnosed with HIV/AIDS including children are put on treatment.

Reply to paragraph 13 (d) of the list of issues

94. Substance (Drug) abuse has been increasing in Rwanda and especially among the youth. In a recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Rwanda Mental Health Survey (2018), the prevalence of disorders related to alcohol use was estimated at 1.6% of the Rwandan population whereas drug abuse related disorders were at 0.3% and most victims were youths.

95. On June 26th 2019 Rwanda together with other worldwide countries celebrated the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1987. This was an occasion to urge the youth to make positive choices for their health and not abuse drugs, and to remind those already addicted to seek treatment. The campaign was targeting all categories of population ranging from youth students to non-students, employed to unoccupied, adults, parents, and others.

96. The following were the activities carried out:

- Production and dissemination of sensitization materials (banners, flyers, Branded T Shirts);
- Awareness on drug abuse in schools through anti-drug use clubs countrywide;
- Sensitization through Media (TV, radio emissions and spots, live talk show on RBA);
- National celebration of International day against drug abuse in Nyagatare District on 26 June 2019;
- Sensitization in Burera District on 1st July 2019. Sensitization visit at Iwawa Rehabilitation Center, organized on 07 July 2019.

97. Jointly with other concerned Ministries, Institutions and Civil Society, faith Based Organizations, the Ministry of Health regularly conducts awareness campaign targeting different categories and through different channels.

98. Continuous sensitization is also done through Media, Drug seizures, organized mass campaigns and community based interventions.

99. Rwanda Investigation Bureau and the Ministry of Justice conduct regular campaigns to combat substance abuse with particular focus among youth.

Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues

100. The Rwanda Mental Health Survey 2018 reported 10.2% of the prevalence of mental disorders among young people aged 14 to 18 years.

101. With regard to the availability of mental health services, services are now effectively decentralized across the country. Each district hospital has its own mental health unit, which delivers a comprehensive mental health care package according to the national standards. Each health center has at least one trained general nurse who may offer primary mental care and refer people with mental disorders for further assessment and treatment. The process for appointing mental health professionals in health centers has started and it is ongoing.

Reply to paragraph 15 (a) of the list of issues

102. The introduction of 9YBE and its upgrading to 12 YBE has resulted in high demand in the education system and the Government of Rwanda has undertaken a series of strategies including school infrastructure development, using “Unconventional Method” as a strategy of rapid construction of classrooms and latrines. The strategy drew upon the Rwandan tradition of *Umuganda*, which is a culture of community participation in developmental activities. The local communities contribute in terms of labor, resources and locally available building materials (such as stones, water, wood and sand, etc.).

103. The Ministry of Education through Rwanda Education Board (REB) in its Curriculum Teaching and Learning Resources Department (CTLR) and in partnership with educational stakeholders provide school materials to all levels of Education to improve children “access to school materials”.

104. With regards to school infrastructure, new classrooms have been constructed to address overcrowding and long distance. Currently, 1150 classrooms are under construction.

Reply to paragraph 15 (b) of the list of issues

105. Since 2003, the Government of Rwanda introduced a fee free Nine Year Basic Education composed of the whole cycle of primary education (9YBE) (P1–P6 + Lower Secondary Education: S1–S3). The objective was to ensure equitable access for all children to primary education and lower secondary education cycle (both in urban and rural areas), and complete these cycles without any barrier.

106. More measures were put in place to ensure equitable access for all children:

- In 2012, the 9YBE was upgraded to 12YBE to give access for children to upper secondary education without barriers related to cost in urban and rural areas. In 2014, school feeding program was introduced as a strategy to reduce repetition and dropout rates mainly observed in rural areas.
- The “ONE LAPTOP per Child” programme was also introduced in rural and urban primary schools to equip children with ICT skills.
- Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) and distribution of CBC Syllabus and supplementary materials in both rural and urban schools of all levels of education.

Reply to paragraph 15 (c) of the list of issues

107. The Government of Rwanda maintains its commitment towards achieving free, universal and quality education. More than 60 per cent of the education budget is allocated to pre-primary, primary and secondary education combined. Currently Nine-Year Basic Education (9YBE) was extended to Twelve Year Basic Education (12YBE). The Basic Education from primary one up to senior six is fully free in public schools providing 12YBE.

108. In some schools, parents are requested to pay some extra fees, like bonuses for teachers, fees for mock, rent mattresses, buying a school vehicle, and other schools’

materials, etc. These are considered as malpractices which contravene Government policy on access to education for all, especially for pupils and students from financially disadvantaged families.

109. To mitigate this, procedures are in place stipulating that any schools desiring to increase schools' fees and other related fees will be required to inform their respective district authorities through an official letter, with a copy to the Ministry of Education. In principle the practices are prohibited.

Reply to paragraph 15 (d) of the list of issues

110. The following causes are often attributed to school dropouts:

- Mindset of some parents who do not value the education of their children;
- Aspirations for wage-earning employment;
- Poverty;
- Family conflict.

111. In addressing this issue, there is a Ministerial Order N° 001/2016 OF 08/01/2016 providing sanctions against parents who do not send their children to school and against other persons who employ children in work preventing them from going to or encouraging them to drop out of school.

112. MINEDUC in collaboration with REB jointly with various stakeholders have been conducting the "Education Quality Enhancement Campaigns" since 2018 school year. In the campaigns, the issue of dropout was made a priority as well as the exercise of raising awareness of parents on schooling and retaining their children in school.

Reply to paragraph 15 (e) of the list of issues

113. Article 51 of the Constitution of Rwanda of 2003 as revised in 2015 stipulates that: "The State has the duty to establish special measures facilitating the education of persons with disabilities. From this legal provision, the Ministry of Education published the Ministerial Order N° 007/2016 of 01/03/2016 determining modalities for special treatment of persons with disabilities in schools, whereby article 2 and 3 provides that children from the poorest families are facilitated to study for free of charge."

114. The National Competency Based Curriculum was revised and incorporated component of inclusive education, whereby all teachers should learn how to take care of learners with disabilities.

115. The inclusive and Special Needs Education Policy with its implementation plan was adopted by the Cabinet in January 2019. The policy provides the overarching framework for the development and delivery of education services to eradicate intrinsically and/or extrinsically motivated barriers met by learners with special educational needs in school.

116. In 2018, a toolkit to raise awareness on inclusive education was developed and accessibility audits were conducted in 180 public and private schools.

117. MINEDUC in collaboration with REB and other educational stakeholders have trained at least two primary and secondary teachers per school on inclusive Education. They are able to cater for the needs of learners with Disabilities and other Special Educational Needs (SENs).

118. REB has also developed specialized curriculum for learners with intellectual challenges and several other documents to facilitate the education of children with disabilities and other SENs.

119. More initiatives were conducted by MINEDUC:

- Provision of specialized teaching and learning materials (e.g. Equipping special schools for the blind with braille materials and machine).
- Schools were made accessible (Physical accessibility, communication accessibility and information accessibility).

- The system of screening, identification and assessment of children suspected to have disabilities was introduced in some districts.
- Support services were provided to some children with disabilities (rehabilitation services and medical services).
- Support services for some parents of children with disabilities (guidance and counseling services set up and facilitate self-help groups).

Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

120. The programs to combat poverty impact both directly and indirectly on the child protection. The VUP components in general contributes to children's schooling – ability to pay fees, uniforms, books and provision of better children's nutrition that leads to better outcomes.

121. Moreover, the flexibility and reduction in hours in VUP expanded public works helped women manage public works, domestic and childcare responsibilities, and other work activities.

122. Poverty levels continue to fall among Rwandans. According to EICV 5 there has been a slight decrease in poverty levels for the period under review.

123. The GoR regularly revises its plans and poverty reduction strategies to ensure they respond to the needs of the country. Since 2017, Rwanda phased out the EDPRS II and embarked on NST1 which runs through 2024.

Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

124. The Social Protection Strategic Plan (SP SP) 2018–2024 took into consideration the views and needs of children with different specific situations. This sector strategic plan is built on the other high-level commitments. The following are some of the major points showing how the specific needs and views on children were taken into consideration in the Social Protection Strategic Plan 2018–2024.

125. Social Protection Strategic Plan is built on AU Agenda 2063 which committed to provide social protection services to children and other vulnerable groups and built on the Vision 2050 and National Strategic for Transformation1(NST1) which targets to scale up the efforts to improve nutrition among children and women.

126. It is considered and built on the international policy commitments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

127. This strategy is also built on the national policies with the eye on child including Integrated Child Policy of 2011 revised in in 2019, National Early Childhood Development Policy 2016, National Delinquency Policy 2016. A national child care system has been established since 2012 that has strong linkages to the national social protection system which have child protection programmes as part of Rwanda's Social Care Services framework.

128. This strategy prioritizes the strengthening of Rwanda's Social Care services to address new forms of social vulnerability, some of which are increasing as an unintended consequence of Rwanda's rapid socio-economic transformation. Key issues to be addressed include: gender-based violence (GBV); child neglect and abuse; delinquency; substance abuse; neglect and exclusion of people with disabilities; family planning; and isolation and neglect of older people.

129. The SPSP reveals that the Expanded Public Works scheme will be used to establish community-based child care services which will be linked with relevant proximity advisory services to improve parents' awareness and understanding of ECD-related issues. Training and sensitization of parents and communities on nutrition and other parenting issues will be integrated into community-based childcare services implemented under the VUP's Expanded Public Works scheme.

Reply to paragraph 18 (a) of the list of issues

130. The newly published Labour (Law no 66/2018 Regulating Labour in Rwanda) maintained the Minimum age for admission to employment at sixteen (16) years. In Article 6, the above-mentioned law lists the forms of work prohibited for children under 18 years.

131. A Ministerial Order from the Ministry of Public Labour will complement the list of light works allowed for children from the age of 13 under supervision.

Protection for workers in the informal Sector

132. Article 2 of Law No 66/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda has extended its scope for the protection of employees in informal sector with regard to the following: (a) occupational health and safety; (b) the right to form trade unions and employers' associations; (c) the right to salary; (d) the minimum wage in categories of occupations determined by an Order of the Minister in charge of labour; (e) the right to leave; (f) social security; (g) protection against workplace discrimination; (h) protection from forced labour; (i) prohibited forms of work for the child, pregnant or breastfeeding woman.

Employers to report work related injury

133. Article 82 of law no 66/2018 regulating labor in Rwanda mandates employers to declare any occupational accident, disease or death to the Rwanda Social Security Body (RSSB) and the Inspectorate of Labour where the enterprise is located, in accordance with relevant Laws.

134. However, when the employer fails to declare occupational accident, disease or death; the victim is entitled to do it. The declaration can also be done by any beneficiary of the victim or competent authority within a period provided for by relevant Laws.

Reply to paragraph 18 (b) of the list of issues

135. The Government of Rwanda has established an Integrated labour administration system which allows the collection of data on Labour related matters such as registration of establishment; child labour cases; labour Disputes; occupational hazards; labour inspections; social dialogues (data on trade unions and employers organizations) etc.

Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

136. Child labour is a denial of children's rights and a barrier to holistic child development. Rwanda as a signatory to the International Labour Convention No. 138 of June 26, 1973 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment; and the International Labour Convention No. 182 of June 17, 1999 concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour, is committed to the elimination of child labour, particularly in its worst forms. The Government of Rwanda is committed to eradicate all forms of child labour by investigating and prosecuting such cases.

137. The GoR adopted a new law, N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda, which improved the standards of protection of children from child labor.

138. First, the law gives clear definition of what constitutes prohibited work for children. This is regarded as any work which has a detrimental effect on the child's rights, health or on other aspects of the child's life.

139. Second, although the new law maintains the minimum age for admission to employment at sixteen (16) years as it was in the repealed law; it provides for an exception where a child aged between thirteen (13) and fifteen (15) years is allowed to perform only light works in the context of apprenticeship.

140. Third, as mentioned in the above paragraph, the 2018 law regulating labor in Rwanda defines light work as a work which cannot have a detrimental effect on a child's health, child development and child's education or other aspects of child's life interest.

141. In addition, there are administrative sanctions provided for by the Ministerial Instructions No 01/2017 of 17/11/17 on the prevention and fight against child labour which is being implemented to fight against the worst forms of child labour and hazardous work.

142. The amended Ministerial Instructions on the Prevention and Fight against worst forms of child labour takes into consideration domestic child labour for children under 18 years as worst forms of child labour prohibited for children.

143. These Ministerial Guidelines are useful to fight child labour mostly in the informal economic sector. It is also worth noting that the GoR has also adopted the law n° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others and the law N°71/2018of31/08/2018 relating to the protection of the child that further protection in the informal sector.

144. The existing legal framework also covers hazardous works and domestic child labour under the Ministerial order no06/2010 determining the list of worst forms of child labour. Domestic child labour as well as agricultural hazardous work is already on the list of hazardous work prohibited for children under 18 years old.

145. Inspections are conducted by labour inspectors in collaboration with the District steering committee and employers, parents found engaging children in the worst forms of child labour are punished.

146. Furthermore, child labour inspectors have been deployed at district level to work hand in hand with different concerned institutions such as police in making sure that child labour cases are investigated and punished. Every year about Rwf 30,000,000 is allocated to facilitate labour inspections and investigate cases of child labour.

147. Among other measures taken toward the elimination of Child labour, the Government of Rwanda has undertaken the following:

- Established Steering Committees on the Prevention and elimination of child labour from District to village levels. A Ministerial guidelines establishing members of Steering Committees and their responsibilities was sent to all local authorities in September 2018 for its implementation.
- Child labour prevention and elimination is mainstreamed into Performance contracts of District *Imihigo* (performance contracts).
- Increased specific inspections on elimination of child labour are at least conducted twice a month in line of ensuring that all children found in child labour are removed and reintegrated in their families and in schools.
- The awareness rising on the prevention and elimination of child labour is also conducted on monthly basis. This is done through community work (*Umuganda*) conducted at the end of each month in order to increase sensitization on the danger of engaging children in prohibited works.
- Capacity building of members of Steering Committees on the prevention & Elimination of Child labour from District to village level is also conducted.

148. Lastly, NCC in partnership with World Vision Rwanda has an ongoing project called “*It Takes All Rwandans to End Child Exploitation project*”.

149. This project has four objectives;

- (a) To initiate movement for, with and by children to end child exploitation;
- (b) To strengthen prevention, response and restorative measures;
- (c) To increase in long-term targeted funding; and
- (d) To strengthen accountability.

150. The Project Goal is that “By 2022, the project will contribute to increased protection of children from child labour and sexual abuse”. This goal will be achieved through three main outcomes as follows:

151. Outcome 1: Strengthened prevention measures against child labour and sexual abuse in Rwandan communities.

152. Outcome 2: Enhanced response mechanisms against child labour and sexual abuse in communities.

153. Outcome 3: Improved resilience and hope for child victims of sexual abuse and child labour in communities.

Reply to paragraph 20 (a) of the list of issues

154. The Government of Rwanda adopted the National Legal Aid Policy (NLAP) in 2014. The NLAP provides a framework for the provision of legal aid services to ensure the delivery of comprehensive Access to Justice for all Rwandans, paying particular emphasis to the poor and other vulnerable groups that have been comparatively disadvantaged.

155. The GoR continues to ensure that minors and indigent people whether victims or offenders receive free legal assistance/representation from the early stage of legal proceedings.

156. In this regard, the Ministry of Justice coordinated the legal representation of minors in the following ways:

157. In 2016/17, 1,483 minors were represented while in 2017/18 1,835 minors were represented. The majority were assisted before courts whereas the remaining were assisted before Rwanda National Police and the National Public Prosecution Authority.

158. The revised Guidelines on the Justice for Children policy were translated into Kinyarwanda and are awaiting validation by the JRLS Steering Committee.

159. With regards to the Justice for Children Policy, an evaluation analysis is currently being undertaken to determine its level of implementation.

Reply to paragraph 20 (b) of the list of issues

160. Rwanda has established juvenile chambers in all intermediate courts to try cases involving juveniles. Convicted juvenile offenders are also detained separately from adults.

161. The GoR ensures that all juveniles accused of criminal offence are offered legal assistance and fair trial guarantees. In this regard, the Ministry of Justice has an agreement with the Rwanda Bar Association to provide legal assistance to juvenile offenders.

162. There are also other mechanisms in place to enable a child-friendly justice system that focuses on reconciliation as provided for by the Justice for Children Policy.

163. The justice for children environment has also been strengthened through the adoption of a new law, N° 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 on the rights and protection of the child. Besides being witnesses before courts of law, children over 12 years of age are also allowed to give their views in civil matters affecting them. This law stipulates that the child has the right to attend any proceedings aimed at separating him/her from his/her family or his/her guardian and give his/her opinion. The hearing of the child may be done directly or indirectly through a psychologist, a psychosocial assistant or any adult of his/her choice.

164. Child victims and/or witnesses of crimes are provided protection through a special unit protecting victims and witnesses within the NPPA.

165. Lastly, the newly created Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) has a specific division in charge of children's matters and is expected to boost the quality and professionalism in prevention, investigation and justice delivery for child rights violation cases.

166. Lastly, according to article 64 of the law n° 71/2018 of 31/08/2018 relating to the rights and the protection of the child, the privacy of a child facing justice must be protected at all stages of criminal proceedings. Criminal cases involving children must thus be tried in camera by relevant courts; and their identity cannot be disclosed to the public or to the media.

Reply to paragraph 20 (c) of the list of issues

167. Unlawful detention is an offence according to the law determining offences and penalties in general.⁶

168. The National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) inspects detention places, at least once a week, and takes all necessary decisions to ensure compliance with laws.⁷ The inspectorate Department also inspects detention places to monitor illegal detention.

169. A juvenile offender being prosecuted is assisted by legal counsel, starting from investigation up to court proceedings. If a juvenile offender or/his guardian cannot choose a legal counsel for him/her, the public prosecution requests the president of the Bar Association to assign a pro bono legal counsel to him.

170. There is no case of ill-treatment allegation of children in detention.

Reply to paragraph 20 (d) of the list of issues

171. In sentencing a child to punishment, the goal is to avoid imprisonment as much as possible. This is in accordance with Article 62 of the Law relating to the rights and the protection of the child. As such, a judge should suggest other alternatives such as suspension of sentence or placing the child in a re-education centre in order to ensure his/her welfare. Full punishment is expected to be a rare occurrence.

172. Also, Article 63 of the same law relating to the rights and the protection of the child, states that a child who is liable for a term of imprisonment of less than two years can instead be placed in a rehabilitation centre.

173. Even children who have been sentenced to imprisonment can be placed under rehabilitation upon request by the authority of the prison if their file shows good behavior.

174. The following are measures that have been taken to ensure that non-custodial sentences are used as a matter of priority for children who are in conflict with the law:

- The Ministry of Justice has put in place a Policy on justice for Children in 2014 emphasizing non-custodial sentences;
- Articles 24, 25 and 26 of the Law Relating to Child Rights and Protection emphasize application of non-custodial sentences;
- The Ministry of Justice and National Commission for Children developed and disseminated a booklet on Justice for Children;
- Trainings of 36 prosecutors, investigators and lawyers on juvenile justice operating at Intermediate level were also conducted by NCC in February 2019.

Reply to paragraph 20 (e) of the list of issues

175. Juvenile offenders are allowed to sit for national exams just like other children. In 2018, 34 juveniles who demonstrated high discipline and passed well national exams benefited from Presidential pardon.

176. The prison administration maintains contact with families of the release children. Regular visits are held with the purpose of educating the children and their families on the effects of criminal conducts and preventing any factors that would lead children into recidivism. Similar visits are also conducted to schools hosting children who benefited from Presidential pardon.

177. Where released children do not have a family, the prison management assists them to get a foster family.

178. Further, measures are in place to ensure that children who complete technical schools in prison or after serving their prison terms are assisted with startup toolkits.

⁶ Article 285 LDOP.

⁷ See article 27 of the Law N0 014/4/2018 determining the organization, functioning and competence of the National Public Prosecution Authority and of the Military Prosecution Department.

Reply to paragraph 21 (a) of the list of issues

179. A number of laws relevant to the domestication of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography have been adopted as follows:

- Law no 14/2018 of 13/08/2018 amending Law no 14/2008 of 04/26/2008 governing registration of the population and issuance of the national identity card was published in Official Gazette no special of 20/9/2018;
- Law no 68/2018 of 30/08/2018 determining offences and penalties in general was published in Official Gazette no special of 27/09/2018;
- The law no 32/2016 of 28/8/2016 governing persons and family is under review.
- Law no 27/2016 of 8/2016 governing matrimonial regimes, donations and successions is still in force.
- The law replacing Organic Law no 01/2012/OL of 02/05/2012 instituting the penal code was published in Official Gazette no special of 27/09/2018.
- Law no 48/2015 of 23/11/2015 governing the organization, functioning and management of health insurance schemes in Rwanda is in force.
- The Law No 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others was adopted. Article 12 of this law specifically provides special assistance to the child victim. The special treatments provided are the following:
 - Where the age of the victim is uncertain and there are reasons to believe that the victim may be a child, the victim is presumed to be a child and is treated as such, pending verification of his/her age;
 - Assistance to the child victim is provided by specially trained professionals and in accordance with the children's special needs;
 - If the victim is an unaccompanied child, he/she is provided with a legal guardian, in accordance with the provision of the Law;
 - The organ in charge of child protection ensures that the child's identity or nationality is established and makes every effort to locate his/her family if it is in the best interest of the child to do so.

Reply to paragraph 21 (b) of the list of issues

180. The GoR is committed to combating trafficking in persons and related crimes. For the period under review, the GoR has revised its laws on prevention of trafficking in person with the view to bringing it into conformity with international principles and standards in matters related to human trafficking.

181. In 2018, the GoR adopted a specific law n° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others (hereafter referred to as the 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person). The law defines trafficking in persons in the same terms as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (hereafter referred to as the UN Protocol on prevention of trafficking in person)

182. In Rwanda, commercial sex is prohibited, and different campaigns are conducted to prevent commercial sex and strong labour laws prohibit such work.

Reply to paragraph 21 (c) of the list of issues

183. The Rwandan government implements a number of mechanisms to protect and assist VoTs, in accordance with Article 6 of the Palermo protocol. The 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person provides that protection and assistance should be provided without any discrimination. Further, the law caters for other important aspects such as the protection of the victim and the victim's accompanying dependents; protection of the identity of the

victim during court proceedings; basic assistance services to the victim; special treatment granted to the victim; special assistance to the child victim; permission for a non-Rwandan victim to remain in Rwanda; repatriation of a foreign victim to his/her country; and return of the victim to Rwanda.

184. It has also established a counter-trafficking task force and is beginning to institute victim-centered protocols and standard operating procedures in coordination with NGOs, International-NGOs, and FBOs amongst others to address the rights and needs of victims. For foreign victims, the new human trafficking law provides legal channels for preventing deportation to a country where victims may face retaliation from traffickers and/or their accomplices.

185. The most notable governmental intervention to assist VoTs has been through the Isange One Stop Center model, which is a collection of countrywide centres in every district designed to assist victims of GBV. The Kigali centre has already assisted a number of VoTs.

Reply to paragraph 22 (a) of the list of issues

186. Rwanda abides by its obligations under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Presidential order N° 22/01 of 21/10/2016 Establishing Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) Special Statute, in its Article 8 sets out conditions for recruitment into RDF. One of the conditions is that the applicant for recruitment into RDF must be at least 18 years of age. Similar conditions are required for recruitment into Rwanda National Police and Rwanda Correctional Service.

187. In addition to the above, as it was mentioned above, Article 9 of the Ministerial Instructions No 01/2017 of 17/11/2017 Relating to Prevention and Fight Against Child Labour lists out forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict among worst form of Child labour.

188. Non-State armed groups are not applicable in Rwanda.

189. While the legal instruments mentioned above are relevant in the prevention of recruitment, the GoR notes that there is a gap in criminalization of the recruitment and use in hostilities of children under 18 years of age by national armed forces and non-State armed groups and therefore undertakes to revise the relevant law to ensure the acts are explicitly criminalized.

Reply to paragraph 22 (b) of the list of issues

190. Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) closely collaborates with MONUSCO which is in charge of Disarming members of armed groups (adults and children associated with armed groups) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. After the disarmament process, MONUSCO shares information with RDRC for the repatriation process of children withdrawn.

191. Through this Demobilization, Reintegration and Reinsertion programme, returnees are:

- Given national identity cards;
- Enrolled in formal education and in various vocational skills;
- Assisted to set up income-generating activities;
- Enrolled in the National health care scheme known as *mutuelle de santé*; and
- Given access to their land.

192. RDRC has so far demobilized 985 ex-child soldiers including 2 females. The distribution of demobilized children per province is as follows: 99 for City of Kigali, 84 for the Eastern province, 160 for Southern Province, 149 for the Northern province, and 493 for the Western province.

Reply to paragraph 22 (c) of the list of issues

193. The Government of Rwanda continues to strengthen the capacity of administrative and judicial officers on child rights and child protection, with special focus on the principle of the “Best interest of the child” to ensure it is taken into account during judicial and administrative decision-making processes in all matters affecting children.

194. Ongoing trainings are conducted countrywide with the view to reach a wide range of law practitioners. For example, in February 2019, the National Commission for Children trained 12 Prosecutors, 12 Investigators and 12 Lawyers operating at intermediate level from the districts of Nyarugenge, Gasabo, Nyagatare, Ngoma, Muhanga, Huye, Nyamagabe, Rusizi, Karongi, Rubavu, Gicumbi and Musanze and the city of Kigali on Justice for children.

195. In partnership with the Supreme Court, USAID/Land Project and Haguruka NGO, conducted a training of 22 primary court judges from the Eastern Province to strengthen their capacity in protecting and promoting children’s rights in cases related to divorce, inheritance, succession and land.

196. Moreover, in February 2017, thirty (30) Ministry of Justice Staff placed at district level (*Maison d’Accès à la Justice*) in charge of Child Protection and GBV from each all districts countrywide, received training on child rights and on the enforcement of the best interest of the child whenever they are representing children in court proceedings.

197. Also, in February 2018, local leaders from district to village levels in 11 districts received intensive training on child protection. The program will continue for the remaining districts.

198. Training on child protection, gender equality and GBV was also given to 50 Chief Editors from media houses in Rwanda to contribute towards awareness raising of communities that do not know about children’s rights, gender equality and GBV.

Part II**Reply to paragraph 23 (a) of the list of issues**

199. Refer to para 179.

Reply to paragraph 23 (b) of the list of issues

200. As far as institutional framework, the National Early Childhood Development Program was established in 2017 to coordinate all interventions related to early childhood development (ECD) in the country. Specifically, NECDP is responsible for reducing malnutrition and stunting of children, promoting optimal child development, increasing children’s preparedness to primary education, enhancing positive parenting and community participation in child protection, eliminating physical, moral, and psychological abuse of young children, and enhancing equal access to early childhood development services by children with special needs. The Program enjoys administrative and financial autonomy. During the fiscal year 2017/2018, NECDP was provided the total budget of 396,094,832 Frw to start its activities.

Reply to paragraph 23 (c) of the list of issues

201. The purpose of the Strategic Plan (2019–2024) of the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) is to guide the interventions needed for the implementation of the ICRP. The five years plan addresses 7 thematic areas of children’s rights as listed in the ICRP: Identity and Nationality; Family and Alternative Care; Health, Survival and Standard of Living; Education; Protection; Justice; and Participation. This Second ICRP Strategic Plan will also enable NCC to better coordinate and oversee the implementation of the ICRP. This Strategic Plan has a budget of FRW 122, 345,494,672 Frw.

202. The Child Online Policy (COP) approved in 2019 sets out a comprehensive set of policy areas and measures designed to support children online, in an environment where all stakeholders play their part (Budget 1,520,000,000 Frw).

Reply to paragraph 23 (d) of the list of issues

203. There is no recent ratification of human rights instruments. However, on 22 October 2019, Rwanda signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.

Part III

Reply to paragraph 24 of the list of issues

204. NCC continues to lead the implementation of activities related to the fulfilment of children's rights. The ordinary budget allocated to NCC increased by more than 100% within a period of less than five (5) years, rising from 260,069,547 Rwandan Francs in 2013 to 533,149,718 Rwandan Francs in 2017.

205. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) continues playing a vital role in child rights protection. Funding for the NCHR kept increasing since the submission of the last report, and enables it to accomplish its planned activities, in addition to paying staff salaries. The budget allocated to the NCHR increased from RWF 1,155,439,445 in fiscal year 2014/2015 to RWF 1,217,030,660 in the year 2016/2017 representing 9.5 % increase.

206. The budget allocated to child protection activities continued to increase from year to year. For instance, the budget allocated to maternal and neonatal health, nutrition, vaccine preventable disease, elimination of mother to child HIV transmission, family planning and reproductive health & GBV, adolescent sexual reproductive health and community health, increased from USD 34,037,999 in 2013/2014 to USD 62,383,384 in 2015/2016, which means an increment of 83%.

207. During the fiscal year 2017/2018, the health sector was allocated the budget of 193.6 billion Rwandan francs used in a number of interventions including the fight against malnutrition and stunting, construction of health facilities to increase access to health services and deployment of qualified staff in hospitals and health centers in order to ensure quality and availability of human resources for healthcare.

208. Still in the same fiscal year, the education sector was allocated 248.5 billion Rwandan francs used in different interventions including rehabilitation and construction of new classrooms, creating and equipping new TVET schools and increasing the quality of education through distribution of curricula and training of teachers. At the same time, the budget for water and sanitation sector was equivalent to 30.4 billion Rwandan francs used for different activities including construction of water pipelines and water supply systems in rural areas.

209. In addition, child rights matters have been mainstreamed in national priorities provided in long term plans such as Vision 2020 and the newly adopted National Strategy for Transformation (NST) as well as Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs) and District Development Plans (DDPs). On top of that, gender equality and family promotion, which also includes child protection, are considered as cross cutting issues that have to be reflected in the budget of every institution. In this regard, under the guidance of MIGEPROF, NCC and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), child related interventions are adequately mainstreamed in annual action plans, performance contracts and budgets for all Government institutions.

Reply to paragraph 25 (a) of the list of issues

210. The CRO helped the NCHR to receive and handle cases of child rights violations: 283 child rights related cases were reported in 2013–2014, 587 cases in 2014–2015, 440 cases in 2015–2016 and 592 cases in 2016–2017. This makes a total of 1902 cases of child rights violations that have been handled between July 2013 and June 2017.

Reply to paragraph 25 (b) of the list of issues

211. No case received.

Reply to paragraph 25 (c) of the list of issues

212. The National Public Prosecution Authority received 3 cases of corporal punishment during the past three years.

Reply to paragraph 25 (d) of the list of issues

213. The rising figures of teenage pregnancies remain a priority to the Government of Rwanda.

214. According to the 2014/15 Rwanda Demographic Health Survey, 7% of women become pregnant between the ages of 15 and 19.

215. Early childbearing (15–19 years) occurs more frequently among young women with a primary education (9 per cent) than among those with secondary education or higher (4%).

216. Figures from Ministry of Health indicate that, in 2016, Rwanda registered 17,000 teenage pregnancies. The upcoming DHS 2020 will provide updated data on teenage pregnancies.

Reply to paragraph 25 (e) of the list of issues

217. In August 2018, the GoR revised its penal code, which had previously imposed prison sentences on anyone having an abortion or assisting someone to terminate a pregnancy. Under the new law, abortion is allowed in cases where the victim is a minor, rape, forced marriage, incest to the second degree, or instances where the pregnancy poses a health risk to the mother or fetus.

218. The new law requires that abortion be carried out after consultation with a doctor whereas in the past, the final decision was taken by the courts.

219. It is also worth noting that in December 2016, 62 women and girls convicted of abortion received Presidential pardon. In April 2019, 367 more women and girls who were in prison for abortion and infanticide were pardoned.

220. More recently, on the eve of the Celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child, 52 more women and girls were pardoned.

221. This reflects the rights and freedoms of women and girls enshrined under the Constitution of Rwanda, regional and international human rights instruments. It is a positive step taken to realise the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in Rwanda.

Reply to paragraph 25 (f) of the list of issues

222. During the past two years, the National Public Prosecution Authority has received 63 cases of drug and alcohol abuse by children.

Reply to paragraph 25 (g) of the list of issues

223. Refer to paras. 100–101.

Reply to paragraph 25 (h) of the list of issues

224. Refer to question 18.

Reply to paragraph 25 (i) of the list of issues

225. From 2016 to 2018 a total number of 6,319 cases of sexual violence (Defilement) were investigated and submitted to prosecution. 6,479 victims were involved: 2131 were under 10 years of age, 1336 were between 10 and 14 years while 3012 were between 15 and 17 years. 125 were males while 6,354 were females.

Reply to paragraph 25 (j) of the list of issues

226. No case of disappearance was received.

Reply to paragraph 26 (a) of the list of issues

227. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 26 (b) of the list of issues

228. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 26 (c) of the list of issues

229. Following the National Strategy for Child Care Reform in 2012, no child is placed in an institution.

Reply to paragraph 26 (d) of the list of issues

230. Since the National Strategy for Child Care Reform, 3,151 children have been placed into families and foster families.

Reply to paragraph 27 (a) of the list of issues

231. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 27 (b) of the list of issues

232. The Integrated Child Rights Policy adopted in 2011 reflects the view that all children, notwithstanding any disability, have the right to grow up in a family environment. To accomplish this goal, children residing in institutions should be reunited with family or placed in alternative family-based care. The process for doing so is operationalised in the National Strategy for Child Care Reform (2012), through the National Commission for Children’s Tubarere Mu Muryango (TMM, Let’s Raise Children in Families) program.

233. TMM is responsible for the reintegration of children from institutions and other forms of residential care. Deinstitutionalisation is still underway among the general population of children living in residential facilities.

234. The total number of children and young people in March 2016 who were living in an institution was 1,262.⁸

235. Disaggregated data is currently unavailable. However, the government has been working closely with a number of service providers and advocacy organizations to better estimate the population of adults and children with disabilities and to disaggregate the data in meaningful ways.

Reply to paragraph 27 (c) of the list of issues

| 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| M: 10 639 | M: 11 663 | M: 9 669 |
| F: 8 479 | F: 11 663 | F: 7 464 |
| T: 19 118 | T: 24 980 | T: 17 133 |

Reply to paragraph 27 (d) of the list of issues

| 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----------|----------|----------|
| M: 2 918 | M: 2 253 | M: 2 445 |
| F: 2 669 | F: 2 304 | F: 2 240 |

⁸ Report of National Assessment of Centres caring for Children with Disabilities in Rwanda, March 2016.

| 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| T: 5587 | T: 4557 | T: 4685 |

Reply to paragraph 27 (e) of the list of issues

236. 1,286 children with disabilities attend special schools.

Reply to paragraph 27 (f) of the list of issues

237. 42,329 children with disabilities are currently out of school.

Reply to paragraph 27 (g) of the list of issues

238. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 28 (a) of the list of issues

239. From 2016 to 2018, a total number of 6,102 children were arrested.

Reply to paragraph 28 (b) of the list of issues

240. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 28 (c) of the list of issues

241. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 28 (d) of the list of issues

242. No data available.

Reply to paragraph 29 of the list of issues

243. The ICRP Strategic Plan (2019–2024) is aligned to the National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially from 1 to 6 and 16, the Africa Union Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan 2014–2023 dedicated to the building of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa and the Regional Framework for Strengthening Child Protection Systems in the East African Community put in place in 2016.

244. Among 17 Goals of SDGs the following are monitored by ICRP strategic plan:

- (a) No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- (b) Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- (c) Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- (d) Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- (e) Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- (f) Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and 16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

245. SDGs goals are aligned with the 7 areas of the child's rights; the strategic plan is further aligned to national and international development agenda, including the National Strategy for Transformation and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Reply to paragraph 30 of the list of issues

246. The updated data has been added within the respective responses above.

Reply to paragraph 31 of the list of issues

247. With regard to the implementation of the Convention, the GoR is currently putting more efforts on child births registration, eradication of teen pregnancy and stunting among children.
