



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Forty-fourth session
6–17 November 2023

National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21*

Cabo Verde

I. Introduction

1. As a democratic country, Cabo Verde, which has a modern constitution that enshrines and protects a set of rights, freedoms and guarantees for its citizens, respects the universal principles of human rights, is bound by the fundamental principles of respect for the status and dignity of the human person and observes the principles of good governance, transparency, accountability, peace and social justice.
2. It is on this basis that the Government of Cabo Verde, within the framework of the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, presents this report.
3. The aim of this report is to present the situation in the country since the third review cycle and to assess the degree to which action has been taken in follow-up to the 159 recommendations made during the previous review, highlighting progress, including the efforts that have been made to give effect, step by step, to those recommendations.

II. Report preparation methodology and process

4. The report of Cabo Verde was prepared by the Interministerial Commission for the Preparation of National Human Rights Reports and laid out following the guidelines for the preparation of information under the universal periodic review contained in decision 17/119 of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
5. Representatives of public institutions were extensively involved in the preparation of this report, and forums for discussion and input were set up with a view to encouraging greater commitment and reaching consensus; the report was shared with civil society and approved by the Council of Ministers.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



III. National human rights framework (recommendations 1–3 and 8, para. 112)

Instrument ratification

6. Cabo Verde has attached particular importance to human rights and has progressively ratified the relevant conventions and additional protocols, thus bringing its legal framework into line with the provisions of the various international instruments. In particular, it has ratified the following instruments:

- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, under National Assembly resolution No. 57/X/2022, published in the Official Gazette (No. 50, 25 May 2022). Letter of ratification dated 15 August 2022. Notification and deposit by note No. 30/DGAJT/2022 dated 6 September, via the Permanent Mission of Cabo Verde in New York, pending publication and entry into force.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, under National Assembly resolution No. 158/IX/2020, published in the Official Gazette (No. 36, 26 March 2020). Letter of ratification dated 17 November 2020. Notification and deposit by note 27/GMNEC/SAJT/2020 dated 30 November at the Permanent Mission of Cabo Verde in New York.
- Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction of 25 October 1980, under National Assembly resolution no. 45/X/2022, published in the Official Gazette (No. 30, 22 March 2022). Letter of accession dated 6 June 2022. Entry into force on 1 January 2023 (notice No. 2/2023, published in the Official Gazette, No. 28, series I, 20 March 2023).
- Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, adopted on 19 October 1996, ratification approved under National Assembly resolution No. 56/X/2022 of 25 May 2022.
- Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance of 23 November 2007, under resolution No. 60/X/2022 of 6 June 2022.

IV. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures (recommendations 47 and 48, para. 112)

7. The Forensic Medicine and Sciences Institute was created and set up to modernize and professionalize criminal investigations and to cooperate with the courts in connection with forensic studies, examinations, reports, social information, hearings and other proceedings or documents in fields such as clinical pathology, forensic pathology, pathological anatomy, genetics, forensic biology and toxicology.

8. The system for access to and reuse of documents and administrative information relating to the activities of public agencies was established pursuant to Act No. 10/X/2022 of 16 May. This Act regulates access mechanisms, as well as responsibilities in the event of failure to provide the information that must be provided under the Act. Included in the National Development Strategy are measures to ensure that public services are provided transparently, efficiently and responsibly.

9. The Court of Accounts has been guaranteed full access to the comprehensive budgeting and financial management system with a view to facilitating simultaneous audits of the following items.

10. A payment consultation module has been developed with a QR code to enhance the transparency of the payment process and disentangle the process of delivering/sending proof of payment. Similarly, eCOMPRAS.cv, an electronic public procurement system, has been

created to monitor the execution, efficiency and effectiveness of the procurement system, digitize it and make it more transparent.

11. The aim of the Money Laundering Act is to modernize the public and private sectors and promote transparency therein; the adoption of the Act thus constitutes a major investment in economic modernization and in promoting the competitiveness of the domestic economy.

12. Policies intended to change practice in the private and public sectors with a view to mitigating the causes of official secrecy and the failure to disclosure of information have also been adopted.

13. The portal of the Ministry of Finance and Business Development, which makes available a range of data in Excel spreadsheets and in open format in real time, was set up, thus enhancing and optimizing communication with stakeholders and the general public.

14. A competition authority has also been created. Its mission is to ensure the application of the rules for the promotion and defence of competition in the private, public, cooperative and social sectors with a view to ensuring that markets operate efficiently, that resource are properly allocated and that the interests of consumers are protected.

15. The Council for the Prevention of Corruption was created for the sole purpose of identifying and preventing the risk of corruption, collecting and processing information to identify the areas most vulnerable to corruption and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of existing legal instruments.

16. A public finance council, whose mission is to produce independent assessments of the coherence, legality and sustainability of fiscal policy, has also been set up.

17. The institutional adoption of the electronic public procurement platform, which has considerably strengthened the public procurement and contract management process, is also noteworthy.

V. Promotion and protection of human rights (recommendations 18, 21–33, 41, 45 and 74, para. 112)

18. Cabo Verde has paid particular attention to human rights, making a firm commitment to promote and respect them and to strengthen the democratic rule of law and the fundamental freedoms of its people. In this respect, the country intends to announce its candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2025–2027.

19. In accordance with resolution No. 55/2017 of 15 June 2017, amended by resolution No. 98/2022, the Government created the Interministerial Commission for the Preparation of National Human Rights Reports to ensure the regular preparation of national reports under human rights instruments; the members of the Commission were appointed under order No. 35/2022 of 26 October 2022.

20. The Government is considering a new model for the composition of the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship, following international best practice and making the Commission's by-laws compatible with the country's aims, in keeping with human rights principles and without undermining the Government's commitments in this respect.

21. Under resolution No. 98/2018 of 24 September 2018, the Government made the Commission the country's national mechanism for the prevention of torture. Since its creation, the mechanism has made regular visits to places where people are deprived of their liberty, including prisons, police stations, centres for children in conflict with the law, facilities for people with mental illness, premises overseen by criminal investigation officers and temporary holding facilities at international airports, produced reports and made recommendations on measures to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

22. Civil society is well represented on the Commission, participating in plenary meetings, and its involvement and contributions are sought whenever promotional activities, studies, plans, reports and other documents relating to human rights are produced.

23. The Second National Action Plan for Human Rights and Citizenship, effective from 2017 to 2022, was progressively implemented. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic affected some of the measures set out in the Plan, but an overall assessment of the outcome of the Plan, intended to inform the development of a third plan, is under way.

24. Law enforcement officials have taken several initial or in-service courses in a range of disciplines that have been organized by the Commission to enhance and consolidate their knowledge and awareness of human rights as they relate to their duties – the emphasis is on constitutional law, human rights, criminal law and procedure and ethics, including professional ethics.

25. Thanks to international cooperation, they have also regularly attended courses on human rights held both in Cabo Verde and abroad. In addition, prison guards have received training on humanization and human rights, as well as social reintegration, in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

VI. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination (recommendations 34, 73, 138, 139, 141 and 143, para. 112)

26. To combat discrimination, the country, with the unequivocal backing of the Constitution, follows international practices and standards, has acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1979 and is in the process of drafting an anti-discrimination law.

27. Outreach and awareness-raising events have been held to prevent and combat discrimination and racism, as well as to disseminate information on immigrants' rights. The publication series "Foreign Communities in Cabo Verde", for example, was launched to circulate information about different immigrant groups and prevent/combat the formation of stereotypes, an intercultural and cultural diversity training programme for groups of people in professions such as journalism, education and policing began in 2022 and outreach campaigns to combat racial discrimination (one, which kicked off on 24 March, was entitled "Diversity enriches us") were organized.

28. Of particular note is the preparation of the National Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2021–2026, which, with a view to a comprehensive, coordinated approach to gender equality, defines the powers and responsibilities of the various stakeholders as they relate to implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

29. In line with the Government's programme, the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development and the main international agendas for the promotion of gender equality and development (the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063), the National Plan for Equality between Men and Women outlines a strategic vision involving making every effort to achieve gender equality and eliminate discrimination, including by opting for the institutional adoption of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for consolidating gains and making sustained progress, emphasizing economic, physical and decision-making autonomy and combining agendas with a view to facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of progress and the identification of challenges. The Interministerial Commission for Gender Mainstreaming was established pursuant to resolution No. 103/2018 of 11 October; the establishment of the Commission also involved the appointment of focal points in different sectors.

30. The development under the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development of a specific programme on gender equality and equity and the incorporation of a gender dimension into the Plan's 27 other programmes, as well as the human rights-based approach to most of the Plan's 28 programmes, are also worthy of note.

31. As part of the project "Promoting women's participation in democratic processes", several training sessions and workshops have been held, in particular for women with

disabilities on the island of Santiago, with a view to strengthening women's leadership role, raising awareness of the Parity Act and encouraging greater inclusion of and social justice for this most vulnerable population group.

32. The Cabo Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity is translating the Parity Act into Braille, making it accessible to persons with visual impairments. This is one of the greatest steps forward in the policy of inclusion, making it possible to reach everyone, regardless of his or her condition.

33. The Government's programme makes caring for dependent people (children, older persons and persons with disabilities) a priority, putting it at the heart of the public policy agenda for social inclusion and family support. The aim of the National Care Plan 2017–2019 is to address the "care crisis" affecting the country, which stems from the close relationship between caregiving and gender inequalities and is associated with the insufficient availability of care or the difficulty of gaining access to it, as well as a lack of support in extended family networks. This Plan makes the care of children up to the age of 12 (especially children under 3), older persons and persons with disabilities a priority.

34. The signing, within the framework of the continuous multi-objective survey, of a cooperation protocol by the Cabo Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity and the National Institute of Statistics for the production of indicators on the use of time, which help the Institute organize its activities and inform the development and adoption of gender-related policies intended to facilitate the activities planned as part of the project "Promoting women's participation in democratic processes".

35. The signing of an ordinance to create the conditions for care centres for persons with disabilities and for children that will meet international standards and make it possible for persons with disabilities to gain access, in dignity, to the centres.

VII. Civil and political rights

A. Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law (recommendations 38, 39, 42–44 and 46, para. 112)

36. The adoption of a bill to regulate the use of remote or electronic means of monitoring persons in pretrial detention and convicted prisoners is under way. Electronic monitoring, including remote monitoring techniques, can enhance the enforcement of a non-custodial coercive measure less severe than pretrial detention and makes it possible for home confinement to replace prison sentences when the court concludes that this measure adequately and sufficiently fulfils the objectives of the punishment.

37. The Government, together with the Higher Council of the Judiciary and the Higher Council of the Public Prosecutor's Office, has drawn up a national plan for the reduction of the case backlog that seeks to significantly reduce the backlog and procedural delays at the national level, especially in the district of Praia, by the period 2022–2025.

38. To improve prison conditions with a view to humanizing them, Praia Central Prison and Fogo Regional Prison have undergone renovation, and work to improve security at the Orlando Pantera Social and Educational Centre has been done.

B. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons (recommendations 50–67, para. 112)

39. Cabo Verde has made a number of efforts in this respect, including by drawing up the First National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons 2018–2021, adopted in accordance with resolution No. 40/2018, published in the Official Gazette (No. 27, 9 May), and by preparing the second such plan, which is currently being drafted.

40. The country has ratified important international instruments and, within the framework of the demand response mechanism of the West African Response to Trafficking

Project, implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, developed the National Strategy and the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2023–2026).

41. Pursuant to Act No. 27/X/2023, a third amendment was made to Act No. 66/VIII/2014 of 17 July 2014, amended by Act No. 80/VIII/2015 of 7 January 2015 and by Act No. 19/IX/2017 of 13 December 2017, which defines the legal conditions for the entry, stay, exit and expulsion of foreign nationals from Cabo Verdean territory, as well as their legal situation, to provide for measures to combat, prevent and clamp down on trafficking in persons and to authorize the temporary stay of foreign nationals who are victims of crimes related to trafficking in persons.

42. Significant progress towards the implementation of the Plan has been made since 2018, including with the creation of a national centre for the monitoring of trafficking in persons that, bringing together several State institutions and civil society organizations, focuses primarily on identifying and monitoring suspicious activity, as well as on collecting, processing and disseminating data and information on trafficking in persons in the country.

43. A fourth amendment to the Criminal Code was made in 2021 in accordance with Act No. 117/IX/2021 of 11 February, under which the crime of trafficking in human organs was included in article 131-B of the Code. New offences relating to child pornography, including sexting involving children, sex tourism and child prostitution, have also been defined, bringing the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code into line with those of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

44. The Code of Criminal Procedure has also been amended, establishing faster procedural mechanisms.

45. The Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Centre has adopted a handbook, prepared by the International Organization for Migration, setting forth operating procedures for the fight against human trafficking in Cabo Verde; the handbook outlines an approach based on the reality of the country and includes guidelines for the identification, orientation and assistance of victims, as well as for the investigation and punishment of traffickers.

46. With regard to services for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking victims, the proposed anti-trafficking plan for the period 2023–2026, which would be the country's second such plan, includes a component covering immediate rescue, sustainable reintegration and the protection of potential victims and witnesses.

47. The issue was resolved in 2015 during the third review of the Criminal Code, conducted pursuant to legislative Decree No. 4/2015, under which trafficking in persons was made a crime in Cabo Verde. Article 271-A of the Criminal Code has been amended to define the offence and specify the penalties, whereas forced prostitution (articles 268-A and 268-B) and child prostitution (article 145-A) were defined as part of the 2021 review.

48. Senior and operational personnel of the National Police, in particular personnel from the Central Criminal Investigation Department, the Foreign Nationals and Borders Department and the maritime police, have taken part in training and capacity-building for senior and operational staff.

C. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work (recommendations 69–72, para. 112)

49. The new law on public employment extends maternity leave from 60 to 90 days, introduces 10 days' paternity leave, provides for telecommuting or hybrid work and makes it possible, where the employee agrees and it is in the employer's interest, for an employee to remain in the civil service until the age of 70 (Act No. 20/X/2023 of 24 March 2023).

50. With a view to harmonizing the rules for the public and private sectors, the Government submitted to the National Assembly a bill, which was adopted in its entirety, to extend maternity leave under the Labour Code to 90 days and to introduce 10 days' paternity leave.

51. In the event of a complaint of failure to respect workers' rights, the Inspectorate General of Labour, in a bid to ensure compliance with the law, intervenes directly. Complaints may be submitted via the toll-free number 8002727.

52. The Inspectorate General's information management system was set up to be used as a tool to improve relations between the Inspectorate General, employees, trade unions and employers.

D. Right to an adequate standard of living (food, housing, water and sanitation, and land) (recommendations 75–77, 79–88, 90, para. 112)

53. In terms of stepping up efforts to eliminate poverty, the National Strategy for the Elimination of Extreme Poverty has been brought into line with the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2022–2026, an exercise designed to mobilize resources and funding, including from the State budget, for the complete elimination of extreme poverty by 2026.

54. An economic financing ecosystem, based on new programmes designed to promote businesses and the creation of a variety of credit and financing lines, has been created to introduce measures, facilities and instruments for greater access to financing for the private sector, which fosters increased employment and inclusive, sustainable economic growth. The business climate has improved, and incentives have been provided for investment and domestic production, in part as a result of the integration of microfinance into the national financial system.

55. The Government has signed a protocol with all the municipalities, chambers of commerce and commercial banks to improve access to credit, and these financial dynamics have made direct contributions to increases in employment and household income.

56. The acceleration of the transition from the informal to the formal economy, a process that includes a set of rights promoting greater inclusion, is also under way.

57. The main themes of the recently adopted National Policy for Territorial Cohesion (resolution No. 58/2022 of 22 May) include the reduction of regional and municipal disparities through cross-cutting policies for the provision of public administrative, education and health services, the reduction of poverty and the creation of economic and social opportunities conducive to progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by all the municipalities and islands.

58. The National Strategy for Regional and Local Development (resolution No. 87/2022 of 3 October 2022) and the National Decentralization Strategy (resolution No. 73/2022 of 30 June 2022) have been adopted. The aim of the first of the two strategies is to combat inter- and intraregional economic disparities, whereas the second, which focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of local and central public administration, seeks to guarantee the rights of constituents.

59. The single social register, an important tool to support the social protection system, was created further to Decree No. 7/2018 of 20 September 2018. The register establishes the criteria for eligibility for social assistance, including reduced rates for water and electricity, co-payment waivers and access to emergency programmes, the rehousing programme, preschool scholarships and low-cost housing, for families living in poverty.

60. As of May 2023, there were 307,689 people, corresponding to 96,229 households, of which 81,308 are duly updated and classified in the targeting indicator, on the register. Of the latter figure, 24,965 are in group I, the group of households in extreme poverty, 21,793 are in group II, the group of those in moderate poverty, 18,181 are in group III, the group of those in vulnerable poverty, and 16,017 are in group IV, the group of those not in poverty.

61. To eradicate extreme poverty by 2026, the Government, pursuant to resolution No. 4/2023 of 26 January 2023, adopted the National Strategy for the Elimination of Extreme Poverty 2022–2026, which defines the strategic actions to be taken to combat extreme poverty within the framework of the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2022–2026; the aims include strengthening the social protection system, increasing the

coverage of social programmes, linking social policies and promoting comprehensive responses.

62. The Strategic Plan 2017–2021 of the National Social Welfare Institute foresaw an increase in the salaried population covered by the social security system, which has in fact materialized; the active population in the system rose from 83,441 in 2016 to 104,851 in 2021, a figure corresponding to 52.5 per cent of the salaried population. One of the strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan 2022–2026 is to extend compulsory social protection coverage to around 66 per cent of salaried workers.

63. Two major plans, prepared as part of the implementation of rural development strategies, have been made possible by public funding – namely, the National Plan for Agricultural Investment, Food Security and Nutrition (2017–2021) and the Strategic Plan for the Rural Extension System (2017–2026); the aim of those plans is to contribute to the achievement of national goals by increasing farm yields, productivity and sales and by improving food and nutritional security.

64. The decentralization fund was set up to help the country's 22 municipalities and local associations carry out projects to combat poverty and improve the quality of people's lives, promote economic and social development and reduce poverty at the local level, particularly in rural areas.

65. Activities benefiting 385 people, with a particular focus on empowering women and young people in rural areas, were organized within the framework of the Programme for the Promotion of Rural Socioeconomic Opportunities in 2022. The Programme, whose objective was to train 8,000 women, has already reached 9,600 women, 120 per cent of its target.

66. Gender and human rights dimensions, including clear objectives to be achieved by 2026, have been made part of the 28 programmes of the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2022–2026, thereby ensuring their integration in all governance sectors.

67. The social inclusion income, an important tool with which to reduce inequalities and promote social rights that seeks to increase incomes and access to basic services such as health, education and care, which is also an important instrument for promoting social rights, was created pursuant to Decree-Law No. 41/2020 of 2 April 2020 with a view to achieving sustainable, balanced and inclusive development.

68. A social tariff for energy was created as part of Decent Access to Electricity and Water, a programme intended to benefit families in groups I and II of the single social register, and connections to the grid have been made more robust, enabling the most vulnerable families to gain access to these essential goods, which has an effect on their health and education and helps make it possible for them to develop income-generating economic activities.

E. Right to health (recommendations 92 and 93, para. 112)

69. In January 2021, the Government introduced a system of exemptions from co-payments for consultations, surgical procedures and hospitalizations for children up to 5 years of age, people in situations of economic vulnerability who are on the single social register, pensioners who have not contributed to a pension plan, persons with disabilities and blood donors.

70. Assistance has been introduced for the purchase of medicines and complementary diagnostic tests not available through the public health service, as well as for the purchase of compensating devices (including hearing aids, glasses, prostheses and orthotic devices) for patients with disabilities and those with chronic illnesses, and for the transport of haemodialysis patients. Care centres for children and adults with disabilities have also been upgraded or set up and made operational.

71. With regard to mental health, the Government has adopted the National Strategic Plan for Mental Health 2021–2025, the foundations of which involve defining mental health policies that transcend mental illness and focusing on the person with mental illness, while emphasizing primary health care as an integral part of the set of national health-care services,

as well as secondary care based on preventive, diagnostic and treatment interventions during the acute phase of the illness and tertiary care that includes psychological and social rehabilitation.

72. Also worth highlighting is the Government's determination to equip the country with a national strategic plan for comprehensive child and adolescent health for the period 2023–2026, as well as the care protocol for comprehensive child and adolescent health, for which an ownership workshop, held to obtain subsidies from the various stakeholders and put these instruments of considerable value to the National Health Service into practice, has already taken place.

73. The National Health Promotion Plan 2018–2021, with its national scope and cross-cutting nature – vectors of a multisectoral outlook and health partnerships – was adopted within the framework of national health objectives and policies and as a result of enhanced health promotion and education facilitated by the involvement of different actors and sectors.

74. The National Health Development Plan 2022–2026, which forms the basis of health policy in Cabo Verde, guiding the strategic direction of the National Health Service, was presented in follow-up to the policies and strategies outlined in the National Health Development Plan 2016–2021; it is informed by the constitutional law principles of universality, accessibility and non-discrimination.

75. The Strategic Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2018–2022, an instrument to guide policy in this area, was also adopted.

76. The legal framework for comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and care was adopted pursuant to Act No. 7/X/2022 of 16 May, whose normative content is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 3, which seeks to end the HIV epidemic by 2030, and with the Fourth National Strategic Plan to Combat AIDS 2016–2020.

F. Right to education (recommendations 94–100, 102 and 103, para. 112)

77. The first, second and third phases of lifelong learning circles have opened in most municipalities and seventh and eighth grade classes in the municipalities; vocational courses for young people and adults on fishing, construction, electricity, management and administration and information and communication technology have been introduced.

78. A technical and vocational achievement programme has been developed to enable young people and adults outside the education system to continue their studies and complete secondary education with a dual academic and vocational certification.

79. Decree-Law No. 13/2018 of 7 December was adopted; it amended Decree-Law No. 2/2010 of 7 May, pursuant to which free basic and secondary education are guaranteed and provision is made for the expansion of school meal services, the reinforcement of school transport for students living in more remote areas and the award of scholarships and subsidies for students, with an emphasis on students in technical and vocational education.

80. In the curricula contained in Decree-Laws No. 27/2022 and No. 28/2022 of 12 July, human rights, as a subject of study, is covered under citizenship education, a theme that cuts across basic education, and, in secondary institutions, under citizenship and sustainability education.

81. Course content and other instructional aids, including a human rights education handbook, games, videos and children's clubs, have been developed.

82. The Strategic Plan for Education (2022–2026) seeks to achieve the following objectives: enhance access and retention, reduce regional disparities and improve outcomes and the quality of instruction.

83. Basic education is compulsory for children who reach the age of 6 by 31 December of the year of enrolment (legislative Decree No. 13/2018 of 7 December 2018 amending legislative Decree No. 2/2010 of 7 May 2010, under which the basic principles of the

education system were set forth). Students may remain in compulsory basic education up to no more than the age of 18.

84. The Safe School Programme seeks to ensure that the school population is safe by promoting safe behaviour at school, monitoring the schools and maintaining law and order on the usual routes to school, as well as by raising awareness among students and other education system stakeholders.

85. As part of the implementation of the National Plan to Combat Sexual Violence 2017–2019, awareness-raising and training activities for coordinators and teachers at the various levels of education were organized. This teacher training programme on the prevention of sexual violence is taken up again in the new Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents 2022–2024.

86. Social and educational support measures that guarantee access to and continued enrolment in the education system for mothers and fathers, with special attention paid to pregnant teenagers who drop out, the authorization of 60 days' postnatal leave and the creation of a special regime for absences and follow-up during pregnancy, were adopted under Decree-Law No. 47/2017 of 26 October 2017. The objective is to bring this law into line with the new basic law on public employment, under which maternity leave is extended to 90 days.

87. Similarly, article 47 (3) of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent states that the suspension or cancellation of enrolment, as well as the voluntary withdrawal from school of a pregnant or parenting child or adolescent, is not taken into account in the context of non-compliance with the law.

88. Ordinance No. 27/2018 of 8 August 2018 ensures access to health care for children up to 3 years of age and to preschool education for children aged 4 to 6.

89. With a view to improving responses to students with special educational needs, Cabo Verde, starting in the 2018/19 school year, adopted as a policy measure and set up the National Reporting System for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs, which identifies the educational needs of each child/young person and, based on his or her abilities, defines the special measures to be taken (changes to the enrolment process, classroom organization, individual curricular changes, personalized learning support, a specific individual programme, assistive technologies and special assessment conditions).

90. The MELISSA Project – Women Entrepreneurs Striving for Sustainable Integration in the Agricultural Sector – has been launched. It is a hands-on project whose objective is to train a group of 250 women in sustainable farming techniques, efficient use of water and drip irrigation. In the first phase, a total of 175 rural women on the island of Santiago took a course entitled “Women in agriculture, irrigation and climate change” and, in the second phase, they participated in a training initiative on rural entrepreneurship to enable them to engage more fully in decision-making and in the management of small and medium-sized agricultural firms.

VIII. Cross-cutting issues

A. Women (recommendations 104–137, 140, 142 and 145, para. 112)

91. Cabo Verde has taken the necessary steps by investing in the consolidation of assistance offices for victims of gender-based violence and making investigations of reports of such violence more robust.

92. The Commission to Combat and Prevent Violence was created by regulatory Decree No. 46/2022 of 24 November to function as an interdepartmental body responsible for promoting and ensuring the articulation and provision of interdepartmental technical support for the conception, elaboration, definition, execution, follow-up, control, supervision and evaluation of policy measures to prevent and combat offences involving gender-based violence, including sexual violence, against minors. The Commission is currently being set up.

93. The regulation of shelters is established by Decree-Law No. 8/2014 of 27 January, and four shelters – two on the island of Santiago, one on São Vicente and one on Fogo – are in operation.
94. With the introduction of a specific chapter on gender in Act No. 55/IX/2019, which lays the foundations for the State budget, the country took a step towards taking gender equality and equity into account in drawing up budgets; it then proceeded to introduce gender indicators into the comprehensive budget and financial management system, thereby making it possible to categorize projects and programmes by their contributions to gender equality.
95. The Labour Market Monitoring Centre, whose mission is to contribute to the development of employment and vocational training policies by conducting diagnoses, analyses, studies and assessments of labour market dynamics, which inform forecasts of economic and social trends, was established pursuant to Act No. 89/IX/2020.
96. Bigamy, punishable by up to 2 years' imprisonment, is a public offence under the Criminal Code.
97. The project "Djuntu pa igualdadi", which focuses on a participatory audit of the application of the Gender-based Violence Act, was launched to strengthen the protection of women's rights in the fight against gender-based violence.
98. The project "Fla sim pa mudjer" – women together for the prevention of violence in Cabo Verde – a powerful instrument for promoting human rights, improving access to justice and exercising citizenship, was also created. It won an award from the Womanity Foundation, thus initiating the international activities of Themis, which, together with the Cabo Verdean Association for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence, will develop a women's legal empowerment programme.
99. The articles of association of the autonomous fund for victims of crimes of gender-based violence were adopted further to regulatory Decree No. 3/2023 of 17 April.
100. Centres for the provision of support and follow-up to victims of gender-based violence have been set up under Act No. 84/VII/2011 of 10 January. Support centres for such victims are already in place, as are four shelters, in all municipalities, ensuring effective support and the adoption of temporary measures to protect victims and their children. Toll-free telephone hotlines for reporting gender-based violence are available 24 hours a day.
101. With the guarantee of the existence of policy measures in the national strategic plans duly aligned with the governance agenda, funds for the support centres have been secured by mobilizing internal or external resources. Public funds have been set aside for the full operation of the 22 support centres at the national level, including their staff, the operation of the four existing shelters and the extension of those facilities to other islands, as well as the budgetary allocation for the implementation of all active employment policies and other sector-specific measures to increase the participation of women in economic and political life.
102. Training on helping victims of gender-based violence was provided, with the participation of judges, prosecutors and national police officers, at various institutions – the initiative focused on the second round table for the development of a national action plan within the framework of the participatory audit of the application of the Gender-based Violence Act (the project "Djuntu pa igualdadi").
103. The project "Promoting women's participation in democratic processes" was launched as part of the implementation of the Parity Act, the aim of which is to guarantee equal opportunities for leaders at all levels of decision-making in political and public life, to foster this participation.
104. The Gender-based Violence Act – that is, the amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure – states that conditions conducive to guaranteeing rapid, specialized and effective responses to victims are to be created and that all rights are to be guaranteed without distinction to Cabo Verdean and foreign nationals in the country, regardless of their situation.

105. Law enforcement officers, civil servants, doctors or health technicians who, in the course of their duties, become aware of the commission of an offence involving gender-based violence are required to report it within 48 hours, on pain of disciplinary liability.

106. A study on gender, immigration and harmful practices (female genital mutilation in particular) is planned as part of a wider project that will also involve outreach, awareness-raising and training for representatives of institutions, health institutions in particular, designed to promote a culture of equality and equity between men and women in resident immigrant communities.

107. Article 24 of the Constitution enshrines the principle of equality, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and origin, while article 25 recognizes equal rights for foreign nationals and stateless persons. This principle was strengthened by article 67 of Act No. 19/IX/2017 of 13 December 2017, the Foreign Nationals Act, and is protected under article 161 of the Criminal Code, which provides for punishment of up to 2 years' imprisonment.

108. The aim of the adoption of the Parity Act in 2019 was to guarantee effective equality of rights and duties between men and women with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination and creating equal opportunities, particularly with regard to political participation and decision-making, and to achieving a fairer, more democratic and more equal society.

109. This Act, which is now in force, led to a significant change in the Cabo Verdean political system in the most recent elections; for example, parity was achieved in municipal councils and assemblies, as women now account for 40.6 per cent of municipal councillors, 41.8 per cent of municipal deputies and 40.9 per cent of presidents of municipal assemblies, up from 25.9 per cent, 26.7 per cent and 13.6 per cent previously. In the legislative elections, the percentage of women deputies rose considerably, from 23.6 to 37.5 per cent.

110. Article 7 of the Parity Act provides for parity not only in political participation but also on the management boards of entities forming part of the administrative and commercial public sector of the State and local authorities.

111. In addition to Agenda 50–50, a project designed to contribute to the development of policies that guarantee greater representation in political and public bodies, the Parity Act provides for the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation commission, including representatives of political parties and civil society, that will ensure the application of the Act and notify the Government in the event of non-compliance and a lack of parity in the composition of bodies, State-subsidized enterprises in particular. All the programmes of the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2022–2026 have a gender dimension.

112. The National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity, duly aligned with national strategic plans and international agendas for gender equality and equity in all sectors of governance, was a government measure that justified and continues to justify the mobilization and budgetary allocation of the financial resources needed to ensure that the Cabo Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity achieves the country's specific objectives.

113. The Productive Inclusion Programme, which involves income-generating activities, efforts to improve participants' technical and vocational skills, entrepreneurship, financial education and life skills, was launched to promote opportunity, primarily for women representing households with children up to the age of 15.

114. A comprehensive family support project has been set up within the framework of the programme "Guaranteed access to income, education, care and health"; the aim of the project is to ensure that, with the help of follow-up methodologies consisting of activities designed to support and guide the family in accessing essential services, strengthening its potential and achieving productive inclusion, families and their members in vulnerable situations are given comprehensive support.

115. The new basic law on public employment, Act No. 20/X/2023 of 24 March, guarantees the principle of equal pay.

B. Children and adolescents (recommendations 125, 144 and 146–152 para. 112)

116. General and specific guidelines for childcare facilities and guidelines for public and private child and adolescent services are being adopted.

117. The country has approved a set of instruments to organize the protection system and combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children, including the National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents 2022–2024 (resolution No. 102/2021 of 19 November), the aim of which is to put in place policies to combat the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents.

118. Similarly, the general legal framework for the protection of children and adolescents at risk was adopted pursuant to Act No. 19/X/2023 of 31 January to ensure the promotion and full and effective exercise of their rights, as well as their well-being and integral development; a review of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, intended to guarantee better protection for the country's children, is under way, as are efforts to amend the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

119. As part of the project “Justice tailored to children”, special hearing rooms for child victims of sexual abuse and violence have been set up in the cities of Praia and Mindelo and on the islands of Sal and Boa Vista.

120. The Cabo Verde Communication Plan for Children and Adolescents (resolution No. 100/2021 of 19 November) and the National Communication Strategy for Preventing and Combating Sexual Violence (resolution No. 101/2021 of 19 November) have also been adopted).

121. Pursuant to resolution No. 38/IX/2017 of 3 June, the parliament unanimously approved making 4 June the National Day against the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Minors, an initiative that seeks to promote reflection, evaluation and decision-making on a phenomenon that affects all of society.

122. Child marriage, which is not a practice in Cabo Verde, is prohibited by law.

123. One of the themes of the Global Plan of Action for Adolescent Health 2018–2020, as of the National Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Health 2023–2026, is teen pregnancy. The “Adolescence First, Pregnancy Later” campaign, which is ongoing, was launched in 2021 to discourage early pregnancy.

124. Cabo Verde has ratified the various International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions protecting children – namely, the Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957 (No. 105), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) – and has adopted a list of hazardous forms of child labour.

125. Under the Labour Code, together with the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, no minor may work until he or she has reached the age of 15.

126. Government initiatives are complemented by several others undertaken by civil society organizations to assist and support children at risk; these initiatives include those of SOS Children's Villages and others in the field of prevention, such as the 2017–2018 project “Capacity-building to prevent and combat the sexual exploitation and abuse of children” and the project “Justice tailored to children” (2020–2022, Association for Disadvantaged Children and Ministry of Justice).

127. As part of the child-friendly justice project, a series of webinars on the protection of child victims of crime was organized for prosecutors, and judiciary officials were provided with training as the specialized hearing rooms were being set up.

128. A recent amendment to the Criminal Code increased the penalties for those who use minors 10 to 18 years of age in sexual activities or engage in sexual activity with them in exchange for remuneration or any other form of compensation (art. 145-A).

129. The criminal penalties for all types of offences involving violence against and sexual abuse of children and adolescents have been stiffened to create a deterrent and punish the perpetrators severely.

130. The amendment to the Criminal Code that was adopted in 2021 made genital mutilation a criminal offence punishable by 4 to 10 years' imprisonment; it also established penalties for preparatory acts.

131. Action has been taken, including by informing the immigrant and Cabo Verdean communities of the country's laws on these phenomena, to discourage genital mutilation and polygamy, and a project on female genital mutilation is under way.

132. Capacity-building for the providers of psychological services of the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents has been encouraged, and psychologists for all the commissions and branch offices on all the islands were recruited in 2021 and 2022. Reports of sexual abuse have been dealt with appropriately, and victims have benefited from psychosocial assistance and follow-up. In addition to the Institute, the commissions and health centres provide this type of assistance.

133. The issue of the gender balance of children and adolescents with special needs in terms of participation has been considered against the backdrop of efforts to set up parliaments and other forums for children and young people.

C. Older persons (recommendation 89, para. 112)

134. The technical requirements for the establishment and operation of homes and day centres for older people have been outlined in Ordinance No. 46/2021 of 24 September.

135. An evaluation of the National Strategic Plan for Active Ageing and the Health of Older Persons 2017–2021 is being undertaken to improve indicators for the health care provided to older people and bring the Plan into line with the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030, a United Nations programme. The Government adopted the Statue of the Older Person under Act No. 26/X/2023 of 17 April.

136. The policy on co-payments was reviewed, thereby ensuring that vulnerable groups are not liable for such payments for access to health care and medicines. The protocol for comprehensive health care for older persons in health services 2018–2023 was also adopted.

137. Municipalities have been encouraged to join the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (World Health Organization) and organize campaigns to combat discrimination against older people.

138. Health-care professionals have received training in gerontology and geriatrics for the comprehensive care of older persons in health-care facilities, including multidimensional assessments of such persons and comprehensive care at the national level.

D. Persons with disabilities (recommendations 4–6, 153 and 154, para. 112)

139. Although the Government has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it has adopted Decree-Law No. 21/2019 of 24 May 2019, which is intended to promote the development of policies and programmes that ensure that persons with disabilities, a category of person newly defined in law, have access to the most diverse array of goods and services with a view to enhancing their autonomy, independence, quality of life and social inclusion; the Decree-Law lays out the general foundations of the legal framework for prevention and the rehabilitation and participation of persons with disabilities. A booklet on the implementing regulations of the Decree-Law has been adopted to help stakeholders take ownership of it.

140. In accordance with legislative Decree No. 63/2022 of 28 August, which establishes the rules for the provision of services for the creation and operation of social assistance establishments, the Government has adopted Ordinance No. 56/2022 setting forth the

technical requirements for the establishment and operation of support centres for persons with disabilities and dependent persons.

141. The Government has taken measures for the advancement and inclusion of persons with disabilities from low-income families, guaranteeing them access to medical treatment, compensation mechanisms and vocational training. Ordinance No. 56/2022 of 5 December was adopted to that end; it sets out the operating requirements for the centres for persons with disabilities in a situation of dependency intended to provide care and support services for daily needs, medical assistance and recreational activities, thereby ensuring that such persons remain in their social and family environment.

142. In addition, the rules for free enrolment and attendance at public and private preschools, basic, secondary and higher education establishments and vocational training establishments for persons with disabilities have been laid out in Ordinance No. 27/2018 of 8 August.

143. During the pandemic, the Government set up the Care Caravan Project to make the municipal social welfare network more robust, giving a boost to the work of the providers of in-home care who look after around 500 dependent older persons and persons with disabilities a year.

E. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (recommendation 35, para. 112)

144. Promotion of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons is a component of the gender perspective that informs the Second Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development.

145. The National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship has prepared initiatives for the advancement and protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. An international seminar on citizenship and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons was held in Praia on 28 June 2021, International LGBTI Pride Day.

146. In the wake of a diagnostic study of the social and legal situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in Cabo Verde, which was commissioned by the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship and published in 2021, a recommendation was made to draw up a law to penalize direct, indirect or multiple forms of discrimination against this group; a bill is currently before the country's lawmakers.

147. A protocol has been signed with Employment and Vocational Training Institute to offer vocational training to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community in Cabo Verde with a view to giving the members of that community tools to help them with their search for decent employment.

148. A strategic plan for joint work by associations and activists in Cabo Verde, intended to facilitate the achievement of consensus on the direction to take in the fight for the human rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community, has also been adopted.

149. Awareness-raising activities, organized against the backdrop of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia and the initiative "May, Europe month", took place in the city of Praia in partnership with the Praia LGBTI Association, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the European Union.

150. To raise awareness of the importance of combating homophobia and thus to build a prejudice-free and egalitarian society, regardless of gender, the country observed International Gay Pride Day in June 2023.

F. Migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees (recommendations 91 and 155–158, para. 112)

151. The National Reception and Social (Re)integration Programme for Returning Migrants 2022–2026, which is intended to organize and put in place reception, assistance and social (re)integration mechanisms for returning migrants, was established further to resolution No. 6/2023 of 2 February 2023.

152. A fifth amendment to the Foreign Nationals Act, which seeks to update the legal framework to bring it into line with international standards for the protection of immigrants, was made pursuant to Act No. 27/X/2023. Also noteworthy is the adoption of Decree-Law No. 72/2021 of 18 October, which provides for a special procedure for the extraordinary regularization of foreign nationals with a view to making it easier for immigrants to obtain legal status.

153. In addition, Decree-Law No. 46/2019 of 25 October 2019, which provides for and regulates assistance for voluntary return, establishing procedures for support and social assistance for foreign nationals who wish to return to their country of origin, was adopted.

154. Act No. 30/IX/2018 of 23 April created a separate status for owners of secondary residences in Cabo Verde by providing for the issuance of a green card.

155. The High Authority for Immigration was established by Decree-Law No. 55/2020 of 6 July 2020; the Authority's mission is to coordinate and adopt immigration policy measures. Resolution No. 3/2019 of 10 January 2019 provided for the implementation of the Action Plan for Immigration and the Social Inclusion of Immigrants 2018–2020, the second such plan. It is designed to strengthen institutional coordination and facilitate the creation, in partnership with other institutions with expertise in immigration, of a comprehensive system of care for immigrants.

156. Cabo Verde is a party to the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). In line with this instrument, equality in employment is recognized in the Labour Code, which states that foreign or stateless workers who are authorized to work in Cabo Verde or who are subject to Cabo Verdean labour legislation have the same rights and responsibilities as Cabo Verdean workers.

157. The Labour Code, strengthening the principle of equality, prohibits racial discrimination by limiting the discretion of employers and the effect of their instructions and by preventing unlawful dismissals based on discrimination.

158. The Second Action Plan for Immigration and the Social Inclusion of Immigrants 2018–2020 provides for the organization of information sessions for employers, intended to facilitate the social inclusion of immigrants, on the rights and responsibilities of foreign workers

G. Stateless persons (recommendation 159, para. 112)

159. Since 2014, within the framework of the campaign #IBelong, which seeks to end statelessness over the period 2014–2024, Cabo Verde has participated actively in meetings of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on statelessness at the United Nations; a focal point has been appointed in the statelessness unit of the Office's regional representation for West Africa.

160. In 2019, Cabo Verde received the Office's Special Adviser on Statelessness, who visited the country to help it with the process of acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

161. Cabo Verde has provisions on stateless persons to its Nationality Act, including specific rules enabling a person born in Cabo Verde who has no other nationality and whose parents are stateless or of unknown nationality, and who resides in the country, to be considered to be Cabo Verdean by birth and automatically acquire Cabo Verdean citizenship.

162. All newborn children in the country are presumed Cabo Verdean. The Nationality Act, which was adopted unanimously article by article and as a whole, is currently being amended.

163. The plan is for the scope of nationality of origin to be expanded under the Act by giving form to the idea of a global nation and clarifying a number of legal precepts.

H. Persons in detention (recommendations 36, 37 and 40, para. 112)

164. A basic education programme for young people and adults, along with vocational distance learning courses on topics including tourism in English, climate change, food handling and ciguatera, has been set up in the central prisons of Praia, São Vicente and Sal with a view to rehabilitating persons deprived of their liberty and facilitating their reintegration into society.

165. The results of a prison census informed the development of the National Social Rehabilitation Plan 2019–2021, the aim of which is to shed light on the people who are in prison, their background, social situation, level of education, criminal records and suitability for training in a bid to align public policies with efforts to reduce recidivism.

166. Similarly, Recovery Plus, a programme for young people aged 17 to 25 who are serving the final years of their sentences, was created to promote skills development and equip such people with the personal and educational aptitudes that will help them take on socially constructive roles upon their release.

167. The team of social rehabilitation technicians, for which, in addition to psychiatrists and nutritionists, a total of 18 additional technicians in the fields of psychology, social work and criminology have been hired to work as senior social rehabilitation technicians, has been strengthened.

168. The use of remote-controlled electronic surveillance equipment, or electronic bracelets, is currently being regulated and implemented.

169. All the regional prisons and the detention centres have undergone improvement and renovation, and inmates have been given uniforms, initially in the prisons of Fogo, São Vicente and Santo Antão and currently in the prisons of Praia and Sal.

170. The separation of inmates by sex is guaranteed in all prisons. At present, all the prisons have special areas for young people aged 16 to 21, who benefit from specific programmes.

171. Competitive recruitment processes and a specific training course for prison security officers have been organized regularly to increase the size of the corps; 50 officers were recently recruited and trained.

IX. Conclusion

172. This report presents the main achievements during the period under review and, without being exhaustive, illustrates the country's commitment to taking action in follow-up to the recommendations it received during the third cycle of the universal periodic review.