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**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Fifty-first session**  
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## **Sao Tome and Principe**

### **Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the outcome of the previous review.<sup>1</sup> It is a compilation of information contained in relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### **II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with human rights mechanisms**

2. The United Nations country team recommended that Sao Tome and Principe establish a national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up to ensure consistent follow-up on international human rights recommendations. It also recommended aligning domestic legislation with regional and international human rights obligations.<sup>2</sup>

3. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Sao Tome and Principe ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.<sup>3</sup>

#### **III. National human rights framework**

##### **1. Constitutional and legislative framework**

4. UNESCO noted that the right to education, as recognized in the Constitution, was limited to citizens. It recommended explicitly enshrining the right to education for all within the Constitution and domestic law.<sup>4</sup>

5. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State accelerate its legislative review to bring domestic legislation fully in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that it consider availing itself of technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).<sup>5</sup>

6. The Committee on the Rights of the Child reiterated its previous recommendations to fully integrate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national legislation and establish clear guidelines for the consistent application of the Convention.<sup>6</sup>



## 2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

7. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families were concerned that the State had not yet established a national human rights institution. They recommended establishing an independent national human rights institution in line with the principles relating to the status of national human rights institutions (the Paris Principles), providing it with adequate resources and a strong mandate and, to that end, drawing on the technical assistance and advice of OHCHR.<sup>7</sup>

8. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the State: (a) reprioritize its budgetary allocation to ensure that the resources of the Ministry of Women's Rights were adequate and enabled it to effectively implement its mandate on women's rights and gender equality; and (b) enhance coordination among the different entities of the national machinery for the advancement of women.<sup>8</sup>

9. The United Nations country team recommended institutionalizing gender-responsive planning and budgeting, enhancing capacity across the justice sector with a gender lens, and expanding inclusive economic empowerment programmes for women and youth.<sup>9</sup>

10. It highlighted that sustained investment in localized legal infrastructure and social services remained essential to ensuring equitable access to justice and protection from gender-based violence.<sup>10</sup>

11. The Committee on Migrant Workers recommended designing and adopting a national action plan against trafficking, with measurable indicators and objectives.<sup>11</sup>

## IV. Promotion and protection of human rights

### A. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

#### 1. Equality and non-discrimination

12. The same Committee noted that, while the principle of non-discrimination was enshrined in domestic legislation, it did not cover all the grounds for discrimination prohibited by the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, including sex, language, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic status, property, marital status, or birth, migration or other status. It also noted with concern the lack of information on measures taken to guarantee the principle of non-discrimination in practice. It recommended adopting a comprehensive law to combat all forms of discrimination, in compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>12</sup>

13. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended adopting anti-discrimination legislation that included a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women encompassing direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.<sup>13</sup>

14. The same Committee was concerned that women could not automatically transmit their nationality to their children born outside the State. It recommended making legal amendments to allow for the automatic transfer of nationality from mothers to their children, regardless of where a child was born.<sup>14</sup>

15. The Committee on Migrant Workers recommended ensuring that all children of migrant workers, irrespective of their own or their parents' migration status and identity documents, enjoyed access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

16. UNESCO and the Committee on the Rights of the Child were concerned that corporal punishment was not prohibited in domestic law.<sup>16</sup> The Committee recommended: (a) establishing a legal and institutional framework, policy and strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children; (b) prohibiting corporal punishment and promoting positive and non-violent forms of discipline, and developing early intervention programmes for parents as an alternative to imprisonment; (c) ensuring that children had access to confidential, child-friendly complaint mechanisms; and (d) ensuring that all cases of violence against children were promptly investigated, that perpetrators were prosecuted and duly sanctioned and that reparations were provided to victims.<sup>17</sup>

17. The same Committee recommended ensuring that children were not detained together with adults and that detention conditions were compliant with international standards, including regarding access to education and healthcare.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

18. The United Nations country team expressed concern about the delays in judicial proceedings to address the allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings by military personnel in November 2022. OHCHR highlighted that accountability must be pursued through independent civilian courts, in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as military courts lacked sufficient guarantees of independence to adjudicate such cases. It called for compliance with international obligations.<sup>19</sup>

19. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended: (a) providing legal aid to all women without sufficient means, including in cases of rights violations other than gender-based violence; (b) disseminating information in accessible and easy-to-read formats on the legal remedies available to women and girls to claim their rights and their eligibility to receive legal aid, including free of charge, if necessary; and (c) adopt legal and other safeguards to ensure that women had a realistic choice between the use of legal proceedings or mediation and that the use of mediation did not place women at a disadvantage or at risk, especially in cases of domestic violence.<sup>20</sup>

20. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended allocating adequate resources to establish a child justice system with court facilities, procedures and specialized and trained judges.<sup>21</sup>

21. The Committee on Migrant Workers was concerned about reports of corruption. It recommended investigating all instances of corruption and adopting preventive and punitive measures to put an end to them.<sup>22</sup>

## 4. Fundamental freedoms

22. UNESCO noted that the country had adopted several laws on freedom of opinion and expression. It also noted that, under the Penal Code, defamation, libel and slander were criminal offences and could be punished by a maximum of two years of imprisonment. There was no legislation concerning freedom of information.<sup>23</sup>

23. UNESCO recommended that Sao Tome and Principe: (a) decriminalize defamation and place it within civil defamation legislation that was in accordance with international standards; and (b) introduce an access to information law that was in accordance with international standards.<sup>24</sup>

24. UNESCO indicated that, since systematic monitoring had begun, it had recorded no killings of journalists in Sao Tome and Principe.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. Right to marriage and family life

25. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned at the lack of data on children deprived of parental care and the absence of a mandated body responsible for alternative care. It recommended ensuring that poverty, disability or divorce were never the sole justification for the placement of children in alternative care and that children were

separated from their family only if it was in their best interests, after a comprehensive assessment of their situation by the competent authorities. It also recommended accelerating the establishment of the mechanism and legal framework for international adoption.<sup>26</sup>

## **6. Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons**

26. The same Committee was concerned at persistent reports of child labour, including in domestic and agricultural work, in the informal economy and in hazardous conditions, particularly in the north-western and south-eastern regions, and at the lack of enforcement of child labour laws. It recommended aligning the minimum working age with the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), of the International Labour Organization, protecting children from work in hazardous conditions, and ensuring the effective enforcement of the child labour laws across all sectors, including in the informal economy.<sup>27</sup>

27. The Committee on Migrant Workers recommended: (a) increasing the frequency of unannounced, spontaneous labour inspections, particularly in the informal sector, and prosecuting and punishing persons or groups who exploited migrant workers, in particular children; and (b) adopting a national plan to reduce child labour and eliminate the worst forms of child labour and providing the necessary assistance to migrant workers, especially children, who had been victims of labour exploitation and other forms of exploitation.<sup>28</sup>

28. The United Nations country team stressed that revitalizing the national action plan to combat child labour remained a priority, with particular focus on the enforcement of legislation, awareness-raising campaigns and school reintegration initiatives.<sup>29</sup>

29. The Committee on Migrant Workers was concerned at the scale of human trafficking, particularly for exploitation in prostitution and agriculture, and at the lack of information on investigations, prosecutions and convictions for trafficking in persons, and on any prevention and protection mechanisms that had been set up for victims. It recommended: (a) adopting and implementing a law to combat trafficking in persons in line with international law; (b) developing adequately resourced services for the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims; (c) providing police officers, border guards, judges, lawyers and other relevant staff with appropriate training to enable them to identify potential victims of trafficking; and (d) ensuring that trafficking in persons and the exploitation of prostitution were duly punished.<sup>30</sup>

## **7. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work**

30. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned at the persistence of gender stereotypes hampering women's access to employment, the disproportionately high unemployment rates among women, in particular young women, exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, resulting in many women's economic dependency and poverty in old age, and at the overrepresentation of women in unpaid work, in particular domestic work, and the informal economy, without access to social protection and pension benefits. It recommended: (a) increasing women's access to employment in the formal economy; (b) criminalizing sexual harassment in the workplace and ensuring that victims had access to complaint procedures, those responsible were adequately punished and victims were protected from retaliation; and (c) amending the Labour Code to remove any restrictions concerning prohibited occupations for pregnant, post-partum and breastfeeding mothers.<sup>31</sup>

31. The Committee on Migrant Workers noted with concern reports of reprisals suffered because of the trade union activity of certain workers. It recommended taking all measures, including legislative amendments, necessary to guarantee all migrant workers the right to take part in trade union activities and to freely join trade unions.<sup>32</sup>

32. The United Nations country team noted the Government's inability to generate employment, which affected the most vulnerable segment of the population and posed a potential challenge to political stability and economic prosperity. Legal modernization was essential for safeguarding the right to work, promoting investment and improving business confidence.<sup>33</sup>

33. The United Nations country team noted that youth unemployment remained high, compounded by limited vocational training and the absence of a national employment policy. Inclusive and rights-based youth programming must remain a priority to achieving long-term social cohesion, economic resilience and environmental sustainability.<sup>34</sup>

34. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommended aligning youth skill development with labour market needs, expanding entrepreneurship opportunities, and closely integrating the National Youth Strategy (2025–2030) with gender equality and climate resilience initiatives.<sup>35</sup>

## **8. Right to social security**

35. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended substantially increasing the budget allocations for social protection, in particular for families in vulnerable situations.<sup>36</sup>

36. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended extending social protection to women working in the informal economy and women performing domestic and other unpaid work, with special attention to rural women.<sup>37</sup>

## **9. Right to an adequate standard of living**

37. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that only one third of households had access to adequate drinking water and sanitation and only one fifth of households had access to an adequate waste disposal system, while two thirds of the population lived in poverty, including one third in extreme poverty. It reiterated its recommendation to implement the national legislation and policies aimed at improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation and waste disposal, including in rural areas, and recommended evaluating the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy, 2012–2016.<sup>38</sup>

38. The United Nations country team stated that, despite progress in access to improved water sources, open defecation persisted, particularly in rural areas. Malnutrition remained a significant concern, as 67 per cent of children aged between 6 and 59 months suffered from anaemia, with the highest prevalence among low-income households.<sup>39</sup>

39. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended developing and adopting a poverty reduction strategy incorporating a gender perspective and with a particular focus on women, especially women heads of households and unemployed women.<sup>40</sup>

40. The same Committee was concerned that rural women and girls had very limited access to education, health services and transportation and that they were largely relegated to traditional caretaking responsibilities. It recommended: (a) improving women's access to basic services, such as healthcare, transportation and education, and adequate water and sanitation facilities in rural areas; (b) promoting equal sharing between rural women and men of responsibilities for traditional caretaking responsibilities, including the procurement of water, wood and food; and (c) ensuring rural women's access to land ownership and use and that jointly owned land parcels were registered under the names of both spouses.<sup>41</sup>

## **10. Right to health**

41. The same Committee noted with concern the disparities in women's access to health services, that rural women were especially disadvantaged, the lack of sexual and reproductive health services, in particular prenatal, perinatal and post-partum services, and the low level of contraception use. It recommended: (a) strengthening women's access to quality health services and eliminating disparities, in particular for rural women, including by improving the healthcare infrastructure, increasing budgetary allocations for the health sector and conducting informational campaigns on women's health; and (b) widely disseminating information on and strengthening women's access to sexual and reproductive health services.<sup>42</sup>

42. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned at the high maternal, neonatal and infant mortality rates, disparities in vaccination coverage, especially between urban and rural areas, and the lower vaccination coverage among populations at risk, and malnutrition among children, including increased obesity and micronutrient deficiency. It

recommended: (a) improving the quality of and access to antenatal and postnatal services and facilities and early identification and intervention; (b) allocating resources to expand vaccination coverage, with particular attention to children from poor and marginalized families; and (c) promoting healthy lifestyles, with a focus on preventing and reducing the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and other harmful substances.<sup>43</sup>

43. The same Committee was concerned at the alarmingly high rates of early pregnancy, in particular among girls belonging to disadvantaged groups and in the Autonomous Region of Principe, resulting in school dropout and an increased risk of economic destitution and dependence.<sup>44</sup>

44. The United Nations country team noted that misconceptions, stigma and limited access to information continued to restrict individual autonomy in relation to contraceptive use, family planning and informed reproductive decision-making, hindering the realization of the rights to health, dignity and gender equality.<sup>45</sup>

45. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended, on the basis of an evaluation of the national youth policy strategy and the action plan for the prevention of early pregnancy 2018–2022, developing an age-appropriate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and strengthening sexual and reproductive health education, including by ensuring that it was focused on the prevention of early pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and the promotion of responsible sexual behaviour. It also recommended addressing the root causes of early pregnancy and ensuring that every school had adequate gender-separated sanitary facilities for girls.<sup>46</sup>

46. The United Nations country team highlighted concerns over a decline in routine immunization coverage. UNICEF recommended the full implementation of a national newborn survival strategy and the expansion of community health outreach to further reduce child mortality.<sup>47</sup>

## 11. Right to education

47. According to the United Nations country team, access to pre-primary education remained limited, with only 36.4 per cent of children aged between 3 and 5 years old enrolled. The high dropout rates in secondary school, particularly among girls, were exacerbated by policies that excluded pregnant students from full participation. UNICEF recommended urgent reforms to ensure gender-responsive, equitable education policies and practices.<sup>48</sup>

48. The United Nations country team noted that non-formal education pathways for out-of-school young people were underdeveloped. Persistent challenges remained, especially for children aged between 0 and 3 years, students transitioning between grades and those with disabilities. Early pregnancy continued to lead to dropout and exclusion, underscoring the need for continued advocacy with policymakers to ensure educational continuity and inclusion.<sup>49</sup>

49. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the high rates of school dropout, in particular among girls, due to early pregnancy. It recommended assessing the causes of school dropout among girls, to inform a strategic approach to address those causes, and improving access to education for girls belonging to disadvantaged groups.<sup>50</sup>

50. The same Committee was concerned at disparities in enrolment, retention and completion rates at all levels of education, the insufficient quality of education and number and capacity of teachers, the poor school infrastructure, insufficient books and teaching materials, and the lack of quality vocational training. It recommended: (a) ensuring equal access to and retention in high-quality education, including preschool and upper secondary education, for all children; (b) improving the quality of school education and teaching, including by increasing the number of teachers, in particular in remote and rural areas and in the north-western region and the Autonomous Region of Principe, ensuring training for teachers and providing them with adequate salaries and recognition; (c) investing in the use of technology in education; (d) allocating adequate resources in a sustainable manner to improve school infrastructure; and (e) strengthening preschool education.<sup>51</sup>

51. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned that approximately 20 per cent of secondary school-age girls did not attend school, in

particular girls from economically disadvantaged families, and about high illiteracy rates among women, in particular rural women. It recommended: (a) increasing girls' access to quality education, in particular at the secondary level and in rural and remote areas, including by increasing the number of schools and providing free and safe school transportation; (b) ensuring access for girls to adequate water and sanitation, sex-segregated restrooms and menstrual hygiene products and facilities at schools; and (c) carrying out adult literacy programmes for women, particularly targeting rural women.<sup>52</sup>

52. UNESCO recommended that Sao Tome and Principe guarantee in its legislation at least 12 years of free primary and secondary education, and continue efforts to ensure the right to inclusive education for girls.<sup>53</sup>

## 12. The environment and business and human rights

53. The United Nations country team was concerned that only 36 per cent of the population had access to safely managed drinking water, and only 4.2 per cent used clean cooking fuels. High mortality rates were linked to air and water pollution. It recommended adopting policy incentives for ozone depleting substance-free solar-powered cold storage solutions, which would mitigate post-harvest losses, enhance food and nutrition security, reduce emissions and create income-generating opportunities.<sup>54</sup>

54. The United Nations Environment Programme recommended adopting community incentives for mangrove restoration and clean cooking enterprise development, as such actions supported the realization of the rights to food and protection from environmental hazards. It also recommended adaptation measures such as terracing, irrigation systems and farmer field schools to reduce soil erosion and improve climate-resilient agriculture in rural communities.<sup>55</sup>

55. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended investing in climate change adaptation, resiliency-building and capacity-building across the country to address the negative impact of climate change, seeking bilateral, multilateral, regional and international cooperation in that regard.<sup>56</sup>

56. UNICEF underscored that climate change disproportionately impacted children through food insecurity, disease and displacement. It recommended the integration of child protection concerns into national climate frameworks and increasing investments in climate-resilient social services to fulfil the rights of children, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>57</sup>

57. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended establishing and implementing a regulatory framework for the business sector, in particular in the areas where the impact of business activities and operations on children's rights was most significant, to ensure their compliance with international standards concerning human and children's rights, health, labour and the environment.<sup>58</sup>

## B. Rights of specific persons or groups

### 1. Women

58. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child were concerned about the persistence of harmful practices, including de facto unions, often between girls and older men.<sup>59</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child was also concerned at the growing phenomenon of *catorzinhas/papoite* (sexual abuse of school girls in exchange for better grades), sometimes resulting in early pregnancy. It recommended: (a) strengthening efforts to prevent gender-based violence against girls; (b) bringing domestic legislation on gender-based violence fully into line with international standards, ensuring the effective implementation of the 2013–2018 national strategy to combat gender-based violence and adopting an updated strategy; and (c) fully criminalizing as sexual abuse, preventing and combating the phenomenon of *catorzinhas/papoite*, including by establishing guidelines on preventing and combating sexual harassment and violence at school, setting up an effective monitoring and reporting mechanism and ensuring that all such cases were investigated and prosecuted as

sexual abuse and that girls were provided with the necessary assistance and psychosocial support, in particular to continue schooling.<sup>60</sup>

59. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended: (a) conducting awareness-raising campaigns and effectively addressing harmful practices and social norms; and (b) establishing mechanisms to detect, protect and provide services and support to victims of de facto unions and criminalizing de facto unions.<sup>61</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended effectively addressing harmful practices and social norms, including through a comprehensive behaviour-change strategy, involving, inter alia, relevant professionals, traditional leaders and the media.<sup>62</sup>

60. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended fully criminalizing the sexual abuse of girls by men in exchange for better grades or other benefits, including by establishing guidelines on preventing and combating sexual harassment and violence at school, setting up an effective monitoring and reporting mechanism, and ensuring that all cases of sexual abuse of girls were investigated and prosecuted as such and girls were provided with assistance and psychosocial support, in particular to continue schooling.<sup>63</sup>

61. The same Committee was concerned that women and girls were frequently subjected to various forms of gender-based violence, including, increasingly, domestic and sexual violence and abuse.<sup>64</sup> According to the United Nations country team, domestic violence remained prevalent, notably in Mé-Zóchi and Lembá. Although intersectoral training and public awareness campaigns had been conducted, additional investment was needed to shift entrenched norms and reinforce survivor-centred protection systems.<sup>65</sup>

62. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended: (a) strengthening efforts to prevent gender-based violence against women and girls, in close consultation with experts on the prevention of gender-based violence, and taking a women's and girls' rights-centred approach to such efforts; (b) bringing domestic legislation on gender-based violence fully into line with international standards and ensuring its effective implementation; and (c) updating the national strategy to combat gender-based violence, 2013–2018.<sup>66</sup>

63. The same Committee was concerned at the limited awareness among women and girls, especially rural women and girls, of their human rights and the remedies available to claim them. It recommended strengthening awareness-raising efforts among women and girls and men and boys, on women's and girls' human rights and gender equality, with particular attention to rural areas. It also recommended: (a) adopting temporary special measures to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality of women and men in all areas where women were disadvantaged or underrepresented; and (b) developing a comprehensive strategy to address gender stereotypes affecting girls, including at all levels of the education system, and promoting the equal sharing of roles and responsibilities between girls and boys and women and men.<sup>67</sup>

64. The same Committee noted with concern that, in 2023, women held only 8 out of 55 seats in the National Assembly and that their representation in the public service and the judiciary remained very low. It recommended effectively implementing the minimum quota for women's representation in elected bodies and in the public service stipulated in the gender parity act of 2022.<sup>68</sup>

65. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended developing a comprehensive strategy to address gender stereotypes affecting girls, including at all levels of the education system, and promoting the equal sharing of roles and responsibilities between girls and boys and women and men.<sup>69</sup>

66. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned that women had been disproportionately affected by the adverse economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It recommended supporting women's economic empowerment and ensuring that the National Financial Inclusion Strategy incorporated a comprehensive gender perspective and was implemented accordingly. It also recommended: (a) expanding women's access to financial credit by providing relevant information to them and creating an infrastructure that enabled women to access markets, including e-commerce; (b) ensuring

that post-COVID-19 recovery policies and programmes included a gender perspective; and (c) increasing the involvement and leadership of women in implementing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.<sup>70</sup>

67. The same Committee recommended ensuring that women participated equally in decision-making on climate change mitigation measures and the sustainable management of natural resources.<sup>71</sup>

## **2. Children**

68. The United Nations country team stressed that violence against children, including corporal punishment, sexual abuse and early marriage, continued to seriously compromise child development in the country. Efforts to address that violence should be aligned with the country's commitments made during the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children.<sup>72</sup> UNESCO recommended legally proscribing corporal punishment in education settings.<sup>73</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended establishing mechanisms to detect, protect and provide services and support to victims of child and forced marriage, and criminalizing child and forced marriage.<sup>74</sup>

69. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, noting that the minimum age for marriage was set for men and women at 18 years of age, urged the State to remove all exceptions that allowed marriage below that age.<sup>75</sup>

70. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that many fathers did not respect court orders to provide child support payments in the State. It recommended ensuring the enforcement of court decisions on child support payments and advancing child support payments in cases where they could not be collected from a father.<sup>76</sup>

71. The United Nations country team indicated that the number of children in institutional care had increased, primarily due to parental migration and economic hardship. UNICEF was advocating for the expansion of family-based care options such as foster care, kinship support and subsidized guardianship, in line with national child protection workshop outcomes. UNICEF recommended strengthening dedicated resources to guarantee the full operationalization of the child protection network.<sup>77</sup>

72. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended establishing a three-digit, toll-free 24-hour helpline available for all children, promoting awareness of how children could access it and allocating the necessary human, financial and technical resources for its effective functioning.<sup>78</sup>

## **3. Persons with disabilities**

73. The same Committee noted the State's acknowledgement of the urgent need for a change in approach and tangible action to address disability issues. It recommended: (a) adopting a human rights-based approach regarding children with disabilities and reviewing domestic legislation and policies accordingly; (b) establishing a system for disability assessment and the referral of persons with disabilities and ensuring its uniform and harmonized application across different sectors; and (c) seeking international cooperation and assistance to develop an inclusive education system.<sup>79</sup>

74. The United Nations country team stressed that children with disabilities faced enduring barriers to accessing essential services, including systemic exclusion from education and social services. It recommended that dedicated, inclusive strategies be integrated across all national planning frameworks.<sup>80</sup>

## **4. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers**

75. The Committee on Migrant Workers was concerned at the lack of any policy or strategy on migration aimed at implementing the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and allowing migrants to fully exercise their rights. It recommended that the State develop policies and strategies

for the implementation of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention.<sup>81</sup>

76. The same Committee remained concerned about the lack of a specific policy to protect migrant workers from the risk of labour exploitation. It recommended establishing dedicated procedures for the regularization of the status of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families.<sup>82</sup>

77. The same Committee recommended establishing a system to collect data on the situation of migrant workers, in particular those in an irregular situation, and members of their families, and to provide publicly available statistics on foreign migrant workers, both in regular and irregular situations.<sup>83</sup>

78. The same Committee was concerned that the State had no legislation relating to persons in need of international protection. It recommended that the State ensure that its legislation and national policies were in conformity with the Convention, take clear and effective measures to implement a previously defined migration policy and provide sufficient resources for its implementation.<sup>84</sup>

## 5. Stateless persons

79. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned that around 5 per cent of children overall, and 12.5 per cent of children from the poorest families, had not been registered, especially children in rural and remote areas and those born to unmarried parents and in unattended births.<sup>85</sup> The United Nations country team stressed that children from migrant families and remote communities remained at risk of exclusion. It recommended continuing efforts to extend digital registration platforms and targeted outreach to achieve full coverage.<sup>86</sup>

80. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended: (a) ensuring and promoting universal and free birth registration, with particular attention given to the poorest families, rural and remote areas and children born to unmarried parents; and (b) ensuring that a birth certificate was provided free of charge for every registered birth and that children who did not hold a birth certificate could gain access to education and all other necessary social services.<sup>87</sup>

81. The Committee on Migrant Workers recommended ensuring that all children of migrant workers of Sao Tome and Principe living abroad and children born in its territory, including the children of migrants in an irregular situation and of asylum-seekers, were registered at birth, issued with personal identity documents and had a nationality.<sup>88</sup>

82. The same Committee and the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.<sup>89</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [A/HRC/47/16](#), [A/HRC/47/16/Add.1](#) and [A/HRC/47/2](#).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of Sao Tome and Principe, pp. 1 and 7.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Sao Tome and Principe, para. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 2, 3 and 17.

<sup>5</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 13.

<sup>6</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 8.

<sup>7</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), paras. 20 and 21; and [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 20 and 21.

<sup>8</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 19.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 51. See also [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 31 (a) and (c).

<sup>12</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 26 and 27.

<sup>13</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 15.

- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., paras. 34 and 35.
- <sup>15</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), para. 43 (a).
- <sup>16</sup> UNESCO submission, para. 4; and [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 24 (c).
- <sup>17</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 25.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., para. 52 (g).
- <sup>19</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 5.
- <sup>20</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 17.
- <sup>21</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 52 (a).
- <sup>22</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 24 and 25.
- <sup>23</sup> UNESCO submission, paras. 9–11.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., paras. 18 and 19.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., para. 13.
- <sup>26</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 32 (a) and (b), 33 (e) and 34.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., paras. 49 and 50. See also United Nations country team submission, p. 7.
- <sup>28</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), para. 31. See also [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 49 and 50.
- <sup>29</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 7.
- <sup>30</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 50 and 51. See also [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 31 (b) and (c).
- <sup>31</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), paras. 40 and 41.
- <sup>32</sup> [CMW/C/STP/CO/1](#), paras. 34 and 35.
- <sup>33</sup> United Nations country team submission, pp. 8 and 9.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 10 and 11.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 10.
- <sup>36</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 11.
- <sup>37</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 41.
- <sup>38</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 42.
- <sup>39</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 8.
- <sup>40</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 51.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., paras. 48 and 49 (a)–(d).
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., paras. 42 and 43.
- <sup>43</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 37 and 38.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., para. 39. See also [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 43.
- <sup>45</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 11.
- <sup>46</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 40. See also [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 37.
- <sup>47</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 12.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>50</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 45 and 46.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., paras. 43 and 44.
- <sup>52</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), paras. 36 and 37. See also para. 45 (a) and (b).
- <sup>53</sup> UNESCO submission, para. 17.
- <sup>54</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 4.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 5.
- <sup>56</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 41.
- <sup>57</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 5.
- <sup>58</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 15.
- <sup>59</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 26; and [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 28. See also [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), paras. 28 and 29.
- <sup>60</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 26 (b) and 27.
- <sup>61</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 27.
- <sup>62</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), paras. 28 and 29.
- <sup>63</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), para. 29 (b).
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., para. 28.
- <sup>65</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 7.
- <sup>66</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#), para. 29.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., paras. 10, 11, 23 and 25 (d).
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., paras. 32 and 33.
- <sup>69</sup> [CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6](#), para. 19.
- <sup>70</sup> [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5](#) and [CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1](#), paras. 46 and 47 (a)–(c).
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., para. 49 (d).
- <sup>72</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 7.

- <sup>73</sup> UNESCO submission, para. 17.
- <sup>74</sup> CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5 and CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1, para. 27 (b).
- <sup>75</sup> CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6, para. 16.
- <sup>76</sup> CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5 and CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5/Corr.1, paras. 52 (b) and 53 (b).
- <sup>77</sup> United Nations country team submission, pp. 6 and 7.
- <sup>78</sup> CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6, para. 30.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., para. 36. See also CMW/C/STP/CO/1, para. 19 (c).
- <sup>80</sup> United Nations country team submission, pp. 2, 13 and 14.
- <sup>81</sup> CMW/C/STP/CO/1, paras. 14 and 15.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid., paras. 30 and 49 (a).
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., para. 19.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid., paras. 8 and 9.
- <sup>85</sup> CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6, para. 22.
- <sup>86</sup> United Nations country team submission, p. 2.
- <sup>87</sup> CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6, para. 23.
- <sup>88</sup> CMW/C/STP/CO/1, para. 41.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid. and CRC/C/STP/CO/5-6, para. 23. See also CEDAW/C/STP/CO/1-5, paras. 34 and 35.
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