



UPR Mid-Term Report: Eritrea

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eritrea
18 May 2017

TABLE

N	Topic	Sub Topic	Page
I	UPR – INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS		
	(i) A Systemic Approach Developed		1
	(ii) Organization and Structure Established		1
II	PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES		
	A. DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF SOCIAL EQUALITY		2
	(i) Macro-Economic Development Orientation		
		<i>The Warsay-Yikealo Development Programme as a Context for the UPR</i>	2
		<i>Institutional and legal dimensions</i>	2
		<i>Land Rights and Consolidation of Implementation</i>	3
	(ii) Steps in poverty elimination expanded		4
		<i>The Model Agricultural Transformations</i>	4
		<i>The integrated household rural farms and Food Security</i>	4
		<i>Supporting Women in Agri-business</i>	5
		<i>Promoting micro credit schemes</i>	6
		<i>Transforming the life of isolated settlements and villages</i>	6
		<i>New Remuneration System of civil service</i>	7
	(iii) Welfare and Protection of Children		7
		<i>Strengthening children's welfare system</i>	7
		<i>Advocacy and Sensitization</i>	8
		<i>Combating child labour and trafficking of children and women</i>	8
		<i>Pursue progress in education, health to the vulnerable, disabled</i>	9
	(iv) Equality of Women		
		<i>Gender Equality and Empowerment</i>	12
		<i>Discriminatory practices</i>	13
	B. SOCIAL SECTOR STRATEGY & DIGNIFIED LIFE		
	(i) Food Security		
		<i>Improving Food Availability and Accessibility</i>	15
		<i>Food Affordability and Government Proactive Role</i>	16

(ii) Health Security	<i>Increase the quality and accessibility of health services</i>	17
	<i>Develop HR capacity</i>	20
(iii) Right to Education		
	<i>Universalization of Primary Education</i>	21
	<i>Improving quality</i>	25
	<i>Allocation of resources to education and education of girls in particular</i>	26
C. LIBERTIES		
i) Improve the penitentiary system and situation		
	<i>Respect and Protection of detainee rights and dignity</i>	26
	<i>Dignified Life of Detainees</i>	27
	<i>Health Security in Prison Centers</i>	27
	<i>Education of detainees</i>	28
	<i>Other Rights</i>	28
(ii) Freedom of Religion		29
(iii) Freedom of expression, association, assembly		
	<i>Freedom of Expression</i>	29
	<i>Freedom of Association & Assembly</i>	31
	<i>Organization of Youth and Students</i>	32
	<i>Women's Organization</i>	33
	<i>Organization of Eritrean Workers</i>	34
	<i>Organizations of PWDs</i>	36
D. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE		
(i) Implementation of National Laws		
	<i>Implementation of National Laws</i>	37
	<i>Advocacy and Sensitization</i>	38
(ii) Protection		
	<i>The integrity of the Judiciary</i>	39
E. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK		
(i) Existential External Threats and Effects		
		40
(ii) Towards a New Development Trend		
		41
F. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION		
(i) UPR and Monitoring.		
		42
(ii) Engagement and Institutional Linkages		
		44
(iii) Conventions and Thematic Mandates		
		45
(iv) Opposing the Politicization of Human rights and the targeting of Eritrea		
		46

The Second UPR review on Eritrea was held on 3 February 2014. During the 18th Session of the Working Group (WG) on UPR, Eritrea received 200 recommendations and after consultations, Eritrea broadly accepted 92 recommendations. The outcome report was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 26th session in June 2014. On this basis, the implementation and progress accomplished in the last 2 years has been compiled in four parts.

I. UPR IMPLEMENTATION – INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS

(i) A Systemic Approach Outlined

1. On the basis of the previous experiences, Eritrea developed a systemic approach to follow up and implement the 3rd Cycle UPR recommendations. A Framework for Action was thus prepared for the follow up of the accepted recommendations with the following aims:-

- *Reflect* the recommendations in the National Development Goals of the nation
- Use the recommendations as additional drives in internal *coordination* of all stakeholders
- Utilize the UPR as a mechanism for promoting *engagement and cooperation*

2. *The Fundamental Approach and Tenet* has been to reflect the implication of the development progress on the human right of the Eritrean people and the recommendations and a systemic approach developed. The following aspects are the major dimensions:-

- *Human right mainstreaming* has been strengthened. To this end *UPR Framework for Action (2015 -2018)* was prepared and discussed among stakeholders. On this basis, the planning and implementation strategies have reflected the accepted recommendations
- The approach has underlined *essence of human rights in human dignity, human security and betterment* that leads to the improvement in the standard of life and *human development*
- The *methodology* also focused on the fundamental issues described above through the following three parameters of *respect, protection and fulfilment* of the rights through concrete measures

3. To promote integrated and coordinated effort, the organization of recommendations considered 5 *thematic categories, namely*, development and promotion of social equality, promotion of dignified life, administration of justice, liberties, constitution and international cooperation.

(ii) Organization and Structure Established

4. The UPR Coordinating Body (CB) was established in March 2015 after a preparation that laid the above institutional, organizational and functional basis. The Coordinating Body chaired by the MOFA includes the Ministry of National Development (MND), Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare (MOLHW), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the National Force of Police and Security (NFPS) and three national civic

organizations namely, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) and National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW). Effort has also been made to integrate the work of the Eritrean CRC Working Group and CEDAW Committee.

II. PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

A. Development and Promotion of Social Equality

5. This category of recommendations involves measures related to strengthening economic, social and cultural rights. The underlying principles consolidated in this respect include the right to development, equal right and opportunity and integrated and sustainable in development. In essence this focuses on Macro-economic development orientation, poverty elimination, human welfare of children and disabled and women equality and empowerment.

(i) *Macro-Economic Development Orientation*

The recommendations implemented in relation to this area are strengthening the progressive efforts in ESCD (122.68) and efforts for social equality (122.69).

The Warsay-Yikealo Development Programme as a Context for the UPR

6. The UPR recommendations were accepted against the background of the success in the Warsay Yikealo Development Campaign which served as a post war development drive. It addressed the critical bottlenecks, maximized the utilization of comparative advantages and mobilized available resources. In this respect, progress has been achieved in soil and water conservation, agriculture, coastal development, economic infrastructure and capacity building. These have addressed the effects of the border war with Ethiopia (1998-2000) and the effects of the 1999-2004 droughts.
7. Constricted fiscal and a regional dynamics unfavorable to development efforts, unjustified sanctions, occupation of Eritrea's sovereign territories, and the hostile stance of detractors have their influence in the overall situation. However, these challenges have not rolled back the progress and the nation. The economy thus progressed steadily and the national capacity and institutions also evolved at a reasonable and healthy pace. The social sector strategy made impacts and recent reports including the 2015 Eritrea Statistics Office and the Millennium Development Goals Reports attest to this truth. Eritrea is now ready to fast track progress to bring a qualitative leap in the next three years.

Institutional and legal dimensions

8. The people's right to development has been taken as a major drive. Hence, issues of equity, creation of conditions favorable to development and respect for the sovereignty of the nation have formed the essence of the effort. In this regard, equal rights and opportunities have constituted central for economic, social and cultural development. Focus to bridge the gap in the development of the various regions and areas assumed a major priority. People-centered strategies and community based

approaches flourished and attention is given to disadvantaged and vulnerable sections and social groups. Furthermore, collective responsibility has prevailed and there is no dichotomy between rights and duties and the people are beneficiary and active participants in the ongoing development.

9. Strengthening the progressive efforts in ESCD (122.68) has thus been a major consideration in the above context. The vision stated in the National Charter of the People's Front for Justice and Democracy (PFDJ) and the Macro-Policy to achieve rapid, balanced, home grown and sustainable economic growth with social equity and justice constitute the main drive. The National Indicative Development Plan (NIDP/2014-2018) also served as a strategic plan of the Government to mitigate the areas and challenges of development. It thus served as an important context to the consolidation of the economic, social and cultural rights. In this regard, the following practical and organizational dimensions continued to be prominent in reflecting the UPR recommendations accepted by Eritrea:-

- Consideration of cross-cutting issues on gender, youth empowerment, climate change
- The establishment of a committee of focal persons from ministries and regional administrations to monitor progress and implementation
- MOFA and MND coordination to maximize benefits of international cooperation
- The participation of the Ministry of National Development as an important member of the UPR Coordinating Body monitoring the pertinent issues and recommendations.

10. The follow up of the UPR recommendations reflected equal right and opportunities and the implementation has thus considered the following practical dimensions:-

- There has never been any discrimination, exclusion, restriction or preference made on the basis of ethnicity, religion, social status, language, opinion, gender and race.
- Equity considerations have been strengthened and rural population, marginalized areas and vulnerable social groups constituted a priority. This also encompassed the equitable distribution of wealth and resources.
- The population including the Diaspora is active participant and beneficiary of the wealth and opportunities on the basis of an equal footing of all rights. Hence, a system that nurtures collective responsibilities & duties prevails

Land Rights and Consolidation of Implementation

11. Land right and the implementation of the Land Proclamation No 58/1994 is a major step in the consolidation of the ESC rights. The right of every major age citizen (18 years and above) in the rural areas to access agricultural and residential plots of land is guaranteed. This demands fulfillment of national obligation outlined by law and the Proclamation. The Proclamation also addresses land provisions by other parties. Accordingly, land tenure and management is consolidated to empower villagers, maximize productivity and promote food security. In the last three years:

- the inhabitants of a village have organized peoples' land committees to ensure their decisive role in the process of identifying land potential, screening of applicants and decision making process

- one of the three members of land committees at all levels is a woman
- the gender equity in land distribution is guaranteed; data of the last three years shows that 32% is distributed to female-headed households and 68% for both; particular focus has also been made on orphans to ensure their economic and social rights
- assessments were made by a high level government committee and the misuse and abuse of the provisions of the proclamation have been dealt with and measures taken

12. In above context, the following aspects of *advocacy and sensitization* have been prioritized:-

- The Minister of Local Government has conducted seminars and consultation throughout the six regions on the progress and challenges of the land Proclamation (conducted in 2015 and 2016). This also encompassed discussions on community based structure and development. The meetings in particular addressed more effective utilization of land for all purposes.
- More than 5,500 administrators, cadres, leaders of national organizations, community and religious leaders and other representatives, participated in the seminars.
- Seminars conducted by all regional administrators and 65,878 participated
- Similarly, 6,637 at the minister and 129,445 at regional administrators levels participated in the meetings dealing on community based system and development.

(iii) *Significant steps in poverty elimination expanded*

13. seven recommendations have been clustered and involve the change in quality of life (122.171, 122.172, 122.173, 122.175, 122.176, 122.177, and 122.178) and recommendation for strengthening the social sector strategy, in particular to the vulnerable and disabled (122.179) and promotion of services in education, health and food has contributed significantly in poverty elimination

The Model Agricultural Transformations

14. Government sponsored models have evolved as part of the effort to maximize the comparative advantages and potential of the western lowlands of Eritrea, to drive agricultural transformation, promote poverty elimination and raise the income levels of disadvantaged groups and areas. These modern irrigations schemes have risen per hectare yield and predictability thus contributing to higher food productivity. Recently the scheme has been used to empower farmers and contribute to sustainable agriculture. Accordingly, about 680 households have been established near the Kekebet dam, about 1750 near Gerset dam, and hundreds (from several villages) near the Logo dam. The farmers are allotted plots of land and utilize the available irrigation infrastructure, electricity, water and technical support provided by the Government to promote modern commercial farming.

The integrated household rural farms and Food Security

15. Eritrea is pursuing a two-track approach to achieve sustainable national and household food security. Effective implementation of these broad policy objectives consists of:-

- building water and irrigation infrastructures to achieve harvests that meet domestic demand irrespective of the fluctuations and vagaries of rainfall in an ecologically fragile environment
 - bolstering farm-household income through initiatives at sector level and similar national level interventions; the phased Minimum Integrated Agricultural Scheme aims to supplement sustainable farm-household income through diversification and provision (grants/low-credit arrangements) of 1 cow, 25 chicken, 2 bee-hives, 20 trees (10 fruit trees, 5 for animal feeds, and 5 as source of energy through regular pruning), and a 1000 to 2500 sq. m. of land)
16. The Minimum Integrated Agriculture Scheme has gained momentum and is contributing in the fulfillment of the right to food. Farmers were trained on horticultural crops, poultry and dairy production, beekeeping, soil & water conservation, etc. Construction of micro dams, ponds, soil and water conservation structures, diversion weirs and enclosures also expanded. In the last 18 months the Ministry of agriculture has also distributed the following as part of 2015 – 2016 UPR plan:-
- Distribution of 399,657 a month old backyard chicks to 15,985 households of all Zobas ; Distribution of backyard chicks will continue
 - Distribution of 100,000 commercial layer day old chicks to 38 commercial chicken farmers; Distribution of backyard chicks will continue
 - 35% of the target set for distribution of 125 grade dairy cattle to 125 beneficiaries of Anseba region accomplished; Distribution of backyard chicks and dairy cattle will continue to 475 beneficiaries of 4 other regions;
 - Distribution of 2,734.04 Quintals of seed potato 100%; Quality seeds are sorted out and collected back from producers to secure quality seed potato for the next season.
 - Distribution of 918 Quintals of improved wheat and 45.5 quintals of hybrid maize; will continue after the collection of harvest for off season sowing on irrigated farms; Quality seeds are screened out and collected back from contract producers to secure quality seed for next season
 - Distribution to beekeepers 2,053 modern bee hives with accessories
 - Distribution of 3314 Quintals of animal feed to drought affected regions of N and South Red Sea
17. Eradication of livestock and animal diseases is also strengthened. Accordingly, 3,149,802 animals were vaccinated and 4,074,314 were treated in a compulsory programme; Plant pests, disease and Migratory pests (locust, birds, and army worms) controlled through surveillance and insecticide application. Moreover, 800,000 hectare of land surveyed and 8,725 treated with 4,600 litres of pesticide.

Supporting Women in Agri-business

18. In line to the recommendations related to women equality & empowerment (also related to 122.109, 122.110, 122.111, 122.112) women are organized in agribusiness associations and started to produce and rear flowers, produce mushroom and food products (dairy, Jam, Tomato paste) and rabbits. Groups of Mushroom, Dairy, Floriculture, and Aloe also established.

Promoting micro credit schemes

19. Micro-finance, and specifically microcredit programs development and mainly in relation to the integrated rural development in order to foster Eritrea's economic development and eliminate poverty. The SMCP which by now has 20 branch offices throughout the country has expanded its programmes extensively. The aim is to promote self-financing activities by encouraging micro and small enterprises; assisting individuals and groups to increase their income generating capacity. This has been expanded to individual clients and collective loans known as Solidarity Groups (SGs) 3, 5 or 7 people coming together to request a loan without any prerequisites.
20. All branch offices provide savings and loans through a system of Village Banks (VBs). To enable VBs to be established, a minimum of 35 - 105 clients need to use the VB and if the number of clients increases a second one is opened. Currently, about 538 VBs are running nationwide in 58 sub-regions of the country. SMCP is operates in 56 of them and in some there might be two branches. The efforts in general can be reflected by the 2016 situation and achievements:-
- about 160 million Nakfa were borrowed while 110 million Nakfa returned
 - the number of beneficiaries reached 54,000 in 2015/2016 and the target for 2019 is 105,000
 - loans are given from 30,000 Nakfa and 150,000 Nakfa in eight different loan cycles
 - 66% of clients of the loans are women and assessments show that they are very successful, their repayment rate is high and most of the clients repay their loans quickly
 - 90% of loans are devoted to SGs and some of the sub-categories include Micro-Business Loan (MBL), Irrigated Agricultural Loan (IAL) and Small Seasonal Agricultural Loan (SSAL). The MBL and SSAL don't require a license and include ceramics, handicrafts

Transforming the life of isolated settlements and villages

21. Eritrea has pastoralist and semi-pastoral communities as well as small settlements established in scattered areas in the regions of Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. This is an impediment to the promotion of improved livelihood, agriculture, livestock development and social services. Furthermore, it hinders the ongoing effort to promote equal right and opportunity. The effort of the last 15 years is at infancy stage but the result is promising and the implementation of the policy is indicative of the effort needed to transform their livelihood.
22. The on-going progress in one of the above four regional administrations can mainly be taken as representative for the ongoing effort and the initial progress achieved so far. In the Anseba Regional Administration four sub regions, namely Kerkebet, Selia, Habero and Hamelmalo are taken as targets. The standard practical measures taken are the following:-
- A master plan for settling and empowering all the villages is developed
 - Accordingly, parcels of land for farming is allotted to promote food self-sufficiency, contribute to agricultural productivity and develop commercial horticulture farming,
 - Education, health, water, administration and transport facilities are established

- A solar panel system is installed in each village and the villages have their own flour mills, bakery, shops, restaurants and other services.

New Remuneration System of the civil service

23. In line to the modest growth of the economy and the ongoing effort to create macro-economic stability, a new remuneration system that also introduces substantial increase of salary to the civil service is introduced. In this vein, a gradual integration of the national service members into this new system is also taking place. The effort is seen as a process and requires some time to finalize.

(iv) Welfare and Protection of Children

24. The recommendations include strengthening children's welfare system (122.70), combating child labour and trafficking of children and women (122.124) and pursuing progress in education, health to the vulnerable and disabled (122.179)

Strengthening children's welfare system (122.70)

Institutional Focus for respect and protection

25. The following measures relating to policy and reports have been followed

- The MOLHW convened a workshop to finalize the Eritrea Child Policy in cooperation with other government institutions, civil society organizations and Child Wellbeing Committees (CWC)
- CRC 4th country report (2008-2010) printed and disseminated to all stakeholders and served as an important background for the policy development and campaign.
- Progress report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Eritrea (2002 – 2013) submitted to the ACRWC Committee of Experts and the appropriate experts in the African Union and was discussed in the Committee of the ACHPR.
- initial report on the optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the sales of children, child prostitution, child pornography that has been submitted as annex to the 4th country report printed and disseminated to all stakeholders as part of the ongoing campaign

26. *Building institutional capacity* for monitoring in the last two years included the following:-

- training on child rights and justice conducted in all six regions to 215 judges/prosecutors, police officers, social workers, correctional/detention centers and administrations at sub regional level
- the 43 child wellbeing committees (CWCs) at sub regional administration level strengthened by providing training to the 273 members; the training focused strengthened awareness of community promoters and facilitators to protect child abuse, violence, and exploitation.
- capacity of 70 care givers and social workers working in the community based group homes and orphanage center improved to deliver child friendly services and supervise child care
- TOT on FGM/C and child marriage provided to 160 community activists from selected 20 villages of 5 regions.

- 66 social workers in regional and sub-regional offices gained 9 months training on social work to improve community and children friendly services and care.
27. Sub regional level assessment was made each year to reflect on the challenges encountered in the promotion of child rights and welfare and annual action plans have been developed accordingly. The plans focused on prevention of street children behavior, violent offences, school dropout, anti-FGM/C and child marriage and abandonment of infant children.

Advocacy and sensitization

28. In the last 2 years (2015 - 2016) the following efforts have been made:-

- Child Wellbeing Committees (CWCs) established at sub regional level (about 42) sensitized a total of 195,081 parents, care givers and students. Promotional campaigns and seminars were also similarly organized to reach a total of 135,879 members which revitalized the awareness of the communities on child rights and protection
 - Both efforts made significant contribution to strengthen social protection programs on the rights, care and rearing of orphans, vulnerable and children with disabilities, on the elimination of harmful practices, prevention and reduction of those who drift to streets; on offences committed by juvenile delinquents; HIV and AIDS. Participants were from religious institutions, village elders and representatives, police officers, women who used to practice female circumcision, people living with HIV/AIDS, parents of disabled children, community-based rehabilitation volunteers; representatives of associations, administrators, parents, teachers and students.
29. Together with the Commission of the African Union a workshop was convened in the capital city, Asmera to strengthen the nationwide campaign to end child marriage in Eritrea. Furthermore, the International Children's day, December 8, were also celebrated under the theme of 'Support children to make beneficial use of their time' in all six regions. These events helped to mobilize stakeholders and partners and have served as important drives in ensuring the responsibility of all actors.

Combating child labour and trafficking of children and women (122.124)

30. Monitoring and inspection of the prevalence of child labor at different work places has been strengthened. This has been done in collaboration with the labor inspection service and has continuously supervised the working conditions pursuant to the relevant Articles of the Labor Proclamation. Moreover, social workers are deployed to sensitize the public against child labor. During 2015/2016 about 1505 establishments were supervised of which 142 were given warning and 78 reported for legal action but no elements of child labor observed or reported. In general, labor force survey has been conducted and the analysis has reached its last stage. It is expected that this will be helpful in the drafting of a decent work country programme.
31. Furthermore, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS)

- conducted campaigns on raising the awareness of 5000 young people regarding the negative impact of illegal migration and human trafficking
- established mini – media clubs in 20 middle and senior secondary schools and training conducted
- public seminars, cultural shows, and media programs organized

Pursue progress in education, health to the vulnerable and disabled (122.179)

Addressing the problems of vulnerable children

Various categories of vulnerability have been addressed in relation to this recommendation and as way of strengthening and expanding the achievements gained prior to the endorsement of the 2nd cycle UPR National Report. Accordingly, various target groups and problems have been targeted and a system approach of addressing the problem operational.

Addressing HIV/AIDS in Vulnerable Children

32. Children infected with HIV/AIDS and who started ART in all regions are traced and offered a monthly financial for family members’ nutrition and children’s education.
- 2650 children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS were provided with cash assistance each month since 2004 and improved their nutritional status and enhance their immune system. It is also a complementary source of livelihood support and enabled them to send children to school.
 - 493 orphans who live with HIV virus in four regions were provided with monetary support to procure nutritious food to enable them to prolong their life expectancy.

Orphan Re-Unification with Families

33. The number of children reunified with host families has increased from 69 to 473 and the number of families assisted also increased from 20 to 121. The fact that 473 have been unified with families (46.3% girls) has contributed in the advancement of the aim but the task is still huge. 121 host families also assisted to cope with the extra responsibility and burden of hosting orphan children.

Orphan Protection

34. The GoSE’s option being to place orphans in orphanages as a last resort, it has strived to de-institutionalize them. Nonetheless, from 1999 to 2016, The GoSE has given necessary care and protection in the Government managed Orphanage Center to 402 orphans. Additional 5885 orphans (3167 females) have been supported and hosted in 11 Non-governmental organizations

Year	No. of Orphans reunified to host families			No. of Host families assisted by IGA
	males	females	total	
2015	40	29	69	20
2016	214	190	404	101
Total	254	219	473	121

Supporting Economic activities for Vulnerable Families hosting orphans

35. Furthermore, 601 children from 151 vulnerable families in six regions benefited from the income generating support for vulnerable families with OVCs and women headed household. The aim is to improve children's livelihood and acquire access to social services and nutrition. The socioeconomic support included the provision of retail shops, small scale business activities, agricultural tools and livestock. 21 vulnerable families were also provided with socio economic support to host 63 orphans through income generating activities.

Assistance to continue education

36. 10,458 vulnerable and street children, orphans and disabled children received educational materials and cash assistance to pursue education in 2015 & 2016. The intervention of this activity helps children from vulnerable families and street children to pursue their education and prevent them from drifting into streets. Through the "donkey for school" project, 125 children with disabilities have also been able to pursue education.

37. Through the "donkey for school" project, 125 children with disabilities have also been able to pursue education. The initiative intends to enhance the right to education of disabled children who live in difficult terrain to reach nearby schools through the support of donkeys with saddles for their mobility. In addition, it has also created additional income source to beneficiary households

Persons with Disability

38. A comprehensive national policy draft on persons with disabilities was discussed and finalized in a workshop convened in May 2015. This document charts the approaches, strategic options and the course of action on persons with disabilities in the context of the situation of the country and in alignment to relevant international principles and norms.

39. Strengthening the CBR Programme and structure has been strengthened. The implementation of the program to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities and to improve their livelihoods has thus gained momentum. Accordingly,

- the number of CBR volunteers working to support and reintegrate the disabled citizens into normal life in 52 sub regions of the country has reached 2, 766 (ideally an average of one person in every village and urban locality).
- To strengthen their capacity extensive workshops were conducted in various sub regions through the project support of UPR agreed with the UNCT in Eritrea. These workshops have also consolidated the data collection and analysis on disabilities.
- In general, attitudinal change at the community level appears to be positive and this was possible through the active role of the CBR Volunteers. A total of 2747 PWDs benefitted from the social and economic support of communities. December 3, 2016, International Day for Persons with Disability was also commemorated throughout the Country under the theme '*Harmony of national organizations creates Force.*'

40. National Organizations of persons with disabilities (PWDs) have also contributed significantly in the above endeavor. The following are some of the examples:-

- The Eritrean National Association of the Deaf (ERNAD) accomplished the following:-
 - gave basic education on sign language competency to persons from different governmental and civil society organizations
 - continues to play an important role in advocating for the deaf during court hearing and in helping the court and the deaf to communicate better with the help of an interpreter and doctor-deaf communication in health services
 - disseminated written material and posters on 'the right to sight' which is a global strategy to campaign on the prevention of blindness
 - biannual bulletin of the association - 'Self Reliance' prepared in Braille
 - seminars to 8100 representatives of government institutions and administrations, members of regional councils and representatives of blind persons
 - seminars conducted for women with vision impairment
- Taking the Inclusive Education Policy into consideration, the Eritrean National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability in close collaboration of the MOE is endeavoring to open special classes within the premises of the various schools in all regions. Accordingly,
 - Children with intellectual and developmental disability are enrolled in 8 special schools in Asmara, the capital city
 - The association has launched a magazine called 'CARE' which is published every year as a tool to update the activities of the association and to sensitize the general public on intellectual developmental disability.
- The Eritrean National War Disabled Veteran Association (ENWDVA) has promoted advocacy and awareness rising by organizing seminars, public education. Its annual magazine called 'HABEN' serves as an update on its activities and to sensitize on prevention of disability and to promote self-support among the disabled

41. The national orthopedic workshops have been strengthened and produced assorted mobility appliances and devices including wheelchairs, crutches and body trolleys that assisted a total of 6026 PWDs in their everyday movement.

Best Practices

- Community Based Approach to deal with all social problems in general and the approach to orphans and other vulnerable children and persons with disability is not only cost effective and sustainable but also considers the context, needs and human betterment of the individual
- Community-Based Rehabilitation Program (CBRP) promoted as an effective way of rehabilitating persons with disabilities.

- the empowerment of the family as a social institution in the context of the child upbringing
- Resilience, Cohesion and Unity of the society inside the country and in the Diaspora is an important factor to surmount the challenges.

(iv) Equality of Women

The recommendations relate to gender equality and empowerment (122.109, 122.110, 122.111, 122.112, 122.114), discriminatory practices (122.108, 122.125, 122.126, 122. 127, 122.128, 122.129, 122.130, 122.131), awareness raising (122.113), protection of women from violence (122.132) and support to victims of domestic violence (122.133)

Gender Equality and Empowerment (122.109, 122.110, 122.111, 122.112, 122.114)

In the last years NUEW has continued to strengthen gender equality and empowerment measures.

42. At political level

- Major focus has been made to bolster the organization and activities of women working in ministries and various institutions; All ministries have established gender focal points to follow up the 2000 Gender Plan of Action. Hence the gender strategic action plan of ministries has been prepared to strengthen their organizational link with the NUEW. Already the review of the plans of the ministries of Education and Agriculture has been done. In general the organization of women has taken place in all ministries and they have established their own boards to give guidance on women's issue and develop relationship with the NUEW.
- On the other hand concerted effort has been made to strengthen the leadership role of the NUEW. In this connection, Leadership meeting to 84 leaders and cadres of NUEW was given in 2016. This encompassed an interactive dialogue with the Minister of Justice and two legal experts on the new National Codes and on CEDAW with experts from the NUEW. On the other hand, Eritrea's CEDAW Reports (1st to 6th) and the CEDAW were discussed with about 300 representatives from various ministries, government institutions and national civic organizations.
- NUEW membership has also grown to about 327,000 at an average increase of 8.8% annually.

43. The economic empowerment of many women, in particular in rural areas, managed through the Micro – Credit program under SMCP is also augmented by NUEW's additional investment are leading a better life and in the last two years:-

- 2,472 women are supported and assessment has been done to raise the effectiveness
- Women farmers involved in irrigation agriculture have been provided 4 water pumps
- 1490 women are also supported in livestock and 259 in poultry production

44. Various activities at consolidating the social-cultural level of women have been taken;

- 30,000 girls given financial and material support to continue junior/senior secondary education.
- The NUEYS is supporting 200 economically disadvantaged and academically under-performing girls in selected sample schools of the Central region.
- Reproductive Health Committees” have also been established in 5 junior and senior secondary schools of each region (as a pilot) and conduct awareness raising campaigns for students on gender issues, reproductive health and transmitted diseases. They are composed of the school principal, representatives of teachers, students (male and female), and parents (male and female) and have proven to be effective and a plan has been outlined to expand the practice throughout the school system. The committees have also distributed sanitary pads to needy girls.
- The exemplary role of women and girls has also been rewarded. In this respect, girl students who excelled in the National General Examination for entrance to Secondary level (at the end of 8th grade) are rewarded every year by NUEW. On the other hand on the occasion of the Forestry Day, the MOA rewarded 50 women each in 2015 and 2016 for their performance in environment protection, tree planting and mobilization of the communities for such endeavors.

Discriminatory practices (122.108, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131)

The Fight against FGM/C and Early Marriage Strengthened

45. In the last two years the work and organization of the FGM Committees has entered into a new stage. It is to be noted that a total of 548 committees are functioning at all levels (6 at regional with 70 members – 58 are male), 82 at sub regional level with 798 members – 587 male, 460 at village and locality level with 3666 members – 2262 male) are functional. They have been strengthened to uphold responsibility in the fight against FGM/c and progress made including the following:-

- Each committee at local level formed small groups from the community at a cascade model and an expanded mobilization of entire communities for action is already becoming a reality. It is to be noted there are 4534 committee members at all levels and 2907 (64.12%) of these are male.
- A significant development in the last two years is that all the anti FGM/C committees have now been transformed to include the fight against early marriage

46. In many places the issue has started to develop into a grassroots movement to eliminate FGM/C and early marriage. The fact that some of these are traditional communities mostly inhabited by nomads and semi pastoralists indicates to the growing success in effort. Furthermore, the ongoing movement has asserted that these practices are not part of religion but rather cultural practices that have to be avoided. The following progress denoted the situation;-

- The meeting of religious leaders in the Central Region on November 20, 2016 resulting in a declaration that condemns the practice of FGM and early marriage is a significant development. The declaration among others includes the following (translated from local language – refer the full translation of the original statement):-

- The age limit in religious matrimonies shall be 18, in accordance to the civil law, and bride and groom should submit their Eritrean ID and relevant documents to prove their right age.
 - This will immediately be implemented by both Christian and Moslem institutions in Eritrea. Any violations should be notified to the religious leaders.
 - Effort will be made to expand at national levels in all regions.
- On the other hand a similar movement has led to the total mobilization of another region (Anseba Region). It started at grassroots levels in two sub regions with the active role of junior and secondary school students and religious leaders and elders and declaration also has been issued in the meeting conducted at region level to ban the practices and follow up mechanisms have been devised. In general zero FGM in a short time in particular in Habero and Asmath sub regions have also has been declared. A similar movement has started in the North Red Sea Region and a similar declaration has been issued already in the Nakfa and Afabet sub regions.

Monitoring and Protection Measures

47. Continuous monitoring through the law enforcement agencies, administrations and anti-FGM/C and early marriage committees has taken place at local levels. In 2016, 39 women in Anseba Region (Sub Region of Hagaz) were convicted for practicing FGM/C and given jail sentences for violating the law. Similarly 2 women were given jail sentence for similar violations in Gash Bark Region. Effort is still continuing to compile the data from the other four regions and will be incorporated once finalized. The need for greater coordination and capacity building to strengthen monitoring activities and collection and management of pertinent data by all stakeholders still remains a major task. A fundamental issue that remains to be assessed is also the issue of any unreported cases.

48. Legal advice to protect women and children's rights has been strengthened. In the last two years, 1,167 women attended the counseling centers in all regions to get advice and legal support for various problems and violations (see table below). The critical issue is that NUEW has not established mechanisms of follow up on the cases after they are settled legally.

Divorce	Spouse violence	Early marriage	Rape	Recognizing Fatherhood	Violation marriage	Child support	Land issues	Inheritance	Others	Total
646	32	47	56	65	29	155	75	7	55	1167

Advocacy and Sensitization

49. In 2016-2017 the following effort has been made:-

- 423 meetings and seminars to 152729 participants (36,365 male) were conducted in all regions. They dealt with issues related to women equality and empowerment and discriminatory practices and protection. Furthermore, peer education is organized by coordinators (8 in each region and the NUEW head office) and the 209 facilitators appointed in various parts of the regions.

Focused campaigns on sexual reproductive health and prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) also took place encouraging visits to the clinics by couples.

- Mother and child safety has been targeted and 460 facilitators have reached out about 107,113 mothers (3901 of whom were pregnant women). As a result 6354 delivered in local clinics. Gender and health training has been ongoing in at least five schools of each region and about 13,275 students and 6,927 women from 3 regions trained in this respect. While the effort made is promising, it suggests that more effort is still needed to address the prevailing challenges.
- Two documentary films (on FGM/C and women empowerment) have been produced and used in campaigns. Radio broadcasts in 5 local languages (Tigrigna, Tigre, Arabic, Saho and Afar) and the NUEW Magazine (Ageizo) have also contributed in raising consciousness and responsibility.

B. Social Sector Strategy and Dignified Life

The 20 recommendations relate to the social sector policy and the goals of improving the quality of life.

(i) Food Security

The recommendations on access to food (122.169, 122.170) followed by the MOA are reflected in the effort of the Government to promote food and nutrition security in particular to vulnerable groups.

Improving Food Availability and Accessibility

50. In general, it is estimated that the yearly average demand of cereals in Eritrea in the last 17 years ranged from about 220,000 tons in 1999 to 310,000 tons in 2015 (an average growth of 2.72% yearly). The supply also fluctuated from a minimum of about 70,000 tons in 2002 (during the drought period) to the highest of 510,000 tons in 2014. The crop production (cereals) in spite of many challenges also amounted about 350,000 tons in 2016. Vegetable and fruit production also progressively increased from 119,061 tons in 1999 to 288,700 tons in 2014 at an average of 85,000 tons per year (the production in 1992 and 1998 was 42,579 and 74,925 respectively). Furthermore, livestock development, poultry production, milk and other necessities have also increased and are contributing to the effort of ensuring the necessary food demands of the people. Beekeeping, dairy, poultry, horticulture productions also made significant increases. Food availability and accessibility has been ensured and no famine encountered in Eritrea so far as a result.

51. Control, prevention and eradication of animal diseases through vaccination and treatment are also promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture. In the last two years about 3,149,800 vaccinations and 4,074,314 treatments were done to ensure the contribution of livestock production in the overall availability of healthy food in the country.

52. A critical issue not reported is the effort on coordinated monitoring of food safety and will be followed closely in the future. Significant attention will be given on these aspects in the 2017-2018

Plan of Action in coordination with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade and Industry – Department of Standards and Regional Administrations).

Food Affordability and Government Proactive Role

53. In the difficult circumstances when rain failed and food market prices soared, the Government uses its reserves for contingency measures. The Crop and livestock Corporation established by the Government has started to promote food availability, accessibility at affordable prices and defended the right of the people through prudent market stabilization measures. The *Hidri Programme* of subsidized food supplies (some imported at certain times in hard currencies) is also an intervention that reflects the government’s commitment and runs 201 centers throughout the country.

Region	Sub Regions	Centers
Southern	12	25
Central	16	64
Gash Barka	14	24
Anseba	11	25
Northern Red Sea	10	38
Southern Red Sea	4	25
Total	67	201

54. In the last two years, the programme has guaranteed availability, accessibility and affordability, especially to those affected by the prevailing food shortages and market vulnerability. An average of about 10 essential food items is sold at subsidized prices and some items at rational prices in order to alleviate the problem and control the inflated food market prices. The amount provided is determined by the size of the family and managed as a basic right to be respected. The critical issue is that not all the basic items are available in some regions for logistical reasons. The equitable demographic distribution in all regions and the rational approach on fares as well as the huge expenditure of subsidy attests to the government’s commitment. Hence, there has never been famine that exposes the people to hunger. On the other hand note is to be made that in 2016 food prices have significantly gone down in some by more than half but still more effort is needed.

(ii) Health Security

The key health related Recommendations are the increase in the quality and accessibility of health services (Recommendation 122,180,181,182) and the development in human resource capacity (Recommendation 122.183). The following related recommendations are also considered:-

- 122.69 Pursue all efforts to preserve the progress achieved in a number of areas such as culture, education, health and the fight against social inequality (Egypt).
- 122.108, 122.125, 122.126, 122.127, 122.128, 122.129, 122.130 and 122.131 Continue to make its best efforts to abolish all types of discriminatory practices against women and children, which

notably include FGM, early marriage and domestic violence (Republic of Korea, Chile, Croatia, France, Ireland, Uruguay, Slovenia, and Argentina).

- 122.179 Continue its efforts on health, education and social service system, in order to help the vulnerable and disabled people particularly women and children (Islamic Rep. of Iran).
- 122.180, 122.181 and 122.182. Give continuity and strengthen positive measures underway to increase the quality and accessibility of health services (Cuba, Egypt and Singapore).
- 122.183 Train more professional health workers to fill and carry out the work of the newly established health centers (Uganda).

Increase the quality and accessibility of health services (12.2.180,181,182)

Strategic Plans Developed

55. In the last two years the following steps have been taken to expand and strengthen the respect of health rights in particular by addressing some issues of access and quality;-

- Health Sector Strategic plan (2017-2021) finalized with the participation of all sectors
- In line to the Health Sector Strategic Plan The Pharmacovigilance Centre developed a five years strategic plan (2016 – 2020). It also published ‘Standard Operating Procedures’ and ‘National Pharmacovigilance Guidelines’.
- Strategic plan and standards on Adolescents and young people friendly health services (AYPFHS) developed and discussed
- Training Needs Assessment done at national level and types of training identified.
- Curriculum Review for associate Nurse training program conducted

Guidelines and Manuals

56. Continuous effort is done to strengthen the institutionalization of health security and the following guidelines and manuals are some of the important areas addressed during the period:-

- A range of guideline on Vector Control produced in different Languages.
- Nursing supportive supervision guidelines and checklists Revised and distributed.
- New modules of IMNCI adapted and disseminated to all zobas.
- New self-assessment tool adapted from WHO to evaluate IMNCI training program.
- Malaria Treatment guideline and Case Management manual printed and distributed
- HIV Counseling Training manual reviewed
- IMAAI and IMPAC training manuals reviewed and updated,
- The product registration and evaluation unit has updated registration guideline into the Common Technical Document format which is the format now in use in the majority of regulatory authorities around the world. The guideline has been reviewed, published and distributed. The National Health Laboratory with the help of a consultant from the Supra-national Lab Uganda also developed 3 Manuals and 35 SOP's

Monitoring and supervision Support

57. Three areas were given prominence in this respect;

- The Ministry conducted a review of internal quality assurances to evaluate and cross check the result, client satisfaction surveys and hospitals performance surveys for internal quality audit. The emergency services unit of the MOH also conducted focused supportive supervision to the departments of emergency services of National Referral hospitals in Orotta and Halibet. The Injury, Violence & Disability Prevention & Control unit also conducted supervision and quality assurances in Gash Barka region and other health centers.
- To further improve the quality of health services on malaria, Therapeutic Efficacy Study, Vector Resistance and Bed Net Utilization surveys were also conducted.
- In Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), 72 project sites were supervised, 523 water points in four regions inspected and treated, 2,368 food & drink establishments were inspected and necessary guidelines and warnings given. Quarterly supervision visits were also done to Bisha and Zara mining sites. Inspection of the Institute of Agriculture Technology in hamelmalo college sanitation condition was also conducted

Accessibility and quality

58. To increase accessibility of health services, the MOH carried out construction and renovation activities. The progress ranges from 21 to 100% and some others are in design stage. The delay in the physical infrastructure emanating from the prevailing situation of the country. Most of those under construction (also at design level) target rural and remote areas and are expected to raise the demographic coverage of over 78% service availability in less than 10 km distance in rural areas.

Outreach programmes

59. Various aspects of outreach programmes and campaigns have also helped in ensuring health provision accessibility to those who live in remote areas far from health services. The critical issue is that their impact in the demographic distribution of health services has not been reported.

60. Waiting home significantly improve the access for pregnant mothers. In all regions the currently functioning 43 functional waiting homes have contributed to alleviating the essential problems. In 2015-16, 2,725 pregnant women safely delivered in health facilities in the five regions after staying in the maternity waiting homes. Sixty one mothers were also referred to higher level of health facilities. They get continuous supplies directly from the headquarter. To strengthen their resource base, 192 quintals of DMK, 750 baby clothes, 750 T-shirt and under wear for new born and 750 sets of diaper (each set with 5 pieces) were also distributed in 2016.

61. Services by Community Health Agents (CHA) also play significant role in improving access to health services. They deliver various promotional and clinical health services. In addition to promotional activities on various health issues. Community Health Agents (CHAs) do test febrile

cases using Rapid Diagnostic Test and treat the confirmed malaria cases using first line treatment and refer severe cases to health facilities. In 2016 malaria community agents treated 33,395 malaria patients. This constitutes 40% of the total treated malaria incidences. IMNCI, TB dots Promoters, Reproductive health, Nutrition and WASH promoters are some of the areas in which CHAs provide clinical health services to people in their home. The Ministry has provided CHAs with medicines and equipment after proper training and refresher trainings are given.

62. The Mendefera Fistula center continues to address Obstetric Fistula problems at national level. In the last 2 years, 34 fistula cases were repaired by local surgeons. 39 others with complicated fistula cases were also repaired by surgeons from Stanford University. 6 mothers who had successful repairs also gave birth safely and are healthy with their children. The hospital also conducted awareness raising, skill training (knitting, hair dressing) and literacy program to 43 survivors.

63. Campaigns have also been used to raise accessibility. In the last 2 years the following measures and can be indicative of the extensive effort made:-

- There is a routine outreach vaccination program in 16 subzones of the country serving nomadic communities and villages far from health facilities. On polio National Immunization day (NID) immunization for children age group <59 months conducted with Coverage of >95% as validated by Independent Monitoring (IM) group. In such National Immunization days, vaccination is also given in and out of health facilities.
- About 270,000 were treated through a campaign in the bilharzia endemic sub zones through Mass Drug Administration. Mass drug Administration of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH) conducted in 4 target sub regions and 103,789 people were treated
- A Total of 21,364 people took Diethyl carbamazepine (DEC) and Albendazole for elimination of Lymphatic filariasis (L.F) in Forto Sawa sub region
- 507 students screened for early detection and management of Cardio Vascular complications by Italian cardiologist Group.
- In this connection, 21 schools including the Boarding Schools of the Southern Red Sea Region conducted sensitization campaigns on personal hygiene.
- Furthermore, 812 WASH promoters were trained and basic and refresher training on nutrition was given to 1480 community volunteers in all regions.

Promoting Quality Health Service

64. Specialized services introduced have impacted on the quality of services. The Ministry has built new Cardiac and Physiotherapy Center; Oxygen Plants, Radiotherapy Centers; Outreach TT surgery conducted in 8 subzones of Zoba Debub by training Six TT surgeons. A number of foreign visiting medical teams, namely Italian orthopedic team, German pediatric cardiac & plastic surgery team, ARCHEMED, Hammer Forum, Egyptian and Sudanese teams of orthopedic and general surgery visited Orotta, Halibet and Berhan Ayni Eye hospitals. They screened and operated a number of cases such as skin graft, plastic surgery, surgical interventions on cataract, glaucoma, & retina,

arthroscopy, condylar and femur plate fixation, breast surgeries, abdominal surgeries, pediatric cardiac and orthopedic surgeries, Urology surgery and Obstetrics & gynecology surgery.

65. The following specialized measures have also been introduced in the last 2 years:-

- Vaccines - Pneumococcal Conjugative Vaccine (PCV) has been introduced since 2015 and post introduction evaluation conducted in accordance to WHO protocol.
- HIV/AIDS - To prevent vertical HIV transmission, routine syphilis test in Ante Natal Care (ANC) sites introduced and 60,000 pregnant women tested for syphilis. 80,000 ANC attendees also tested for HIV; Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) and SRH services integrated in all facilities; Hospitals, Health centers and 17 Health stations of Anseba region are providing HIV(PEP) Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
- Malaria - Artesunate injection for severe malaria introduced; Investigation into false-negative RDT results has been conducted with results showing change in *P. falciparum* parasite strains and as a result a new type of RDT has been introduced
- HA1C laboratory test introduced in Orotta and Sembel Hospital's laboratories

66. *New Medical Technology and equipment expanded* - To improve quality of health services, the Ministry have also purchased and deployed solar energy panels, ambulances, service giving vehicles, high tech medical equipment, X-ray machines, chlorox producing machines, PCR for EID, GeneXpert machines and emergency units.

Develop HR capacity (Recommendation 122.183)

67. In-service training given to different health workers in hospitals graduating from the college of health sciences in diploma, degree and Master's program from the College of health Sciences and the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Ninety-three new HIV counselors also trained.

(iii) Right to Education

68. 14 key recommendations relating to the right to education have been followed and implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE). These include

- Universalization of Primary Education (122.171, 122.172, 122.173, 122.175, 122.176, 122.177)
- Improve equity and quality (122.184, 122.189, 122.191, 122.194)
- Allocate resources to education and education of girls in particular (122.185, 190, 192. 122.193)

Policy, plans and monitoring

69. On the basis of the National Education Policy reviewed in 2012, the MOE focused on ensuring equitable education at all levels and sub-sectors, improving quality and relevance of education and strengthening institutional capacity. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education developed a detailed

action plan and budget for 2013 -2017 and each department and division of the MOE has been engaged in implementing the planned activities to reflect the recommendations.

Universalization of Primary Education (122.171, 172, 122.173, 122.175, 122.176, 122.177)

Expanding Early Childhood Education

70. To promote integrated early childhood development, the pre-school system has grown with more focus on rural areas. The system is thus organized in a two tier institutional arrangement, i.e. formal kindergartens and the Rural Community Care Services, to address the opportunities of children in remote areas. In the last two years, the number of pre-school institutions has reached 483 (64.13% being in the rural areas). In the 2015/2016, 45,233 (49% female) enrolled (7.4% growth). The net enrolment rate is, however, 19.3% (was 16.6% in 2014/2015) and more effort is needed.

Consolidation of Mother Tongue Education

71. In line to the promotion of universal primary education,

- mother tongue education has been consolidated; the right of every child to learn in his/her mother tongue or any other language of choice has been respected and mother tongue schools continue to be opened and 3 regions that deviate negatively from the national average of Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) of 81% have been targeted
- access in nomadic communities has been taken as the main priority based on the recommendations and strategies of the 2011 national workshop on nomadic education
- reports show that 65 schools in the 3 regions (ten of these being boarding schools) have promoted the education right of children in nomadic communities; total enrolment is 6,844 and 43% are female students, and this is a significant achievement in terms of equity but there is a long way to go to address the demands
- NER at primary school level has increased to 82.1% (was 81.1% in 2013/2014)

72. The participation of the communities and stakeholders is mobilized through the Popular Mother tongue Committees established in all regions. The committees actively participate in curriculum development, mother tongue education surveys, data collection, development of literary work, community mobilization and related other tasks.

Strengthening Gender Parity in Education (GPI)

73. The right of girls in education has been respected and protected by law and all legislations and policies in action. In spite of many challenges, gender parity index in education continues to improve. In the 2014 – 2015 academic year, out of the 605,932 students from primary to secondary levels 45.3% are girls. GPI is 0.83 at primary, 0.82 at middle and 0.83 at secondary level. This reflects the remarkable effort and advancement in ensuring the right of girls to continuing education in the school system.

74. However in some ethnic groups and rural areas certain cultural practices, poverty, gender stereotypes and in very few cases some religious pressures inhibit girl's rights to education. Local assemblies and administrations have introduced strong measures to enforce the right of girls to education in collaboration with all stakeholders and progress is being achieved. Incentives have also been introduced to support needy families who make big sacrifice to send their girls to school. A study on menstrual hygiene is conducted and the analysis is in process. NUEW has been distributing sanitary pads for needy girls in rural areas so as to avoid any inconveniences during classes.
75. In some targeted areas the government has established boarding schools to ensure greater opportunities, in particular for girls, to continue their education up to the secondary school level. During the reporting period an additional boarding school was planned in remote north-west area (in Bidawiet area) to cater for about 400 children. This has not been implemented due to delay of resources under the UPR project support. Similarly, the support planned for additional 3600 economically disadvantaged girls has not been implemented due to budget constraints.

Complementary Elementary Education (ECE)

76. A study on out of school children identified the reasons and presented recommendations for action. It also revealed that 33.7% children fail to enroll in pre-primary, elementary and middle school levels. The data also showed that they encompass 64,123 (73%) of age 5, 65,063 (19%) age 6-10 and 91,410 (41%) of age 11-13. In this vein, the Elementary Complimentary Education (ECE) is thus strengthened as an innovative program that caters for 9-14 age children who are out of school. The following facts show the promising progress of the programme:-

- targets communities in rural and remote areas in 108 centers with 427 teachers (15% female teachers) and total enrollment in 2016 reached 11, 000 (46% females)
- 1700 of those who completed the three year ECE program have so far been integrated into the school system to continue the next levels of education
- a plan to introduce combined ECE and regular elementary programmes as a pilot has been finalized and preparation for its launching is undergoing; this will help maximization of resources and opportunities and help in smoothing the gradual integration of the programmes.

Special Needs Education

77. To promote special needs education, two non-government schools for the deaf (in two towns) and one for the blind (by the government) are functioning and in the last two years 11% enrolment increase has been achieved. About 50% are girls and showed 29% increase.
78. The provision of special needs education has also been mainstreamed in 25 middle schools. These schools are equipped with the necessary basic equipment and pedagogic resource rooms where additional support is given to those in need. Furthermore, children with intellectual and development problems get educational opportunities in pilot mainstream schools and assessment has been made to

expand the provision further. The plan to introduce in 4 mainstream elementary schools has thus been postponed due to the delay of funds from the UPR Project support.

Promotion of Adult Literacy and Continuing Education

79. During 2015 - 2016 the adult literacy program enrolled 39,469 participants (88% female) in 865 centers facilitated by about 2585 teachers throughout the country. About 79% completed the programme successfully. The number of the centers has been limited by resource constraints but the importance and success of the programme in prompting the right of education to adults and in particular to women has been ascertained by the prevailing success. In the Northern Red Sea region (in particular in one sub region) it has been indicated that about 74 women who participated in such a programme have been able to continue their education up to secondary level which resulted in social mobility and career development in the following establishments of this remote area:-

- 23 teachers in elementary schools, 13 in adult education programs, 3 in sub regional administration, 1 in the construction sector, 6 in the Ministry of Finance, 6 in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, 7 in the Ministry of Health, 3 in Telecommunications Corporation, 2 in the local bank and 5 in private businesses
- Many others joined the technical schools and the Warsay Yikealo Secondary school to continue their further education

80. In line to the study made on the vocational training needs of adults who complete basic level of adult education programme, 40 minimum skill training areas have been identified in a study made by the MOE. A Framework for Action will be prepared to consider the recommendations.

81. To expand the education continuity for adults (in particular in the disadvantaged areas and groups) evening secondary education program is being catered in many urban areas. In the academic year 2015/16 overall 4, 088 students have enrolled at elementary, middle and secondary levels in all regions. Out of the these, 2, 648 have successfully completed their education, whereas 1, 044 dropped out. The number of teachers involved in this program is 321. The program has now been expanded to the semi urban towns of Afabet, Maymene and Maydema and enrolment has also increased in Northern Red Sea, Gash Barka and Debu regions. Nevertheless, this is a mode which has not been exploited significantly and its general share in education provision still remains very low. The decision to provide evening students the opportunity to take their Secondary Education Leaving Certificate Examination in their respective schools/places has recently become an additional drive for greater participation but still remains very limited.

82. As part of the adult education program and to prevent the relapse into literacy, 88 community libraries have been opened in rural areas. Although limited, the government has allocated budget to run the community libraries. In addition, UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) are now involved in the scheme. In collaboration with the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) and the National Union of Youth and Students (NUEYS) various efforts to improve the

digital studio of the Department of Adult Education and Media (DAEM) and its radio broadcasting capabilities are also ongoing. Awareness programs have been conducted to strengthen the adult education programs and September 8 International Literacy Day have been utilized for this purpose in 2016 in which a national workshop was conducted to use the occasion for further mobilization.

Opportunities for Vocational training

83. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been provided in 8 technical schools at intermediate level including at the Sawa Vocational Training Center (which has five vocational schools). The number of schools has increased from 4 in 1999 to 7 in 2016 and offer a two years programme for students who finish grade 10. In 2015/2016, 1460 (46.6% females) graduated and 1386 (51.8%) are expected to graduate in 2017. The recent batch of 2015 will finish in July 2017 and 2055 secondary school graduates (1068 females – 52%) are taking part. The Sawa Vocational Training Center was established in 2007 to create additional opportunity for National Service graduates and has enrolled about 2000-2500 students annually in 19 fields of specialization.

Continuity to Higher Education

84. In the past ten years, the seven new Institutes and Colleges spread throughout the country have increased free access to tertiary education in a more balanced sector, spatial and professional distribution. More than 27,000 students have graduated in the last decade. This encompasses Degree, Diploma, Certificate, MSc (0.32%), 149 Medical Doctors and Dental Specialists. The prevailing situation also gives a better insight into the growth and prospects of the higher learning institutions. Out of the total students, 41% are females. Total student population in all Eritrean Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), at the end of the 2nd semester (2015/2016 Academic Year) was 10,231 (6,891 - 67.4% enrolled in Degree; 3,295 - 32.2% Diploma Programs and 45 - 0.4% at Masters level. About 43% of the student population attends in the Eritrea Institute of Technology (EIT) and a new modern building with all facilities of learning has been finished recently.

N	Institutions of Higher Learning	Female Composition in %			
		2009/10	2011/12	2014/15	2015/16
1	Eritrea Institute of Technology	33.8	41.1	33.6	35.92
2	College of Health Sciences	35.7	35	43.4	45.67
3	Orota School of Medicine	22	25.9	26.8	28.4
4	Hamelmallo Agricultural College	32	37	43.0	50.37
5	College of Marine Science and Tech.	13.3	17.6	27.8	37.8
6	College of Business & Economics	28.6	33	40.5	36.1
7	College of Arts & Social Sciences	22.8	24.9	44.9	48.75

85. The gender parity index at higher learning institutions has also assumed a promising trend (*see table above*). With the exception of the slight irregularity seen in the College of Business and Economics in 2015/16 academic year, the pattern of growth is positive (it is similar also in 2016/2017). The present 41% participation level of female students in higher learning is a remarkable progress.

Furthermore, the right and opportunity accorded to female students in science and technology, health and medicine, agriculture and marine science and technology is an additional reflection of the ongoing effort to create a reliable human capital formation for a diversified growth of the economy.

Improving quality (122.184, 122.189, 122.191, 122.194)

86. *Curriculum Relevance and improvement* - The main target of the last 2 years has been the review of mother tongue education textbooks in 8 languages and formative changes are being made and new textbooks being printed and disseminated. Furthermore, civic education textbooks and teachers' guide for senior secondary, history textbooks for grade 12 are also reviewed and reprinted. On the other hand Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and ECE Teacher's guide have been prepared and disseminated to improve quality teaching and upbringing of children.

87. *Assessments and Studies* - In this respect the following measures have been conducted:-

- At national level Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA III) has been conducted in key grades (grades 3 and 5) in mother tongue, mathematics and English. The assessment collected data on learner's performance and factors that affect the quality of education in primary school. The analysis shows that more effort is needed to improve attainment level and achievement targets.
- A study on the textbooks of elementary and middle levels assessed the strong and weak areas to introduce formative changes. It was conducted in 2015 and a proposal is discussed for action.
- In 2016 a study on menstrual hygiene schools was conducted to identify the challenges that affect girls' education and an action plan has been prepared

88. *Monitoring and Supervision* - Supervision activities have been conducted in the school system and in the adult education programme through the national and regional education offices. In addition, professional educational support has been provided to the prison and rehabilitation centers in Maekel and Anseba regions. Support has also been provided to the ongoing educational activities in the defense forces and National unions.

89. *Training* - Upgrading the capacity of a target of 1520 mother tongue education teachers was taken as a priority. About 1000 were upgraded to certificate level and 100 more teachers upgraded to diploma level. 50 ECE teachers were also upgraded to certificate level. Moreover, 17 Arabic language teachers were trained in educational pedagogy. Gender perspectives were also given due consideration and 200 female teachers were also enrolled for diploma level upgrading and 166 successfully graduates. In addition, a program on English proficiency was conducted for 250 female teachers and 146 teachers successfully completed the course.

90. Specialized training in the following areas were also accomplished:-

- 400 teachers in the areas of Inclusive Education, pre-primary, Physical Education and Information and Communications Technology and 27 teachers special needs education

- College graduates deployed in the teaching profession trained in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy and education assessment
- Training on Learner Assessment Progression Guideline (LAPG) conducted for supervisors and education officers of the Central, Southern and Gash Barka regions (to continue in the others)
- To introduce Guidance and Counseling services at middle school level a training programme for middle schools directors and sub-regional education officers and supervisors. However, in the last two years the training has been conducted for 106 from Central and 120 Southern regions.
- Training on the promotion of health security has been conducted for 101 and 113 health focal teachers from the Southern and Central regions respectively. The training focused on health sscreening of students, iimplementation of first aid and prevention of accidents and injuries.
- Training on graphics, photographing and editing has been conducted for three staff in order to raise their capacity in digital technology. In 2016 capacity building programs were also conducted in areas of computer graphic design, digital video editing and photographing. The training consolidated the ICT capacity in the documentation of the adult education programs.
- Supervision training conducted for 97 supervisors from the Central region and for 107 from the Southern Region. The program will continue in the other regions.

Allocation of resources to education and education of girls in particular (122.185, 190, 192. 122.193)

91. The decisiveness of the factor in development rests on the knowledge, skills, professional and technical capabilities and attitude. Hence, education and human resource development is taken as a requirement and a precondition for the effective all round development of Eritrea. Equal right and opportunity in education has been respected and protected by law in Eritrea. However, the plight of disadvantaged groups in particular girls and women has been given extreme priority in terms of access and support to continue education. Within the limits of the existing capabilities the education of girls in particular is given prominence and the following measures have been consolidated:-

- the establishment of boarding girls including specific ones to girls
- financial support to economically disadvantaged girls
- special extra educational programmes for girls

C. Liberties

92. The 11 recommendations which relate to the continuous effort to *improve the penitentiary system* and situation (122.134,138), Freedom of expression, association, assembly - (122.154, 158, 159, 160, 168, 152, 162) are being followed by National Force of Police and Security and freedom of religion related to the aspect of *guaranteeing religious freedom* of every citizen (122.156, 122.157)

(i) Improve the penitentiary system and situation (122.134, 122.138)

Respect and Protection of detainee rights and dignity

93. In the last 17 years continuous effort has been made to expand and strengthen the penitentiary system. It recently runs 11 detention facilities throughout the country (1 is only for females and

situated in the capital city). The fundamental principle is that detained persons are treated with humanity and their dignity, security and development guaranteed in accordance to the Transitional National codes. Hence, the underlying practical objectives and main purpose of the Eritrea Correctional and Rehabilitation Services (ECRS) is to rehabilitate convicted individuals so that they would become law-abiding and productive citizens when they reintegrate into the society.

94. In practice, the Prisons Services Regulations is strictly followed and implemented. Inmates are given orientation on the centers management and regulation and the special guideline on their rights and duties is also read to each inmate at the first instance. They are also given guidelines and information on how to report on any abuses. In this regard, prison police (PP) officers who violate the right of a detained person are accounted by the law. The internal codes of conduct and disciplinary measures for any petty offences committed by PP are also enforced.

Dignified Life of Detainees

95. The prisoners' right to education, entertainment, health services, religion, sport and culture, awareness raising seminars and lectures and capacity building programs have been strengthened and integrated into the system. To this aim, the system now runs a network of clinics, academic and vocational programmes, sport, culture, and awareness raising programme. The quarterly magazine of the Prisons and Correctional Services is also distributed as a source for discussion among inmates. In general, the growth in the facilities and services indicates the prioritization of human security and human development of the detainees during the reporting period:-

- 5 centers developed their own inpatient section in the clinics inside the prisons
- 1 center has its own laboratory
- Seven centers have AIDS Counseling sections
- 8 have developed into fledged education programme up to secondary level
- 6 have now computer training centers while in these centers vocational training programmes in graphics and arts, electricity, accounting, food making, sewing and also Arabic in accordance to request have been catered. In 2015/2016, 323 attended these vocational programmes

Health Security in the Prison Centers

96. Major prison centers have their own health facilities that are equipped with basic laboratories. Serious cases are referred to national health facilities. The National Referral Hospital in Asmara also has a designated section for in-patient services to prisoners. In the last 2 years the effort to improve the health security of inmates has continued and no communicable and non-communicable diseases were prevalent in the prison centers. This is because of the due attention given to the health condition of inmates. Referral for those who need better treatments is also part of the system.

97. The 2016 results reflect the effort and progress and the growing efficiency and effectiveness of the health service for inmates. About 15,378 treatments have been given and include 11,290 treated in the prison clinics, 620 hospitalized in the prison clinics, 3321 sent to regional referral hospitals of

which 147 were hospitalized. Routine medical services from nearby dental and eye hospitals are conducted and about 788 inmates got treatment. Furthermore, the continuous programme sensitization and advocacy on HIV Aids and TB prevention has been given by regional hospitals and with the support of the Global Fund but all prison clinics also have regular HIV Counseling.

Education of detainees

98. The national education policy is implemented in all prisons centers. All prisons have academic programmes Education for prisoners is being provided up to grade 12, but in some prisons it is up to grade 4 due to limitation of capabilities. In 2016 vocational trainings have also continued including on basic computer training for 12 females, 18 on food catering, 7 female prisoners in Graphics and Photo shop and First Aid course for 50 inmates in Barentu Prison and Rehabilitation Center.
99. Since 1997 inmates used to participate in the national university entrance examinations but were discontinued in 2002 for technical reasons. The prison service in consultation with the Ministry of Education (MoE) has sorted out the problem and inmates have again started participating since 2012. Furthermore, recently an agreement has been reached with the National Higher Education Board to enroll them in higher education institutions, so that those inmates who participate and achieve passing marks in Secondary School Leaving Examination will be able to continue their studies at degree, diploma and certificate levels. In the academic year of 2015/2016 out of the 25 prisoners who participated in the National Matriculation Exam, 6 were able to score grades that enable them to study at degree level, 9 at diploma level and 4 at certificate level.

Other Rights

100. The right of inmates to unrestricted religious belief and practice in accordance with Article 2 (2-9) of the Prisons Services Regulations is implemented. Prisoners continue to pray, fast and observe other rites that are observed in their respective religion and belief. In most Centers this is done in their dorms but the Sembel detention Center in the capital city Asmera has a Chapel and a Mosque.
101. The prison and rehabilitation services also provides access to radio, TV including Satellite TV services and print media to help them get informed and updated on national and international affairs sufficiently. Various cultural and sport activities also take place. A variety of indoor and outdoor sport activities have also been introduced to enhance the physical fitness and mental well-being of the inmates. Periodic tournaments are also held within and between prison services. All major prison facilities have cultural troupe of their own and activities are conducted during national holidays and events, religious festivities and on special occasions such as the sport's day.
102. Awareness raising campaigns are also part of the system and different seminars, cultural and sport activities have been conducted. Some of the activities include:-
- In the last two years seminars on national development agenda and progress, the new national codes, the value of work, effects of migration, stress management, developing reading habits and

basic skills, socialization and peer pressure were conducted to inmates by inviting various professionals and experts

- Annual general knowledge and literature competition between inmates from different prisons.
- Inmates have also access to media outlets such as TV and gazettes are provided.
- Books donated to female prisoner's rehabilitation center to enhance reading habits of inmates.

(ii) Freedom of Religion

103. Eritrea is a secular state and freedom of religion is protected by law. The Transitional Codes protect the rights of individuals to be free from any discrimination and persecution on account of their religion. No citizen is imprisoned on account of beliefs or expressions including religious beliefs. Freedom of religion is not only protected by law but also continues as a tradition and culture respected by every citizen. Continuous effort to strengthen the co-existence, mutual respect and tolerance is also made. Eritrea's rich history of religious tolerance, co-existence and harmony in a turbulent region that is often wracked by acute religious polarization and strife is thus an example.

104. Even within the confines of secularism, the Government of Eritrea has shouldered the obligations to ensure that this centuries-old religious tolerance and harmony is not perturbed by externally-induced new trends of Islamic or Christian fundamentalism that corrode the social fabric. In general, religious bodies have their respective hierarchies, conduct their own elections for their respective hierarchies – the Synod, the Dar-al-Iftae, and other decision making organs without any intervention from any side, including from the Government. The operation of new faiths, with funding from external source, is also a matter seen in the context of Proclamation 73/1995.

105. Religious institutions and leaders continue to play a significant role in strengthening the harmony and the social cohesion of the society. The interfaith joint coordination mechanism created by the religious leaders is a great advantage and the leaders work together to address basic social problems without and discrimination. In this spirit, main religious holidays are jointly celebrated at regional and national level together in joint inter-faith festivities. They have also promoted projects to assist vulnerable communities and groups without discrimination and joint advocacy is conducted at local, regional and national levels. The following can give an indication of their contributions:-

- support internally displaced due to border war with Ethiopia and the ensuing occupation
- role and contribution in the project to support Martyr's families
- dynamic participation in the fight against HIV/AIDS
- campaign and fight against FGM

(iii) Freedom of expression, association, assembly (122,154, 158, 159, 160, 168, 152, 162)

Freedom of Expression

106. The fundamental principle in the National Charter, Eritrea's Constitution of 1997 and the transitional and national codes and proclamations is respect and protection of citizens' right to lawful

expression and opinion without interference. This, however, demands responsibility from every citizen and emanates from the collective interest of the nation and the society. Hence, it is bound by the Eritrean Law and demands protection of national security, public order and the values of the nation as well as respect to others.

107. *Public Media* has strengthened progressive thinking, transformational culture and reliable information instrumental in the process of building a knowledge society. Furthermore, it helped to consolidate the responsible participation of every citizen. On the other hand regional and international information and development is made available on a daily basis. Hence, the contribution of Eritrea's media establishment to the freedom of expression has been ascertained by its democratic nature. Accordingly, radio programmes in all Eritrean languages, TV programmes in Tigriña, Tigre, Arabic and English and local newspapers in four languages (Tigriña, Tigre, Arabic and English) have been consolidated. Diversity is reflected by integrating into those available programmes various productions in other local languages.
108. Eritrean media facilities and programmes cater for a wider public participation. They are a platform for critical reflection, constructive opinion and knowledge. Extensive discussions and opinions on government policies, development, administration, justice, value system, arts, culture and sports, international affairs, etc. are promoted. The call programmes encourage citizens to express their opinions and criticism. There are also thematic issues that impinge on the overall social fabrics and related rights, such as women equality, FGM, child upbringing and protection, the reintegration of disabled, youth empowerment, etc. Individuals influential in imparting knowledge are also invited in the radio and TV panel discussions. Various magazines with specific purposes and levels of participation are also flourishing. Some are published by various ministries, agencies and national associations and civic organizations also produce their own magazines and bulletins.
109. Awareness raising and knowledge on the mainstreaming of human rights and Eritrea's participation in the UPR process and other engagements has also been presented extensively in the media (TV, radio and newspaper). To lay a solid foundation for this effort a seminar for all journalists, media experts and staff of the Minister of Information was organized by the UPR Coordinating Body. Similar platforms were organized for members of the NUEW, NCEW and NUEYS and on three special occasions to all other national civic organizations.
110. The government also encourages the production and distribution of various cultural works. Many writers have continuously produced books, literary works in most Eritrean languages, historical publications and documents, supplementary readers for various levels of education, etc. and have been circulated widely. On the other hand, dramas and films are also produced by individuals and groups of artists in various languages. The following table indicates the extent of cultural produces by individuals only:-

2015/2016	Song	Music Cassette	Clips	Films	Scrpit	Book	Magazine	Brochure	Bulletin	Booklet	Total
	550	49	120	38	50	112	72	16	35	15	1057

111. While all the above efforts have contributed significantly to strengthen the culture of free expression, seminars and discussions for different purposes also consolidated critical thinking and participation. These are organized from the village up to the national levels. Government bodies, administrations, national associations and interest groups organize forums, debates and discussions including through conferences and workshops. International Conferences are also organized with the aim of promoting research development and to integrate Eritrea's capabilities and contributions into the international intellectual culture. The International Conference on Eritrean Studies (2016) and International Conference of Solidarity on Decent Work (2016) are some recent examples. They have also been instrumental in unraveling the aspirations and potentials of the youth.
112. The emergence of satellite communication has also set a new realm in the culture of expression and information among Eritreans. There is exponential growth in television satellite dishes that have sprouted throughout the country including in most of the rural areas of the country. With standard decoders that most families own, households have access to more than 600 foreign satellite TV and radio channels broadcast 24 hours a day without any restriction. Sources like CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, CCTV, RT, France 24, Euro News including TV stations from Ethiopia and other neighboring countries are available on Arab Sat and Nile Sat easily accessed by these decoders.
113. Internet service started in a small and limited capacity in the year 2000. The annual increment is substantial. but the broadband width remains slow simply because Eritrea could not join the sea-based Fiber Optic Cable connections when they were launched 12 years ago for financial reasons at the time. But the Government has been negotiating with foreign companies and Fibre-optic based broadband internet access will be secured sometime soon. The prevailing low bandwidth and speed notwithstanding, there are no restrictions on Internet access and internet cafés are preponderant everywhere. The Government encourages internet cafes to provide service to the public with proper consideration of the national laws and have become useful medium for information tapping. The use of social media is also growing in particular among the youth, professionals and businesses.
114. On the other hand, the number of GSM mobile subscribers has grown from 16,168 in 2004 to 501,865 in 2016 (an increase of 40,474 subscribers per year). The system covers the whole country as proper facilities have been installed widely in most places and effort is also going on to expand the capacity. In addition, land line and fixed wireless technology cover about 80% of the country.

Freedom of Association and Assembly

115. Freedom of association and assembly is also respected by law. Furthermore, the Legal Notice No 5 of 1992 on "Registration of non-government national organizations and associations" has also promoted the establishment of national organizations and associations. In the last two years the 33 National civic organizations, 190 trade unions established on the basis of the Labour Proclamation and the more than a thousand community social associations established through the country have functioned in their respective areas and mandates. Hence, the system of national associations, trade unions and other gatherings has been consolidated and includes the following categories:-

- *National Civic Organizations contributing to the all-round national development goals* – National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) and the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW);
 - *Interest groups established for promoting professional interests* - (Association of Engineers, nurses, chemists, pharmacists, doctors, agriculture science, etc., labor interests (various federations and unions encompassing various sectors and trades including in rural agriculture and women’s economic empowerment); these have been instrumental in fulfilling their aspirations and raising responsible participation in the nation building endeavors;
 - *Organizations established for fulfilling special needs of citizens affected by physical, intellectual and developmental problems in the society* (the Eritrean Association of the Disabled, the Association for the Deaf, the Association for the Blind, the National Association of Intellectual and Development Disabilities, etc.)
 - *Community level Associations and organizations* – including veteran fighters association, community associations, cultural groups and networking, etc. Gatherings initiated at community levels are also been ingrained in their cultural norms and traditions and play a great role in creating platforms to discuss and address issues together.
116. All associations and trade unions are registered autonomous bodies and have their own constitutions, elected leaders and conduct regular and timely congresses, conferences, meetings and activities. They do have a close working collaboration with their respective related sector of the Government. There is, however, no polarization of interest and national interest has continued as the hallmark of progress. They are also active in advocacy on the issues and challenges of development and they participate in the government efforts for transformation. Youth, women and workers organizations in particular have been represented in the UPR Coordinating Body and have significantly advocated and worked for the implementation of the UPR recommendations. Those who have secured international space also promote people to people relationships.

Organization of Youth and Students

117. The organized life and participation of youth and students under the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) also been followed through the UPR coordinating body. NUEYS has expanded and strengthened its membership (in the age bracket 14-40 years) up to the village level without any discrimination of ethnicity, religion, sex, disability, etc. In the last three years the number of core members has increased to 17,000 and that of ordinary members to 220,000. Its visibility and activities in schools and higher learning institutions is also high. Currently, the female representation in all levels of the organizational leadership is about 42%. A number of young Eritreans from the Diaspora voluntarily contribute in national development activities through the NUEYS volunteer attachment programme and in the national service.
118. Awareness raising and programme on civics, gender, human rights, health and education is regularly conducted. Youth empowerment is also promoted through vocational training, micro credit scheme and entrepreneurship. The organization also conducts media programmes targeting the youth in all Eritrean languages and has its own magazine, “The Youth” which is published in 7 languages.

NUEYS runs continuous educational campaign and entertainment programme targeting children. Children's Associations are organized in each sub region; media clubs are established in schools and children's media programmes promoted through the TV, radio and newspapers.

119. NUEYS is a member of regional and international Youth organizations. Currently it serves as Vice President of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), member of the Executive Committee of the African Youth and Adolescents Network for Population and Development (AFRI-YAN), Executive Committee member of World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), a member of CIN-SAD youth organization, Afro-Arab Youth Council (AAYC), All Africa Students Union (AASU), Nile Basin Youth Initiative, United Peace Builders Net Work (UNOY).

Women's Organization

120. As has been explained in relation to the key recommendations on women equality and empowerment section, NUEW is a successful women's organization mandated to work in the advancement of gender equality. Its organizational basis includes 163 Branches, 481 sub-branches and 4343 basic groups. Membership is open to all Eritrean women above the age of 16 and has more than 323,420 members and the average yearly increase is currently estimated at 7%. NUEW has offices in all six regions, 58 sub-regions, and 2460 (out of 2800) villages inside the country as well as in the Diaspora. In terms of age 34% of the members are in the age range of 16 – 30 and about 22% in the range of 31 - 40. Women farmers are also constitute about 43% of the members.

121. To raise awareness and strengthen participation, every year extensive meetings, seminars and public consultations have been going on. In 2016, about 1471 meetings and public consultations took place at sub regional, regional and national levels, involving 195,475 participants (10.2% men participants). The meetings targeted women cadres, workers, house wives, students, civil servants, members of the army and administrators. On the other hand, 1309 political seminars and consultations involving similar targets of 254,619 participants (18.2% men) took place. NUEW has also organized Friends of NUEW (73% are men) in all regions of the country. The Committees work includes strengthening women's organizational capacity, raising awareness to assert women's equality, economic empowerment, mobilization against VAW and promoting girl's education.

- The laws, proclamations and regulations and all administrative measures of the government continue to play a decisive role in changing the stereotype roles of women. Concrete actions have thus been taken in the education system, work places, cultural life, media activities, etc. The role of men in the struggle for women equality is also gaining momentum. NUEW has also conducted sensitization programs within the community and women to tackle these gender stereotype roles. Above all this has targeted the myths and proverbs that play a major psychological role in directing and shaping the current stereotyped roles of women. The above efforts have dramatically changed the traditional role of women and promoted their equal status paving the way for equal access and opportunity in the Eritrean society. In spite of the significant improvement, however, there is no complacency and more needs to be done to achieve fundamental change.

Organization of Eritrean Workers

122. Data shows that the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW) has 21,245 registered members of which 40.4% (about 8,576) are women. In general, union membership has risen by 24.6% in 2014 (compared to 2005). In the last 2 years, strengthening the institutional basis has been a priority and the following are some aspects given attention in relation to UPR recommendations:-

- in collaboration with the MOLHW and other stakeholders the enterprise collective bargaining policy has improved the terms and conditions of employment of members, often on the basis of equalizing them across industries; 85 base unions are presently working under this principle
- The Tri-partite structure between the government, the workers' representatives, NCEW and employers federation as independent has promoted consultations on labour market and related issues and jointly formulated and implemented national policies
- Discussion to establish the structure and working procedures of an advisory body has been finalized; it will advise the minister on labour policies, implementation of labour proclamation, propose regulations, strengthen labour relation and on other essential matters for the administration of labour.
- NCEW is also playing a significant role in the establishment of the 6 regional labour courts which are empowered to decide industrial relation issues. The court is composed of 2 representatives of workers, 2 from employers' federation and 1 from government.
- NCEW also continues to engage government bodies to push for the ratification of convention no. 182 on the elimination of worst forms of child labor

123. *Monitoring and assessment* - The following are also some of the measures taken by NCEW to consolidate the protection of workers' rights:-

- made visits to major companies and ensured that the current conditions in relation to implementation of different laws and regulations of workers' rights and social justices are in line with national and international requirements
- tours and monitoring ascertained that women and disabled person are not discriminated in employment and remuneration
- a study on government policies relating to workers living standards is already finalized
- Conducted a preliminary study to identify the situation and challenges of the informal sector; the research concluded that the informal sector needs revitalization in order to benefit from the unionization. By organizing the sector NCEW is intending to promote their rights and introduce health and safety measure, and empowerment mechanisms
- legal issues addressed and in 2016 NCEW received 103 cases and complaints in 60 cases have been solved through negotiations, 8 cases are still pending, 20 cases have been solved by the labour court and 10 cases that don't have legal justification dismissed
- formed a safety and health committee in November 2016 to make supervision at workplace and made visits to 35 major enterprises; the outcome shows that many enterprises have increased their awareness on safety and health procedures; however workers' awareness on the importance

of safety tools tends to be very low and the committee on the supervision visit findings and recommendations will be submitted.

- policy document to protect employees with HIV/AIDS from any unfair discrimination and stigma in places of work prepared and submitted to the MOLHW for approval

124. *Advocacy and Sensitization*

- conducted extensive meetings with different government officials to ensure that the rights of workers to express their ideas freely and there is a common understanding on the workers role in enhancing economic growth
- strengthened its role in the implementation of the UPR recommendations and in particular focused on the following that are related to the NCEW's scope of interest:
 - 122.23 (ratification of the international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and their families and disabilities).
 - 122.52 (prohibition and action for the elimination of worst forms of child labor).
 - 122.124 (intensifying efforts to combat child labor).
 - 122.158, 122.159,122.154 (ensuring the rights of citizens to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly).
 - 122.174 (improving legal measures on poverty eradication and an adequate

125. *Organizational Strength and unionization*

- At the end of 2015, the 5 federation under the NCEW (food and drinks, chemical and mining, service sectors, transportation and communication, and textile and leather) conducted successful congressed and elected their leaders democratically.
- On this basis the NCEW then held its congress from March 27-29, 2017 also with the participation of foreign dignitaries. The congress was successful and a new leadership was democratically elected. The NCEW have issued a declaration and the following are some of the important resolutions passed:-
 - expand unionization of workers
 - strengthen base unions and federations
 - upgrade the technical skills of workers
 - focus on youth and women
 - strengthen regional and international bilateral relationship
- In line to the resolutions passed in the NCEW 7th congress to expand unionization, a union the workers of the Bisha Mining Company has been established recently.
- The drafting process of civil service law is also underway. Discussion between the NCEW and the Civil Service Office of the government is on how to organize civil servants under the umbrella of the NCEW in also progress and there Government has asserted political to finalize it.

126. *Training* - Preparation to provide demand-driven vocational training in the port city of Massawa is already finished and planning for other similar centres is also in process. The overall objective is to help Eritrean workers upgrade their skills through technical and vocational training for better employability of NCEW members and improved productivity of enterprises. In order to achieve this, the Technical and vocational training center in Massawa will provide initial and refresher courses in electricity, electronics, computer, hospitality, wood work, metal works. The MTC is a demand-driven training centre where training is given upon the request by employers.
127. *International Cooperation and Relationship* - NCEW has strengthened of cooperation and relationship with several regional and international trade unions. It works profoundly on for international workers' solidarity. It is active member of ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation), ITUC Africa (International Trade Union Confederation - Africa), OATUU (Organization of Africa Trade Union Unity), TUFEA (Trade Union Federation of East Africa), ICATU (International Confederation of Arab Trade Union). NCEW has strong bilateral ties with trade unions from China, Japan, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sudan, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda..etc.

Organizations of PWDs

128. The four associations for persons with disabilities, namely, the National Patriotic Association of the Disabled Persons, the Eritrean Association of the Blind, the Eritrean Association of the Deaf and the National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability have been active in the follow up of the UPR recommendations. These organizations mainstream human right approaches to minimise stigmatisation and discrimination of the disabled and their families. Promotion and protection of the rights of PWDs is thus upheld at all time by all service providers.
129. The Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) has performed independently within the laws and policies of the Government and followed its own strategies and operational plans and programmes. Its micro-finance supported 3616 disabled at an investment of NKa 26,170,000 made Since 2017. It covers 70% of any their special medical bills incurred is covered by the association while 50% of any medication abroad is also covered. Organizing associations of disabled war veterans has also succeeded in Sweden, Norway, Kuwait, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Italy and USA.
130. The Eritrean National Association of the Deaf, which has 4,000 registered members and 40% are females and has performed the following activities in the last 3 years:-
- organized awareness campaigns on the objectives and activities of the association, and various issues including on strengthening the role of the deaf women in the society
 - promotes vocational training among its members
 - Sign language training given to persons from government bodies and civil society organizations
 - Children with hearing impairments trained on sign language
 - Sign language introduced in the Eritrean television twice a week to enable persons with hearing problems get timely information

- In collaboration with the MoLHW, published the Sign Language Dictionary and 5,000 printed copies disseminated throughout the country; The dictionary translated into Arabic and English
131. The Eritrean National Association for the Blind (ERNAB) also has 3000 members. The board has 15 members out of which three are women. It also advocated and lobbied for persons with vision impairment and strengthened awareness on the role of the public in preventing blindness and rehabilitating people with vision impairment. The income generating initiatives through small business and agricultural activities has also improved their livelihoods. The biannual bulletin of the association, 'Self Reliance' is also prepared in Braille for use by its members.
132. The Eritrean National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability is a recently formed association which focuses on children with intellectual and developmental disability. The association has 935 members and has its own annual magazine called 'CARE'. It is also undertaking awareness campaigns through seminars to families who have children with these difficulties and sensitizes the public to send them to school. The organized joint trainings during 2014 – 2016 with international NGOs like ARCHMED (Germany) and Sacra Famiglia (Italy).
133. The favorable government policy, commitment, action, conducive social environment, constructive role of families, communities and the general public to PWDs and the readiness of PWDs to be self-reliant are the main driving factors that have to be sustained in improving the wellbeing of PWDs. Challenges still remain in availing residential houses for PWDs and critical problems in orthopedic appliances, relevant vocational training, research funding to update the data and situation of PWDs at national level and solving physical environmental barriers limited.

D. Administration of Justice

(i) *Implementation of National Laws (122.43)*

Publishing of the new National Laws

134. As is the case with all countries with civil law tradition, statutes are the major sources of law in Eritrea. Transitional Civil Code of Eritrea (2/91), the Transitional Civil Procedure Code of Eritrea (3/91), the Transitional Penal Code of Eritrea (4/91), the Transitional Criminal Procedure of Eritrea (5/91), the Transitional Commercial Code of Eritrea (5/91) and the Transitional Maritime Code of Eritrea (7/91) are the basic codes adopted in 1991. These transitional codes have been the main source of law in Eritrea. Proclamations and legal notices are other sources of law. Since 1991, the Government of Eritrea has issued a number of proclamations and legal notices on specific areas.
135. The new National Codes were published in May 2015 with consideration to the following aspects:-
- The laws are home grown and take into consideration the unity in diversity of the Eritrean society, and are a reflection of the national values and norms

- Dispute resolution in the Eritrean society is also endowed with a wealth of customary mechanisms in solving its problems amicably. Hence, the inclusion of the centuries old, self-advanced customary laws which embody, inter alia, the workable principles of penal law, based on peaceful settlement of certain criminal acts in the newly enacted Penal Code is one of the main achievements of the Eritrean legal system
- Efforts have also been made to include in the Penal Code such crimes sprouting out of advancements in technology and intricate interactions of human life of the 21st century, such as, computer crimes, crimes committed against aircrafts, crimes related to narcotics and others.

Advocacy and Sensitization

136. The tasks of protection and fulfillment of rights is greatly facilitated and made easier when the public possesses greater awareness of the laws and the legal process. With the publication of the new Eritrean Codes (Civil Code, Penal Code, Civil Procedure Code and Criminal Procedure Code) on May 2015, the Ministry of Justice embarked on a comprehensive campaign. It is aimed at raising the awareness of the public on their rights and duties that are guaranteed by these codes. It is also aimed at acquainting the public with the procedures that have to be followed when citizens decide to take their case to the courts. Ultimately, it intends to enable every member of the general public to understand the laws to a considerable degree, behave in accordance with the laws, abide and deal on legal matters with considerable level of legal consciousness.
137. Accordingly the MOJ made the following effort:-
- Organized orientations and discussions for all law enforcement agencies
 - The Minister of Justice organized seminars in all regions to all administration officials, regional assembly members, civic organizations, religious and elder leaders
 - launched a public awareness program aimed at teaching the public on the new Eritrean Codes that spans up to the grassroots level
 - since September of 2016 launched a weekly radio, TV, newspapers media campaign to raise public awareness on the new national codes; the guiding principle of the media campaign is, 'Law for societal harmony and development'
138. Since capacity building requires time and huge resources, implementation is to be seen in phases in a way that addresses present and future needs. The main focus is to continue public awareness campaign and enhance efficiency of the functioning system through the following:-
- capacity building with on-site training, study materials, shared research,
 - gradual replacement of data administration on printed format by the use of e-forms for files and other specific documents
 - software development, and
 - implement the intranet platform for the purpose of online collaboration sharing

(ii) **Protection (122.51, 122.153, 122.167)**

The integrity of the Judiciary strengthened

139. The judiciary and the Attorney General's Office have been engaged in the protection of all rights in their respective mandates and jurisdiction. Most importantly, the process and administration of justice is based on an independent judiciary comprising of hierarchical courts and a Public Prosecution institution headed by an Attorney General. Proclamation No.1/1991 and Article 7 of Proclamation 37/93 have strengthened the Public Prosecution's independence. Hence, it has functioned to uphold the supremacy of the law and protect the basic human rights of the citizens. It also provides judicial and administrative remedies in case of any violation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice has played an important role in making sure that draft legislation that is developed at the required standard.
140. Strengthening and expanding the attorney system is also another aspect of the ongoing progress. Until recently, the Public Prosecution has functioned at national and regional levels only. To further strengthen the function, the appointment of attorney generals at sub regional levels is being introduced. This will contribute significantly in maintaining and consolidating judicial justice at the local levels. The nation has trained many legal professionals in the higher level institutions, who after a brief experience of the legal system are adequate to be deployed to work in the various areas.
141. In accordance to Proclamation No.1 of 1991 which governs the administration of justice institutions. Article 7 of Proclamation 37/93 also safeguards the independence of the judiciary. The Eritrean judiciary and the jurisdictional structure functions at a village or locality level, with regional courts as the second tier of the judicial hierarchy. Regional High Courts function in the majority of the regions and have both first instance appellate jurisdictions. The High Court, which has a Last Appellate Division sitting in the Capital, Asmara, is the third tier of judicial hierarchy.
142. As part of its endeavors to make the Eritrean justice system accessible to every Eritrean in the most remote parts of the country, the GoSE has also established 430 community courts across the country. The judges in the Community Courts are elected by the inhabitants and are members of the respective communities they serve. The Ministry of Justice, which is responsible for the coordination and budget of Community Courts, provides to the judges skill and capacity building programs. The training includes basic literacy programmes, file keeping and basic legal training.
143. The establishment of the Community Courts has thus enhanced access to judicial services and guaranteed a broad-based popular participation in the administration of justice at the local level. They have also strengthened the integration of customary dispute resolution mechanisms into the judicial system. This continues to encourage the parties to resolve their differences amicably with local norms and customs playing important role. One of the main distinctive attributes of Community Courts is that the judges are elected by the inhabitants from among themselves and are well versed with the local norms and values of the society in which they function.

144. There is no fully-fledged system of public defense (an institutionalized system that runs in public-private partnership). Defendants who are indigent, deaf and dumb, juvenile and those charged with offenses punishable with rigorous imprisonment exceeding ten years have access to a legal right to public defense. Accordingly, the Court assigned public defenders – from its personnel – to represent individuals eligible for public defense in High Courts outside the Eritrean capital.
145. To make the justice system accessible, fair, expeditious, and accountable, the Ministry of Justice is developing its human resource capacity. To maintain competent, reliable, efficient, and effective human resources various training programs are given. They included community court judges, regional court judges and newly recruited judges and prosecutors. Furthermore, in an effort to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement, the police are also trained on legal and related matters.

E. Constitutional and Legislative Framework

146. The following are the three areas reflected in 4 recommendations:-

- ✓ Promotion of *HR in the Constitution* – 122.31
- ✓ *Full implementation* of the Constitution - 122.32, 122.41
- ✓ *Institutions and capacity building* - 122.42

(i) Existential External Threats and Effects

147. The post-independence initial period until 1998 was characterized by rapid socio-economic, political and social transformation in Eritrea. The 1998 – 2000 costly war with Ethiopia as well as dire conditions of perennial belligerency that ensued in its aftermath has influenced the tempo and pace of the efforts. A new Constitution was adopted by a 862-member Constituent Assembly. The Constitution drafting process took about two years as it was preceded by civic education and extensive discussions throughout the country as well as in the Diaspora to ensure maximum participation of all segments and stakeholders in the society. The Constitution was a home grown, indigenous process that emanated from the values and convictions of the PFDJ and the GOE.
148. The political trajectory contemplated in those days was to enact subsequent laws to advance the various aspects of the political process. This natural political process of nation building in the broadest sense of the term was interrupted by the border war with Ethiopia that erupted in May 1998. The costly war with Ethiopia as well as dire conditions of perennial belligerency that ensued in its aftermath has adversely affected the tempo and pace of the process. Elections (except local and regional level elections) and related political measures were consequently kept on hold as priorities changed and the country had to grapple, first and foremost, with existential issues of preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Hence, disregard of prevailing external environmental context that shaped Eritrea's policy by anybody are unacceptable as they negate the interlink of peace and security, and human right and development.
149. The existential external threats made attempts to thwart Eritrea's nation building, violate its sovereignty, compromise the independent political stance and sabotage the development

achievements. The essence of the problem which bestow responsibility on the international community (in particular UNSC) that so far shied responsibility constitute the following:-

- The Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute has been resolved through the final and binding delimitation (2002) and demarcation (2007) rulings of the Independent Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC). However, Ethiopia continues to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories in defiance to international law, the Algiers Peace Treaty, the EEBC arbitral ruling and the successive UNSC resolutions. This constitutes flagrant act of aggression with consequences for regional peace and security and is a violation of the Eritrean people's right of sovereignty.
 - Eritrea is also subjected to unjust and illegal UN Security Council sanctions since 2009. This violates the right of the Eritrean people to development.
 - The Eritrean people's right to live in peace without any threats is also violated as Eritrea also faces the belligerent stance of the US and its proxy, Ethiopia. Various alternatives including an all-out war under the pretext of a border dispute and the protracted political, economic, social and cultural conspiracies and military threats have been waged against Eritrea since 1998.
150. The Eritrean people and Government remained resilient and defended the country's sovereignty, national interest and people's rights. This above all emanates from the belief that the biggest responsibility to the martyrs of the Eritrean liberation struggle is to never compromise on the national security. Eritrea's development trajectory has been influenced by many factors and significant challenges, shortcomings and hostilities still prevail. In spite of their influences, the hostilities have not been able to roll back the progress of the nation and have now entered into a new stage as a result of the efforts of the last 18 years.

(ii) Towards a New Development Trend

151. After a decade of implementation and progress of the Warsay-Yikealo Development Campaign, Eritrea in 2016 has declared a new development tenet and organization. This is intended to introduce further development focus. The following are the important tenets:-

- Eritrea's development strategy is now being reorganized into four fronts, namely, Eastern, Western, Central inside the country and the Diaspora front.
- Effort is being made to maximize the utilization of comparative advantages in each front. Management of resources in the areas of energy, water infrastructure, capital equipment and machinery, and human capital resources are being reorganized for optimum effects
- The effort of all ministries, regional administrations as well as defense forces is also maximized to ensure harmonization, complementariness and effective coordination.
- Accordingly, existing capabilities are mobilized, organized and redistributed

152. In this vein, Eritrea is thus focusing on three aspects of development to create a leap in the next three and encompasses the following three pillars of strategic interventions:-

- *Effort has been initiated to create macro-economic stability* - In general, the Government further mobilized human and material resources to expand basic social and economic infrastructure in areas including agriculture, education, healthcare, water harvesting, transportation and energy. Targeted effort to raise productivity and expand investment (both domestic and FDI) is going on. The integrated rural development schemes and coastal development programmes are also major goals for expansion. On the other hand, measures to regulate the market and reduce inflation are also ongoing. These include controlling illegal cross border trade, black market and money movement. Reforming the financial sector is also a major aspect.
- *The political process* - This will be strengthened through the political road map finalized recently, the ongoing effort to implement the new national codes and the writing of a new constitution initiated in May 2015. The experiences of the last 20 years as well as the emerging situation and challenges are taken into consideration in this endeavor. As is always the practice, these are also home grown initiatives driven by internal dynamics and with the full ownership of the people. A systemic approach to conduct nation-wide consultations at all levels is already defined. The above efforts will set guidance for the consolidated trajectory in the political process of nation building and the future governance system.
- *Reorganization of government functions* - This encompasses internal consolidation, redefining of approaches and fast tracking of youth succession process in all aspects of development

F. International Cooperation

(i) UPR and Monitoring.

In this area, *Implementation* (122.52), *follow-up* (122.50), and *awareness rising* on matters relating to the recommendations (122.71) are considered.

153. The UPR CB started to function in August 2015 and prepared the 2015 - 2016 Plan of Action on the basis of the UPR Framework for Action (2015 -2018). In the last one and half years 4 quarterly meetings, an annual meeting and seven consultative meetings were conducted. The meetings were instrumental in experience sharing as well as maximizing coordination and monitoring. Moreover they were very critical in developing a collective understanding among stakeholders, establishing organizational basis for implementation and promoting a human rights coordination infrastructure. In this regard, the 2016 annual evaluation of December 2016 addressed the following objectives:-

- Assessment of the UPR Implementation in 2016
- Identify experiences and challenges
- Map way forward to fast-track implementation during 2017/2018

154. The experience has shown that significant effort has been made to systematically address issues contained in the recommendations. The effort to reflect the recommendations in national

development is thus satisfactory but more capacity is needed to analyze progress and challenges. Hence in the next two years more effort will be made to strengthen the follow up on the protection of human rights. The following Objectives of the 2017 – 2018 Plan have thus been considered:-

- Strengthen the mainstreaming of human right
- Fast track implementation of the accepted recommendations with more focus on the targets identified in the 2017-2018
- Strengthen the data system on implementation and progress
- Build institutional capacity in particular in the monitoring of progress

155. *Mid Term Review and Reflection* - As per the Framework for Action and the need to share experiences and fast track implementation in 2017-18, a one day Mid-term review was also conducted on May 18, 2017. Critical discussion on the implementation of the recommendations across the thematic areas was made on the basis of the reports submitted by all concerned stakeholders. A compiled report is also prepared by the UPR Secretariat. *The following are some of recommendations discussed in the review:-*

- Effectively utilize the 2017 - 2018 UPR Plan of Action to fast track implementation and strengthen efforts on monitoring of protection measures
- Evaluation and data of progress to be presented in relation to the previous standings and the progress achieved at sector level
- Assessment should focus on the implications of the sector progress on human rights
- Secure adequate resources from the project support in due time as some innovative activities related to the recommendations were not implemented
- Speed the forum of national associations (has been delayed due to technical reasons)
- Reflect the best practices and innovative approaches as separate attachments so that more studies and efforts could be made

156. *Expansion and Consolidation of Best Practices and Innovative Approaches* – *this* was also discussed in the mid-term review. They are seen in relation to their effects at system level, nationwide coverage, the prevalence of clear and standard structure and application, the high level of responsible participation by the beneficiaries and their implication to the protection and fulfillment of rights. In this vein, the following are some of the important prevalent best practices and innovative approaches that have been consolidated in the follow up of the UPR recommendations:-

- *Political* - The contribution of local governance and its democratic structure and trends, the decisiveness of community based approaches, the jurisdiction of the Community Courts at grassroots levels and implications to judicial justice and accessibility, the visibility and participation of representative women in all the established community structures and committees, public consultations and meetings at national, regional and local levels by all levels of officials on major policy, strategy issues of the nation
- *Social* - The popular grassroots movement and initiative against FGM/C and early marriage, the right of education to use the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, innovative and successful

approach on out of school children, the Donkey Project to help disabled children going to school, boarding schools for reliable access and continuity in remote and periphery areas, the dominance of women in Adult Education Programmes and its impact in empowerment, popular structures promoting friends of youth and women, grassroots level of outreach health programmes in rural and periphery areas, health and safety structures in all businesses and enterprises, exemplary efforts of total mobilization for water and soil conservation and the greening clubs established in schools, resilience of families and communities, collective support and psycho-social healing in difficult situations, the co-sharing contribution of communities in social services

- *Economic Empowerment* - The effective economic empowerment of citizens and households and in particular women headed households through micro-credit schemes, the integrated minimum package in household farms and food security

(ii) Engagement and Institutional Linkages

157. Recommendations relating to engagement with HRC and OHCHR (122.73, 122.76, 122.79, 122.81 122.82, 122.198) and Technical Support (199) have been reflected in this effort. A Framework on a paradigm for extended engagement and international cooperation on human rights was prepared in May 2015. This was based on the UPR Framework for Action (2015 – 2018) and reflects the main tenets of the engagement and cooperation in the promotion of human rights.

158. Engagement and cooperation with OHCHR has developed and three technical Visits have been made to Eritrea. Eritrea presented three priorities (capacity building in the areas of administration of justice, water security and persons with disability) and agreed by the OHCHR. An agreement is also made. Further technical mission and a training workshop on administration of justice will be conducted by the OHCHR in 2017.

159. UPR Partnerships has also evolved and the following can be noted so far:-

- UPR Project Support agreement signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN. The Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF - 2017 to 2022) signed between Eritrea and the UN also considers the UPR as an area of cooperation
- A similar process is going on with the EU and after repeated discussions, is ready to be presented for decision to the EDF Committee (EU) in July. This is based on the National Indicative Plan (NIP) agreed with the EU under the EDF 11 and includes the UPR.
- Sweden and Norway in particular have committed support to the UPR implementation. Similar discussion are also on-going with Germany and Switzerland

160. Eritrea has consolidated its engagement with the HRC and continuously contributes in the regular sessions of the Council. Regular engagement with the Presidents of the Council is made on many issues. Continuous meetings with the High Commissioner have also been made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Advisor and the Eritrean Delegations to the HRC sessions. The Eritrean Delegation to the HRC sessions also engaged with the Division for Special

Procedures and the UPR Secretariat. Invitation was also sent to thematic mandates and Treaty Bodies but no response has been given so far.

161. On top of regularly participating in the meetings of the AG, NAM, Like Minded Group (LMG), the Eritrean Delegation has made various presentations on issues relating to Eritrea and human rights to the AG, NAM, Arab League Group, Latin American Group and LMG. A televised press conference was also conducted in response and on the occasion of the Report of the COI on Eritrea. Side event were also organized including on UPR, UPR mid-term review, women equality and empowerment, mining and promotion of human rights, right to education and implications to higher learning and partnerships during the 30th, 31st, 34th HRC Sessions and have contributed significantly in strengthening engagement, Eritrea's visibility and a better understanding on major issues of development and their implications to the promotion of human rights in Eritrea.
162. The Eastern & Southern Africa Regional office of UNICEF (ESARO) in March & April of 2017 sent the child & social protection senior advisors to Eritrea and discussed policies, achievements, challenges, and observed progress made in the areas of child and social protection by making field visits in selected sub regions of 3 regions. UNICEF Eritrea Country office and MoLHW also conduct jointly monitoring visits on quarterly basis to all regions of the country to observe implementation status on the rights & welfare of the child and social protection activities.

(iii) Conventions and Thematic Mandates

163. *Reflecting International Covenants in the National Laws (122.107)* - Significant parts of the rights guaranteed by international human rights instruments are incorporated in the transitional Codes and the new Codes. Effort has also been made to reflect the provisions of the common values of mankind and international standards. Furthermore, first draft of a working document on the reflection of provisions of international human rights treaties has been developed by the Ministry of Justice to help identify the gaps if any.
164. *Compliance on covenant of civil and political rights (122.22, 122.43)* - Significant parts of the rights guaranteed by international human rights instruments are incorporated in the new Civil Code, the Civil Procedure Code, the Penal Code, and the Criminal Procedure Codes address a wide range of rights and liberties that form part and parcel of the core human rights instruments.
165. The Ministry of Justice actively participates in finalizing other legislations that may have direct relevance to the protection and fulfillment of the human dignity and human right such as the Cultural and Natural Heritage Proclamation No. 177/2015, the Eritria Environmental Protection, Management and Réhabilitation Framework Proclamation No. 179/2017, Environmental Protection and Management Regulations Legal Notice No. 127/2017 to assess their congruence with the national laws and international standards
166. Ratify ILO Convention No 182 – 122.52; Convention on right of persons with disabilities - 122.24 and 122.28, Migrants, 122.23 are included in this respect. The actions are not yet finalized.

167. *Reporting Obligations* - Preparation for the initial report on Civil and Political Rights is ongoing. A Framework for Action for the preparation of the 7th CEDAW Report has been prepared by the Eritrea CEDAW Working Group and submitted to the CEDAW Committee and preparation has already started since March 2017. Similarly a Framework for Action on CRC implementation and follow up leading to the preparation of the 5th and 6th CRC National Reports has also been prepared and will be submitted soon to the CRC Committee. Note should also be made that Eritrea has also prepared a National Report on Africa Charter for Human and People's Rights.

(iv) Opposing the Politicization of Human rights and the targeting of Eritrea

In spite of all the above efforts and progress, Eritrea continues to be subjected to consecutive and politically motivated HRC resolutions under the pretext of human right. These resolutions and the appointments of a Special Rapporteur and a Commission of Inquiry (finished its mandate in 2016) have not promoted genuine human rights and regional peace, security and development. They undermine Eritrea's effort to promote engagement and cooperation through the UPR and at bilateral levels because,

- the litany of accusations of gross violations is, unfounded, misconstrued and outdated
- is devoid of any legal and institutional basis as targeting a sovereign nation violates the non-selectivity, objectivity and impartiality principles of the Council
- disregards Eritrea' reality and scavenges on information from hostile countries on Eritrea
- the mandate holders indulge into activist-like approaches in contravention to the Mandate Holders' Code of Conduct and the UN principles and resolutions