

Eritrea's National Report (2017-2020) on The African Charter

**The State of Eritrea
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
September 2021**

Table of Contents

	Topic	Sub Topic	Page
I	Introduction		
	1.1. Objectives		3
	1.2. Depth and Scope of the Report		3
II	Civil and Political Rights		4
	2.1. Legal and Institutional Basis		4
	2.2. Measures and Progress		5
	2.2.1. <i>Progress in the Justice System</i>		6
	2.2.2. <i>Law Enforcement & progress</i>		9
	2.3. Fundamental freedoms		12
	2.3.1. <i>Dignity of the detainees and the Penitentiary system</i>		12
	2.3.2. <i>Freedom of religion</i>		14
	2.3.3. <i>Freedom of, expression, association, and assembly</i>	(i) <i>Media and access to information</i>	15
		(ii) <i>Freedom of association and assembly</i>	17
		• General	17
		• Youth and Student mobilization and organization	18
		• Women Equality and empowerment	19
		• Workers Movement and Organization	22
		• Organizations of persons with disabilities	26
		(iii) <i>Freedom of Movement</i>	26
		(iv) <i>Freedom to Public Participation</i>	27
III	Economic, Social, Cultural Right and Development		27
	3.1. Brief Introduction		27
	3.2. Civil Service Salary Increment improving the livelihoods		28
	3.3. Right to Work		28
	3.4. Social Sector Strategy and Basic securities and rights		32
	3.4.1. <i>Right to Food & nutrition security</i>	(i) <i>Domestic production capacity</i>	32

		<i>in agriculture and fisheries enhanced</i>	
		(ii) <i>Institutional Capabilities expanded and strengthened</i>	34
	3.4.2. <i>Right to Health and Care</i>		35
	3.4.3. <i>Right to Education</i>		41
	3.4.4. <i>Soc. Protection & security</i>	(i) <i>Mapping/Stocktaking of Social Protection Programs in Eritrea</i>	53
		ii) <i>social welfare interventions</i>	53
		(iii) <i>The right & development of children</i>	55
		• <i>Organization and mobilization</i>	55
		• <i>Vulnerable Children</i>	57
		(iv) <i>The Family and social security</i>	59
		• <i>Protection of Family as a Social Institution</i>	59
		• <i>Social protection</i>	59
		(v) <i>Right and welfare of persons with disabilities (PWDs)</i>	60
IV	People's Rights		63
	4.1. <i>Right to development</i>	4.1.1. <i>A successful Post-border war Development Campaign</i>	63
		4.1.2. <i>Eritrea's National Road Map & the New Development Drive</i>	64
	4.2. <i>National and International Peace</i>	4.2.1. <i>Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace and regional dynamics/ Progress</i>	66
		4.2.2. <i>Geopolitical agendas, renewed hostilities and Eritrea's resolve to defend its national security & sustain regional dynamics</i>	67
		4.2.3. <i>Eritrea's Engagement and cooperation on Human Rights</i>	68
	4.3. <i>Tackling the COVID 19 Pandemic</i>		69
	4.4. <i>Promote Awareness of the Charter (Art. 25), Duties Art 27, 28, 29</i>		71
V	Conclusion		71
	<i>List of Tables in the Report</i>		73

I. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

1. In 2017 Eritrea submitted its Initial and combined National Report on the African Charter covering the period 1991-2016. The Report was discussed during the 62nd African Commission for human and People's Rights (ACHPR) regular session (25 April to 9 May, 2018). During the Session the Eritrean Delegation presented a summary of the report and gave oral as well written responses to the questions and observations of the ACHPR.
2. Pursuant to Article 62 of the ACHPR, Eritrea is again submitting the 2017-2020 National Report on the African Charter. The submission has been delayed due to the Corona pandemic and other situations. The Report as usual is coordinated by the MOFA through the inter-sector National Coordination Body (NCB) ensuring the contribution of relevant ministries, institutions and national associations. The following factors have been considered:-
 - the conditions, programs and measures taken to respect, protect and fulfill human rights
 - the rights and duties as well as the cooperation entailed in Eritrea's implementation and observance of its responsibilities under the Charter
 - importance of using the Report to further strengthen dignified engagement and cooperation based on partnership with the ACHPR
3. The Report covers the period 2017-2020 and was finalized at the end of 2021 after submissions and comprehensive discussions by relevant sectors and national associations. Due to circumstances however, the Report's submission to the Commission has been delayed. The process for the preparation of 2021-2022 periodic report is also starting soon.

1.2. Depth and Scope of the Report

4. The Report follows the ACHPR reporting guidelines based on the African Charter and covers four areas, namely Civil and Political Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, people's rights and engagement and cooperation on human rights. Each relevant sector (Ministry) and National organizations (*representing youth/students, women, workers as well as organizations on disability*) presented their report in accordance to the ACHPR Reporting Guideline and on the basis of a Framework for Action outlined by the National Coordinating Body (NCB). The sector reports were discussed and compiled by the NCB. The compiled draft was circulated to NCB members and written comments gathered. The feedbacks were taken into consideration and a summary of the updated report was submitted to a meeting of the NCB. The Report has finally been endorsed at policy level.

5. The depth and scope of the report underlines the obligations under the Banjul Charter and other relevant regional and international instruments that have direct bearing on the enjoyment of human and peoples' rights. It encompasses the period 2017-2020 and helps to track achievements and challenges in relation to the Initial and Combined Report. Effort has been made to ensure consistency and verify data in as much as possible. It must be taken into consideration that the African Charter report (like the UNHRC – Universal Periodic Report: UPR) is being used as a source and reference for preparing other Eritrea's reporting obligations. Thus effort has been made to reflect best practices and innovative approaches in the respect, protection and promotion of human rights in Eritrea.
6. In this regard, the following five important aspects of the objective reality are taken as context for the overall national development dynamics reflecting their implication to the Africa Charter in the present Report and will be explained further in the relevant parts:
 - The new prospects and dynamics of regional peace and restoration of peace and relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018
 - Eritrea's New Development Dynamics and Prospects
 - COVID 19 and National efforts
 - The Tigray Crisis in Ethiopia and the threats to peace and security in the Horn of Africa
 - Continued existential external threats and Eritrea's resilience

II. Civil and Political Rights

2.1. Legal and Institutional Basis (Articles 1 and 2)

7. Eritrea has not adopted any new legislative measures (as *relates to Article 1 of the Charter*) but reference to Paragraphs 23 – 25 of the Initial Report is made on the functioning legal and institutional basis that continues to ascertain the respect, promotion and protection of rights. The new National codes published in 2015 are still in the sensitization and refinement stage before they could be promulgated to take functional and legal role. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to underline that the transitional codes and the extensive system of proclamations and legal notices continue to serve as the basis for the respect, protection and fulfillment of all rights. Furthermore, the PFDJ National Charter, as a political road map, continues to serve as the political and institutional framework for the nation building dynamics and the subsequent mainstreaming of human rights.
8. In this regard, reference is made to Paragraphs 44 to 58 of the initial report demonstrating the continued effort to consolidate the rule of law and the enjoyment of equal right and opportunities in accordance to Eritrea's Transitional Codes. The 178 proclamations and 125

legal notices legislated by the Government guarantee the implementation of the rights and freedoms on an equal basis. Moreover, during the reporting period one of the instruments signed by Eritrea is the ILO “Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention”, 2011, (No. 182), in June 2019, thereby completing the ratification of all ILO Core Conventions.

9. Though initially affected by the COVID 19 situation (after March 2019), the judiciary composed of hierarchical courts and Public Prosecution in practice continues to uphold the administration of justice and Independence of Courts is upheld reflecting Article 26 of the Charter. This reflects responsibilities of the state party to articles 1, 2, 3, and 19 of the Charter. Accordingly, all Eritreans are treated equally and entitled to equal protection of the law. Equal rights and opportunities reflected in human dignity, betterment of life and development has been consolidated as reflected in various sections of this report underlining the following obligations under articles 19 and 3 of the Charter,

- there is no discrimination, exclusion, restriction or preference made on the basis of ethnicity, religion, social status, language, opinion, and gender and national unity and citizenship has been consolidated,
- equity considerations and equitable distribution of wealth and resources are maintained
- the population is active participant and beneficiary of the wealth and opportunities on the basis of an equal footing of all rights and a system that nurtures collective responsibilities
- the community driven pragmatic interventions at grassroots level have been consolidated as critical elements in the promotion of rights during the reporting period

2.2. Measures and Progress

During the reporting period the MOJ has been engaged in a continuous task of expanding access to quality legal services; enhancing the professional competence of personnel in the administration of justice, maintaining institutional integrity of the system and striving to become transparent entity promoting and maintaining ethical standards of the judiciary. In this regard, the MOJ has been active in designing comprehensive strategy to improve the quality of justice system and intensify efficient and effective access to justice. The strategy includes the following fundamental components:-

- Introduction of a legal aid system
- Promotion and institutionalization of out-of-court dispute resolution mechanisms through community courts (arbitration, mediation, reconciliation mechanisms)
- Enhancing the ongoing public awareness raising efforts and access to information
- Introduction of uniform standard procedural forms and improving the working conditions to enable judges to effectively promote fair trials

- Introducing creative additional alternatives to strengthen the independence of the judiciary
- Strengthen institutional capacities including cooperation on improving human capabilities with the support of UNDP.

2.2.1. Progress in the Justice System (Article 3, 26)

- 10.** The 2017-2020 Eritrea Report makes an overall reference to developments and challenges stipulated in the ACHPR Eritrea Initial Report on the Justice System and highlight the progress made and challenges addressed in the justice system. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) update highlights efforts and progress in strengthening the National Legal System, prevalence of Justice, consolidation of juvenile justice, harmonization with International Instruments and building human capacity
11. As stipulated in Paragraph 22 of the ACHPR Eritrea Initial Report, and stated earlier in paragraph 9 of this Report, the overriding principle for Eritrea's progress and achievements is equal right and opportunities sanctioned by national law.

(i) Strengthening the National Legal System

12. Reference is made to Eritrea's ACHPR Initial Report Paragraphs 12 – 17 on the political process of nation building and efforts that continued to strengthen the National Legal System upholding the core principles of respecting human dignity and protection of fundamental rights. Moreover, the National Charter as a political road map has consolidated equal rights and opportunities as a basis for the ongoing political process of nation building.
13. Efforts to make Eritrea a country of justice and equality where dignity and basic rights of women, workers, children, refugees, persons with disabilities and others who deserve assistance have been strengthened despite challenges. In actual practice, the Transitional Civil Code of Eritrea (in accordance to Proclamation 2/1991) incorporates the fundamental rights of personality under Articles 8 – 31 and safeguards equal implementation of these rights without discrimination against race, ethnic origin, language, color, sex, religion, disability, age, social or economic status or any other improper factor. Accordingly, all existing national legislations are anchored on these tenets and have ensured that the national legal system upholds the rights of the people of Eritrea.
14. In this regard, the newly adopted Eritrean Civil Code, Civil Procedure Code, Penal and Criminal Procedure Code (2015) reflect legal measures to prevent and respond to different forms of violence against children and minors. It criminalizes sexual violence as a serious offence and has taken a tougher stance and punishment against sexual offence on children and minors. In the 2015 penal code the minimum age of criminal responsibility has been

raised to 18. It applies the principles of child friendly justice mechanisms offering alternative measures designed for the rehabilitation of young offenders by promoting rehabilitation and restorative juvenile justice model. The newly adopted Codes are also intended to strengthen this dynamics and ensure legal measures to prevent and respond to crimes including sexual offences and create tougher stance on sexual offenses against children and minors. The basic human rights of the people including children's and women's rights are thus accordingly enshrined in Eritrea's sectorial laws, policies and strategies, and are making impact.

Prevalence of Justice

15. In accordance to Proclamations No. 166/2012, 167/2012, 168/2012 and Legal Notice 120/2012 people's access to justice has been strengthened. This has been done by adjudicating minor civil litigations by hierarchically lower level courts that have wider geographic coverage. Easy access to court services has been ensured thereby securing speedy delivery of justice. Furthermore, the existing court structure has been amended to enhance community-based dispute settlement mechanisms, ensure the accessibility of quality court services and introduce specialized benches including juvenile and family benches.
16. In regard to capacity building, MoJ periodically conducts training for judges, prosecutors, staff of the Ministry and other law enforcement professionals on crime prevention and criminal justice system; investigating and prosecuting financial crimes; the application of international norms into domestic governance, rule of law and administration of justice. The capacity building initiatives are interventions of the Ministry of Justice to equip legal professionals with contemporary knowledge and skills on administration of justice.
17. Considering Eritrea's strong sense of community responsibility and recognizing the community-based dispute settlement mechanism, the MoJ aims to introduce the restorative justice model for children in conflict with the law. Building on Eritrea's rich sense of community structure, responsibility and dynamics, the restorative model will focus to repair the harm, strengthen community role and responsibility, generalize relationship between offender and victim, and reintegrate juvenile delinquents in the community

Consolidation of Juvenile Justice

18. Eritrean Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes give special emphasis to young offenders with the main aim of rehabilitating and enabling them to be self-sustained and beneficial members of the community. The pertinent codes provide special chapters dealing with juvenile offenders. Young offenders are not subjected to special protection and shall not be kept in custody with adults. Where juveniles are found guilty of criminal wrongdoing, special disciplinary measures including admission to curative institution and supervised education are imposed.

19. To realize the justice for children, the government established a probation service providing counseling and integrating children in conflict with the law into schools and neighborhoods. Judicial cases for children in conflict with the law are heard in closed chambers/benches. Strengthening of the protection efforts through training for justice professionals and sub-regional administrators on administration of justice and law enforcement. Considering Eritrea's sense of community and recognizing the community-based dispute settlement mechanism, the MoJ is also introducing the restorative justice model for children in conflict with the law. As Eritrea's rich sense of community, the restorative model will focus to repair the harm, to strengthen community sense, generalize relationship between offender and victim, and reintegrate juvenile delinquent in the community.
20. The Eritrean family law is based on equality of men and women in all matters relating to marriage and family. Thus the equality of both sexes is respected in entering into marriage; managing the affairs of the children; enjoyment and administration of property; determining the place of residence; dealing with family disputes, and enjoying other family related rights and assuming corresponding mutual obligations. Furthermore, the Civil Code of Eritrea deals on family relationships and inheritance and it regulates, inter alia, matters concerning family relationship, betrothal, marriage, divorce, child custody, adoption and maintenance and this has been compatible with the provisions of CEDAW, and other human rights instruments.

Harmonization with International Instruments

21. Reference is made to the ACHPR Eritrea Initial Report Paragraphs 20 and 21 and that Eritrea is a state party to many UN and regional human rights instruments including six core human rights treaties (ICCPR, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC and CAT) and the African Charter on human and people's rights as well as other regional conventions. These instruments are duly recognized and considered in Eritrean national laws, policies and strategies and thereby enforced by Eritrean courts. Thus, every person continues to enjoy the basic human rights and is required to observe corresponding obligations.
- In this regard, MoJ is providing technical support to the concerned Ministries who spearhead the drafting of sector legislations compatible with national law as well as international and regional instruments that Eritrea is a party to.

Building human capacity

22. MoJ is moving towards building a skilled law and justice workforce. 95 young legal professionals are currently pursuing their post-graduate Master of Laws (L.L.M) studies from the University of South Africa. The MoJ will continue exploring opportunities to enhance

their capacity in law and justice that eventually strengthen Eritrea's legal system and the administration of justice.

2.2.2. Law Enforcement and progress (Art 3)

23. The rights of suspect continue at the center of police investigation and reflect Articles 4 to 7 of the Charter dealing on promotion of liberties and freedoms. Procedural articles enshrined in Chapter 2 on the Transitional Criminal Procedure Code of Eritrea (TCPCE) safeguard the right of the suspect ensuring speedy investigation and include confession (Art 27/2) in which the police shall bring the detainee within 48 hours (Art 29), may release suspect on bail pursuant to the given procedure (art 28), avoiding any improper method during investigation (art 31). In this regard, effort has been made to respect the 28 days maximum time for investigation allowed (art 59 of TCPCE and Proclamation 1.1991).
24. As part of the effort to ascertain the rule of law, police investigation and the rights and dignity of suspect have been taken as central and reflect Articles 4 to 7 of the Charter consolidating promotion of liberties and freedoms. Procedural articles instrumental to safeguard the right of the suspect and ensure speedy investigation as enshrined in Chapter 2 on the Transitional Criminal Procedure Code of Eritrea (TCPCE) include confession (Art 27/2) in which the police shall bring before within 48 hours Art 29), police may release suspect on bail pursuant to the given procedure (art 28) avoiding any improper method while investigating suspect (art 31). Maximum time for investigation allowed as per article 59 of TCPCE and Proclamation 1, 1991 is 28 days and is generally respected.
25. Accordingly, Eritrean Police have worked to ensure investigation in accordance to a speedy lawful process and respecting the right of bail inter alia the right of suspect has remained fundamental. In this regard, proper screening of cases during the initial phase of complaints or information has helped to consolidate the following practice in accordance to the law:-
 - Evaluation and control of complaints with insufficient evidence and no criminal nature
 - Encouraging settlement of petty offences through arbitration and reconciliation
 - Gather sufficient evidence of cases before measures of arrest
 - Careful evaluation and enforcement of suspect's right to bail
26. The practice during the reporting period evidently shows the adherence to the above principles, despite challenges during the CORONA 19 situation. Furthermore, efforts made to settle cases through arbitration and other peaceful means proved a great advantage (See table below). This has consolidated the preservation of the cultural values of the Eritrean

society and enabled at focusing on properly investigating priority criminal offences within the time limit set in the criminal procedure.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
% settled by arbitration	8.67	10.27	8.79	8.78

Table 1: Data on settlements by arbitration

27. Moreover, planned effort has been made to minimize the effects of cases that pass the procedural limits and related problems such as delays of significant evidences including clinical evidences, and unavailability of eye witnesses and suspects within the time required. In this regard, weekly police investigation meetings are conducted to evaluate and manage the progress of case files and those with insufficient evidence are thoroughly evaluated
28. An important aspect in strengthening the rule of law is the progress in Law Enforcement activities with broader aims of public order in particular at community level, the rights and fundamental freedoms being respected fully. The 54 police stations and 35 sub stations (only one station in Kerkebet, Anseba Region is new since the first report submitted in 2016) have maintained public order and safety, with due respect to equal rights and fundamental freedoms. The Eritrean Police Force human resource capacity has remained the same with only measures being taken to fill gaps created (138 members - 3.4%) for various reasons. The present capacity of the police force remains 3902 (3156 male, 746 being female – 19.2%).
29. Presently 1263 communities have community policing with a total capacity of 8657 members spatially distributed throughout the country (Refer Table below) strengthening law and order at local level. Institutional and organizational capabilities of community policing has been strengthened with benefits at ensuring human dignity, public safety and order as important drives. More than 3865 meetings and training seminars have been conducted during the reporting period to strengthen their effectiveness and contribution. Moreover, the total number of offences handled by community policing during the reporting period is about 21730. Out of this, 17458 (80.34%) have been settled at community police level, 1819 (8.38%) forwarded to police stations and 2453 (11.29%) forwarded to community courts for judicial decisions. It is to be noted that yearly number of cases has dropped by 44.55% from 5630 in 2017 to 3122 in 2020.

Central	Southern	Gash Barka	Anseba	Northern Red Sea	Southern Red Sea	Total
2051	2846	1865	1865	765	256	8657

Table 2: Distribution of Community policing capacity across regions

30. On the other hand, public awareness and responsibility to prevent crime have been strengthened. Public campaigns across social categories (students, youth, taxi drivers, elderly, and others according to need) have continued to strengthen and ensure responsibility. After the COVID 19 pandemic situation and the attendant lockdowns, the number of meetings//seminars has decreased but nevertheless continued, lockdown protocols and responsibilities being taken into consideration and focusing on the following:-

- offenses committed in specific areas,
- awareness on crimes and offenses committed and their effect on safety and public order,
- strengthening responsibility and experience sharing

31. The above meetings/seminars were led by police station heads. Similar meetings, seminars were organized by police force commanders at national and regional levels including traffic police commanders. The meetings focused on general and timely issues that demand responsibility and contribution in public order and safety as well as police/community relationship and cooperation for effective law enforcement and protection. During the reporting period the following public meetings/seminars were conducted:-

Year	No of meetings/seminars	Number of participants
2017	1835	602,701
2018	1876	632,677
2019	1369	681,161
2020	525	143430

Table 3: Meetings/seminars and level of public participation

32. To consolidate the above effort, the police magazine (*“Police and the Public”*) has continued its publication every two months but several publications were missed during the early COVID lockdown situation in 2019. The magazine covers issues on liberties and freedoms, public order and responsibilities as well as crime prevention. As usual, the magazine has included general guidance from the police, legal issues and implications, issues and experiences in the commission of crime, efforts to track crime perpetrators, role of the public and interviews conveying important messages and experiences with ethical importance.

33. On top of the wide range of general information broadcasted in Eritrea’s public media, the Eritrean Police Force broadcasts live radio slots (twice per week for half hour) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information. The scope is similar to those discussed in meetings and seminars and in the Police magazine but further includes weekly national and international policing and crime related news of importance. During the reporting period 208 live broadcasts have been made and have not been affected by the COVID 19 situation.

2.3. Fundamental freedoms (reflecting Articles 4-8)

2.3.1. Dignity of the detainees and the Penitentiary system

34. The Eritrea Correctional and Rehabilitation Services (ECRS) as per the Penitentiary System Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 has strengthened its rehabilitation efforts and responsibility of convicted individuals so that they would become law abiding and productive citizens when they reintegrate into the society once released. Accordingly, implementation of the ECRS regulation and guidelines for respect and protection of inmate rights has been strengthened in letter and spirit. Furthermore, strengthening knowledge on detainee rights, the means and guarantees to submit allegations of abuses by detainees, management of abuses by the centers has consolidated institutional responsibilities.

35. *In this regard, respect and protection of detainee rights* has continued as the main goal of the ECRS in the 11 detention facilities (one in the capital city for females). The main goal during the reporting period has remained to consolidate and sustain the earlier efforts (*reference is made to paragraphs 77 to 83 of the Initial Report*) while taking into consideration the situation and impact of COVID 19. The dignity, security and development of the detainees are guaranteed in accordance to the Transitional National codes and efforts continue to adhere to legal standards that safeguard the right of detainees.

36. The health and security of detainees has also been maintained and the following are the important measures:-

- As per the regulation and measures of the higher government COVID 19 Task Force, all prison facilities followed strict COVID standard protocols effectively. There are no cases and fatalities experienced.
- *ECRS Health facilities* are operational in all prison centers and the health security of inmates is guaranteed and the following services have been given:-

ECRS Clinics			Public Hospitals			Total
OPD	Hospitalized	Total	OPD	Hospitalized	Total	
52720	4809	57529	7719	531	8250	65779
91.64%	8.36%	100%	93.56%	6.44%	100%	
% of Grand Total		87.5%	% of Grand Total		12.5%	

Table 4: Health Service to inmates provided by ECRS Health facilities

- The MOH department of Control for communicable diseases has made an extensive study on TB, HIV, Sexual transmissible diseases and Hepatitis in

prison facilities in a sample of 500 detainees and the result and analysis is yet to be finalized. In general, the screening of Communicable diseases to 2063 detainees in various centers was a priority task accomplished during.

- On the other hand health security campaigns and seminars have been conducted and the following are the main:-
 - on communicable diseases and sanitation and hygiene in Asmara detention centers, and similar seminars in Keren detention facility,
 - on communicable diseases and additionally by Biddho Association on HIV/AIDS in Asmera and Keren,
 - On the occasion of International day on Communicable diseases in particular on TB in all detention facilities
- Furthermore, Mobile Clinic bus from the MOH conducted examination on ENT, Eye and skin examinations and 26 (from 60 who took eye examinations) were provided with eye glasses. 67 female detainees got maternity health and cancer examinations checkup. Trachoma prevention treatments were also given in Massawa, and Assab detention centers.

37. Educational provision also continued and 3741 detainees (2529 from grade 1 to 12) in 10 detention centers continued in general education; participants in higher education included 6 in degree, 12 diploma and 8 certificate levels graduated; Other opportunities included 12 in technical field, 1212 detainees participated in vocational training (526 in computer, 40 in weaving, 131 in accounting, 189 in electricity installation, 71 in satellite dish installation, 78 in solar light installation, 33 in graphics, 52 auto mechanic, 17 Photoshop, 30 musical instruments, 27 in literature and 21 in drawing).

38. The rehabilitation of female detainees has been given due consideration, The Women International Day has been organized yearly and women detainees took lead role in the organization of the occasion. Furthermore, in Asmara detention Center (Hazzaz) beauty and make up training was given by a volunteer enterprise for 26 female interns. Similar 3 month training was given to 25 female interns by a female volunteer trainer.

39. To provide general and specific information to strengthen the contribution of detainees, the Journal of the ECRC (Tehadso – meaning rehabilitation published every 3 months) has continued and the 15th edition has been issued. Participation of detainees in the contribution of articles and experiences is

significant. Moreover, a Tigrigna language book written by an intern under the title of Hiyab Emnet (the Gift of faith) was inaugurated in Tseteerat Detention center (in Asmera city). Sport and cultural activities have also continued throughout the reporting period. Furthermore, the following data reflects the seminars and lectures by experts were given to inmates during the reporting period

Sector	Health	Legal	Civics	Soc. Psychology	Art	Nat. building	Total
Number	15	5	15	10	5	5	55

Table 5: Seminars and lectures to inmates provided by experts

40. Legal right to unrestricted religious belief and practice in detention centers has continued in accordance to Article 2 (2-9) of the ECRS. Access to information on national and international affairs is guaranteed and all centers ensure access to radio, Satellite TV and print media. Monthly visits by parents and friends and additional upon request and letter correspondences at any time are part of the detainee rights implemented judiciously. In most Centers this is freely done in their dorms but the Sembel Center in the capital city has a Chapel and a Mosque regular service in the premise.

2.3.2. Freedom of religion (Article 8)

41. Reference is made to paragraphs 65 to 68 of the initial report and freedom of religion as reflected in article 8 of the African Charter continues to be protected by law in accordance to the transitional code as well as pertinent proclamations and is furthermore sustained as a culture respected by every citizen. There is no discrimination and persecution on account of beliefs including religious beliefs.

42. Religious institutions are independent in accordance to the national law and conduct elections for their respective leadership hierarchies and responsibilities - the Synod, Dar-al-Iftae, and other decision making organs without any intervention from any side. Election for the Patriarch is conducted by the synod and the holy ceremony conducted under the direction of religious order and procedures of the Orthodox Church. Furthermore, an election committee is established from all monasteries on the basis of the Orthodox Church rules and holy principles. Elections for Mufti of Eritrea also takes place under the regulations and religious guidelines of the Dar-al-Eftae, the supreme Council that assesses and finalizes the regulations and procedures for the election of the Mufti and representative of all regions gather and elect the new Mufti of Eritrea.

43. As was reflected in the initial report, Religious institutions and leaders have continued to play a significant role in strengthening the harmony and social cohesion of the society. In

this regard, the interfaith joint forum of religious leaders has continued its useful role. This was again demonstrated during the COVID 19 situation. As the general nation-wide lockdown regulation included the suspension of religious ceremonies and services, before the action was taken, the Government conducted consultation with religious leaders on the challenge and to seek means of implementing the lockdown declaration. On the basis of the agreement reached, religious institutions through their leaders issued guidelines for the implementation of the national lockdown in all churches and mosques.

44. Enforcement of Proclamation 73/1995 and in particular that of Article 6, part 1 and 2 regarding the involvement of religious institutions in administering social service provisions and development activities is another measure considered in the present report. Under the provisions of the stated Proclamation, functional and administrative control of the stated provisions is government responsibility implemented on the basis of equal rights and opportunities as sanctioned by national law. The legal provision was however, not implemented fully due to various reasons, conditions and situations. As of May 2019 however, the Government issued a guideline for the full implementation of the proclamation and accordingly all levels of schools and health services run by the religious institutions were handed over to the respective government sectors and integrated into the health and education system of the nation. The decision was welcomed whole heartedly by all religious institutions except the Catholic Church which expressed its dissatisfaction and attempted futile disinformation campaign against the measure taken.

2.3.3. Freedom of expression, association, assembly

45. Article 14 of the TCCE guarantees the right to express own ideas which may only be restricted by the respect for the right of others' morality and the law. No interference with the exercise of the rights is tolerated but such rights may not be utilized for political ill-intent or prejudicial to morality and public order.

(i) Media and access to information (Article 9)

46. A fundamental pillar enunciated in the 1994 Eritrea's National Charter as well as in the country's Civil Codes and related Proclamations underlines the citizens' inalienable rights for lawful expression of opinion and access to information without interference. It recognizes that citizens are both participants and beneficiaries of information and ideas. This, however, demands responsibility from every citizen and is also related to the collective interest of the nation and the society as a whole. There are accordingly specific legal clauses that define the boundaries of freedom of expression to safeguard national security, public order as well as eschew libelous acts that may denigrate other segments of society.

47. The contribution of Eritrea's media establishment to freedom of expression and access to information as reflected in the initial report (Paragraphs 72-76) has been ascertained by its *participatory approach*. During the reporting period, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, access to information has been sustained in content, presentation and organization. Public Media has consolidated a wider public participation driving greater responsibility in national development as highlighted in the following aspects:-

- Radio programmes in all Eritrean languages, TV programmes and local newspapers in Tigriña, Tigre, Arabic and English have strengthened public participation.
- The TV, radio and newspaper panel discussions and platforms including call programmes have been consolidated encouraging citizens to express critical views on policies, national issues and related rights including on human rights mainstreaming.
- Children's TV and radio programmes, as well as columns and articles have been expanded on publicly owned printed media, with a broader content and produced with adequate weekly periodicity. The participatory aspect of these programmes by the public is substantial. In most cases, children and youth are central actors and protagonists. The youth programmes are mostly panel discussions on a variety and relevant issues and they are exclusively produced by the youth including college students.
- Various ministries and civic organizations have strengthened their contribution through the slots provided in public media (radio, TV, print media) on substantive legal matters, food security, environment, health, social protection, women equality, youth empowerment, labor rights, etc. The respective ministries and national associations take lead in the preparation and presentation of the materials in radio, TV and print media slots of the MOI

48. Eri-TV programmes are broadcast all over the globe through Arab Sat and Nile Sat platforms for wider reach out including to the large Eritrean diaspora. The Television sector is moreover deregulated and ensures diversified access to information. Households procure decoders normally receive up to 1310 free to Air (FTA) channels (some repeated on different frequencies) can be captured on the footprint of Arab Sat and Nile Sat. The nation-wide survey carried out in November 2017 ascertained that 91% of households in 20 urban and semi-urban cities possess satellite dishes and decoders and the Eritrean public continues to have access to over 1000TV channels (BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, CGTN, MBCs, sports channels, etc.) including some subversive channels from London, Paris, etc.

49. To promote participation and critical review, the MOI conducts periodic surveys and feedback from its domestic audiences through anonymous telephone calls. In November 2017 it launched an extensive nation-wide survey of all its programmes by commercially procuring the professional services of the Marketing Department of the College of Economics and Business Administration. This was partially funded by UNDP. The feedback obtained from a wide spectrum of audiences (rural/urban, all social groups and gender) is constructive and positive. The feedback mainly provided by parents and other adults is positive and demonstrates the popularity of the programmes.
50. Various ministries and national civic organizations have slots in public media (radio, TV, print media). Magazines with specific purposes and target audience are published by various ministries, agencies and national civic organizations. Production and distribution of cultural works is also growing and contributing to freedom of expression and access to information.
51. While the above efforts have contributed to strengthen the culture of free expression, seminars and discussions organized from the village up to the national levels for different purposes continue to provide access to information and consolidate critical thinking as well as responsible participation in nation building.
52. Internet service still remains slow as previously indicated in the initial report while effort continues to improve the situation. Internet cafes continue to provide service to the public with proper considerations of the national laws and have become useful medium for information access and exchange.

(ii) Freedom of association and assembly (Article 10, 11)

General

53. The State party makes reference to Paragraphs 69-71 of the initial report on the legal basis of freedom of association and assembly and the scale of activities and the wide network of diversified organization. Reference to Paragraphs 258 – 269 of the initial report is also made in this report as relates to Art 10-11, as well as article 13 of the African Charter. Accordingly, a fundamental principle and provision in the transitional codes and proclamations is respect and protection of citizens' right to lawful expression, assembly, opinion and organization without interference. This demands collective responsibility to the national security, national values, public order and respect to others.
54. Accordingly, all associations are registered autonomous bodies and have their own constitutions, elected leaders and conduct congresses, conferences, meetings and activities. They have networks at all levels inside the country and in the diaspora, and continue to

participate in national development in cooperation with various sectors. They conduct awareness raising programmes through media; empower their members through education, vocational training, micro credit schemes and entrepreneurship.

55. Youth, women, workers as well as Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPWDs) are represented in the infrastructure for the coordination and mobilization of human right follow up at various levels. They have continued to advocate and contribute for the mainstreaming of human rights in national development as well as the implementation of various international and regional obligations and reporting including the African Charter. Without underestimating the role and contribution of various other associations (*the hundreds of social, cultural and community associations and organizations prevalent throughout the country*), in this report functional focus is given to youth/students, women, workers and persons with disability as symbolic of the overall effort in terms of the extended effort in freedom of expression, assembly and association.

Youth and Student mobilization and organization

56. **Organizational**:- As an organization of students and youth (age 14-40), NUEYS has further extended its membership up to the village level extending to a network of schools and higher learning institutions and the following data reflects the progress:-

- Presently NUEYS has 22,000 core members and more than 302,000 ordinary members in all the six administrative regions. Female participation is 51% in core and 52% in ordinary membership while female representation at all levels of leadership is 42%.
- With the increase in the number of schools and colleges, NUEYS has extended its activities and student membership from 415 branches in 2016 to 478 branches in 2020.
- The number of out of school youth branches of the union has also increased from 52 in 2016 to 60 in 2020. Thus, the general and core membership of youth and students has grown by 32% and 13% respectively. Children's Associations and media clubs have also continued their activities in schools.

57. **Mobilization and Campaign**:- During the reporting period, NUEYS expanded and strengthened awareness raising campaigns and encompasses the following (though large scale gatherings initially remained restricted in the COVID 19 pandemic situation):-

- TV and radio programmes continued in all Eritrean languages and 38 issues of the 'Youth' magazine in 6 local languages (1170 articles) were published. Furthermore, the messages were disseminated at www.eriyoung.org, as well as social media pages. The

messages were aired through ten youth radio programs in eight local languages (1690 radio episodes) as well as in 164 TV episodes.

- Annual “Youth and students week” were conducted in every subzone, while an annual inter-college festival and a national youth festival were celebrated every two years. The occasions have promoted cultural diversity, innovative capabilities as well as educational and sporting talents. In the last four years 225 youth weeks, three inter-college festivals and one national youth and students’ festival were conducted.
- Strengthening society’s awareness on gender matters and positive attitude on equal participation of women were conducted (1659 events with 395,048 youth participants)
- 409 events on leadership training, gender related campaigns, panel discussions and public seminars with 109,786 participants throughout the country implemented.

58. **Vocational Training and Entrepreneurships** - NUEYS empowers youth through vocational training, micro credit schemes and entrepreneurship. During 2018-2020, 6711 youth (4858 female – 72.4%) from economically disadvantaged families benefited from 230 different vocational training courses (three months to one year). Small startup grants and loans were also provided for 134 economically disadvantaged youth in accordance to their business plan for opening micro businesses.

59. **COVID 19** - NUEYS has mobilized the capacity of the youth in challenging the pandemic mainly by deploying volunteers and conducting campaigns. Around 2000 young volunteers were mobilized mainly in monitoring public movement, social distancing and mandatory use of face masks after being given initial training on self-protection and protecting others.

Women equality and empowerment

60. Reference is made to paragraph 296-323 of the initial report on the State party’s successful effort and challenges on women equality and empowerment. During the reporting period NUEW has stepped up its activities to strengthen and expand achievements on women equality and empowerment in the following areas:-

61. **Organizational** - More than 342,096 Eritrean women above the age of 16 are organized at present under the NUEW with 31.1% of women in the ages of 16 to 65 ages. During the reporting period NUEW has made greater focus on college students in the age range of 16-20 and presently there are 1975 registered members. Furthermore, NUEW has supported the organization of 35 young professional girls working to empower and influence their peers. The professional group has conducted meetings in secondary schools, colleges and the National Service Training center (Sawa). During the reporting period, NUEW has conducted

policy guidance, organization and evaluation meetings annually including 2 at the central committee level, 4 executive board meetings and department heads meetings every month.

62. Political and social - Efforts directed to the consolidation of political, social, economic, cultural and organizational tasks have been made with more focus on the following:-

- In 2017 the Ministries of Health, Labor and Social Welfare and the National Union of Eritrean Women together with the collaboration of UNICEF and UNFPA established a National Steering Committee (NSC) composed of higher officials. Furthermore, National Technical Committee (NTC) that includes the Director Generals of the three ministries has been functional. The NTC renders functional and organizational support to the regional and sub-regional committees active in the fight against harmful practice, such as FGM/C and underage marriage. This is based on extensive assessment and the 2020-2024 national strategic action plan to raise awareness and consolidate community efforts against harmful practice on women and children.
- On the basis of the 2017 NUEW symposium and the extensive evaluation and decisions made on gender equality and empowerment, NUEW also organized meetings, campaigns and organizational activities throughout the country on various issues including,
 - 11,764 general meetings (with attendance of 1,617,453 participants), 6,901 meetings on different political and legal issues (620,455 attendance),
 - campaigns on health, elimination of female genital mutilation and underage marriage conducted (attended by 437,001 people throughout the country)
 - Gender committees established in all schools and campaign in particular against early marriage with participation of 289,684 students successfully accomplished
 - literacy programme project for 402,531 participants (77% women) implemented
 - Furthermore, to encourage girls' education and on the occasion of March 8 celebrations, 5573 outstanding girl students have been awarded financial support (780,002.21 ERN in total) and 1240 disadvantaged girls were supported with school materials, sanitary items and school fees amounting 264,757.5 ERN.
- Various socio-cultural measures also undertaken to transform the socio-cultural patterns, by establishing Friends of NUEW clubs in every region with the aim of fighting against cultural prejudices, where elders, religious leaders, youth and other influential persons are active members. Growing number of women artists, musicians, drama directors, actress, poets, writers, cyclists, footballers, role models and exemplary citizens have been mobilized in this regard have made impact in influencing the traditional patterns and mind-set of communities.

- On the other hand, a major challenge being addressed that could be attributed to various causes is the fistula problem and 261 cases were treated in Medefera Fistula Referral Hospital. The National Union of Eritrean Women provided day to day necessities amounting to 400,000.00 Nakfa to the women during hospitalization

63. Economic:- NUEW's economic activities during the reporting period include.

- women farmers organized in cooperative farms (in vegetables and grain production encompassing 1447 women) in 100 administrative localities were supported with 5 water pump generators
- 30,928 improved energy saving stoves provided in 3 out of the 6 regions (Northern Red Sea, Gash Barka and Central regions)
- 10 solar powered grain grinding mills in Southern Red Sea region have been established
- For more efficient and effective production of sanitary pads automated machinery have been introduced in the NUEW factory with the support of UNDP.

64. **Focus on Social Issues** - After the 2017 Symposium, strengthening the role of women in the family and social settings has been one of the planned targets and accordingly the following action was taken during the reporting period:-

- All six regions have established family counseling centers and 11655 cases and problems have been addressed in collaboration with social, legal and law enforcement agencies. The main incidences amounting to 83.5% of total relate to 4354 farm land right (37.4%), 3017 Divorce/Separation (25.9%), 1704 Child benefit/financial support (14.6%), 501 Patrimonial issues (4.3%). The rest include 830 unclassified others (7.12%) as well as 148 adultery (1.3%), 131 Inheritance (1.12%), 250 Illegal sexual relationship and betrayal (2.15%), 235 under-age marriage (2.02%), 445 rape related allegations (3.8%).
- Day care centers have been established as pilot initiatives alongside schools and institutions to alleviate the burden of women workers and professionals in the Central region. During 2017-2019, 105 out of 169 schools have established day care centers.

65. Legal Measure - During the reporting period 147 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases in Anseba region have been submitted to court for legal decision and 55 under age marriage also cancelled and almost all of the students continued their education. There were no reported cases of legal action regarding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) during the reporting period in other regions.

66. International/regional engagement, participation and celebrations

- Active CSW Sessions participation maximized (CSW 61st Session, 2017 - Women's Economic Empowerment in the changing world of work; CSW 62nd Session in 2018 on Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, CSW 63rd session in 2019 - on Social Protection Systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and CSW 64th session in 2020 – where due to COVID-19 Pandemic a video recorded message was presented)
- NUEW submitted the 6th CEDAW report in March 2019 and a delegation led by the NUEW president travelled to Geneva for presentation and constructive dialogue with the UN CEDAW Committee (on 14th February 2020) and gave explanation and provided answers for the questions raised by the CEDAW committee.
- The Girls' International Day was commemorated yearly by the NUEW, in collaboration with the MOE and UNICEF and has been used as a platform for the advancement of girl's education. Similarly, the International Women's Day was celebrated yearly.

Workers Movement and Organization

67. Reference is made to the initial report paragraphs 229 to 238 Article 10 (Sections 1 and 2) and Article 11 of the African Charter Section 1. The Statutory Base of the NCEW is based on the provisions of Article 86 and 89 of the Eritrean Labor Proclamation No. 118/2001. The healthy labor relations have been strengthened through established tripartite arrangement that involves the National Confederation of Eritrea Workers (NCEW), Eritrean Federation of Employers (EFE) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW). The NCEW actively engages in tripartite consultations in relation to labor related issues, workers health and safety and the promotion of youth and women workers. Furthermore, NCEW cooperates with regional and international labor organizations for international solidarity.

Organizational Consolidation

68. National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW) held its congress on March 27-29, 2017 and elected a new leadership. The 5 NCEW federations (food and drinks, chemical and mining, service sectors, transportation and communication, textile and leather) also conducted their respective congresses. In the last four years the NCEW has worked hard to increase women membership and their representation in the central council and the executive committee and presently 21 out of the 55 members of the Central Council are women. NCEW 7th congress created a “women workers department” and is encouraging women to assume responsibilities in trade union leadership positions. In general, the right to

unionize freely has been consolidated and unionized workers in the 5 federations presently encompass 164 (4 less than 2015). NCEW presently has 21,245 members (40.4% female).

69. The development of new as well as renewal of outdated collective agreements is an essential part of the unionization activities. As of December 2020 the number of collective agreements in base unions across the 5 federations is 104. Labour dispute in any enterprise, is handled responsibly by both the management and the representatives of the employees. Any unresolved dispute is referred to the Labor Relations Board (*composed of 2 representatives of the NCEW, 2 from the employers' federation and a chairperson from the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare*). In this regard, NCEW continuous to play its responsible role defending workers' rights in accordance to the law and legal procedures with the following results during the reporting period:-

Total Case	Pending	Closed	Consolation	Rejected	Adjudicated
59	20	7	15	5	9

Table 6: Cases and actions in defending worker's rights

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

70. In relation to the Decent Work agenda, work place safety and health conditions have assumed great importance in order to maximize their healthy security and productivity. The NCEW continuously monitors OHS activities in workplaces affiliated to the five federations through the 45 health and safety committees established in the base unions.

Peer Facilitation to Prevent HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB Transmission among Workers

71. During the reporting period the number of peer facilitators and coordinators who play an active role in sensitizing their peers in their workplace to prevent HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB has reached 300. Accordingly, the NCEW, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, is actively engaged in raising the awareness of workers in the protection of their health from communicable diseases and recently in the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Life Long Learning and Training Activities

72. In the past 3 years, the NCEW have made a tremendous effort to scale up the training and re-training of workers. The center has prepared a standard curriculum for all skill training programs in collaboration with TVET. In addition to that, the Center has introduced an advanced level of training in Computer Networking. the NCEW has also worked to establish demand-driven vocational and technical training centers across the country that takes into

consideration the ILO's centenary initiatives. One example is the Massawa Workers Vocational Training Center (MWVTC). NCEW has been providing vocational training to workers in the Massawa Workers Vocational Training Center.

- In the first two courses, 350 workers graduated in the fields of Computer Application, Electricity, Electronics, Woodwork, Metalwork, and Refrigeration and Air Conditioning. Recently, the Center has modified its curricula in which skills will be given in a package format as well as adding OHS and Basic Management to every trainee who enrolls in any skill training program.
- In the 3rd batch (2019-2020), the center trained 175 workers in 7 disciplines. All the courses are classified in clusters of modules arranged in levels and every skill is categorized across 3 levels. Moreover, NCEW has reached the final step in finalizing the Asmara Training Center (in Central region) and will provide training in hospitality and catering. An additional center is due to be built in Barentu (in Gash Barka region).

Other activities

73. Provision of Materials and Micro-credit Services in the Tokombiya Program: The NCEW in collaboration with the SUKE (Swiss Support Group for Eritrea) has introduced The Micro-credit and Saving Scheme, Provision of Donkeys and water containers and provision of Bicycles to workers in the Tokombiya district of Gash Barka Zone:-
74. **Covid-19:** Much of NCEW's effort after 2019 has focused on prevention of the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic in workplaces and ensures the safety of workers from its effects. The National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW) has done efforts to ease up the effects of the pandemic in workers and their families throughout Eritrea. The NCEW was very quick to collaborate with local and international partners to provide emergency response reliefs. It effectively distributed sanitizers, face masks and detergents to several workplaces. It also produced and disseminated posters on prevention and control means recommended by the Government Higher Task Force and the Ministry of Health of the state of Eritrea. More importantly, the NCEW used this situation to promote its longer goal of achieving proper Hygiene practice in workplaces through producing and distributing portable pedal operated hand washing basin to different enterprises across the Country.
75. **ILO Centenary Workshop on the Future of Work;** The high level participation by major stakeholders in the ILO and NCEW Centenary two day workshop that took place in Asmara on 30-31 May 2019 highlighted the key areas of interest and the need for higher capacity and devotion for the Future of Work. The workshop further underlined that life-long training and

learning supported with up-to-date technology is significant for a worker's chain of employment. In general, the importance of viable regional peace and cooperation for sustainable development and mutual benefit among nations was a major issue of greater importance. Eritrea's stance and effort in realizing regional dynamics and cooperation based on common interest and trust as well as on respect of the sovereignty and political choice of countries was highlighted.

International and Regional Relations and Issues

76. On the occasion of the ILO Centenary Commemoration, Eritrea ratified Convention 182 of the International Labor Organization (on worst forms of child labor). The NCEW played an important role in this effort. Eritrea has ratified all 8 core ILO conventions.
77. During the reporting period NCEW has continued its effort to establish and maintain good bilateral, regional partnership and cooperation with regional trade unions. In 2018, it co-founded the establishment of the Horn of Africa Confederation of Trade Unions (HACTU), in which eight countries' confederations (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Djibouti, Uganda and Somalia) are members. NCEW presently occupies the presidency of HACTU. Moreover, in the past 3 years, the NCEW has been active in the Organization of African Trade Union Unity.
78. One of the important international events was the visit by the Confederation of Ethiopia Trade Unions (CETU) to Eritrea from 1 to 5 September 2018. A 44-senior member delegation spent 5 days tour to work areas and development sites across Eritrea. Similar visit was made by a senior Eritrean Delegation to Ethiopia.
79. Study Circles; The Study Circle program (Innovative Methods to Raising Awareness) was introduced in collaboration with the OATU and ACFTU operating in study circle groups encompassing several workers which are distributed in all six zones of the country. The aim is to make study circles of 15 to 20 workers with the objective of raising their awareness on duties and rights, collective bargaining, gender rights, safety and health at work place. 2000 printed manuals on how to operate study groups were distributed to every Study Circle group. The second phase of this program began in the February of 2018. The Study Circle program had recorded a success in raising awareness of the workers in the areas selected for the programme and disputes have declined as a result.
80. *Other related activities*
 - Representative form ILO regional and head office undertook a work visit from 23 to 28 July 2018 to several parts of Eritrea, notably Bisha Mining Site for possible supervision on the existence of any kind of child or forced labor. This visit was made.

- NCEW’s representatives also participated in the 108th ILO Conference, 42nd OATUU Congress and 4th ITUC-Africa Congress.
- Other bilateral relations with international Trade Unions and Organizations have been maintained as has been indicated in the initial report.

Organizations of persons with disabilities

81. Reference is made to the Initial Report paragraphs 342-357, 360-365 and the organizations of persons with disability (*OPWD*) have been active in the promotion of the rights of persons with disability. The four associations for persons with disabilities are:

- (i) The Eritrean National War Disabled Veterans’ Association (ENWDVA)
- (ii) The Eritrean Association of the Blind (ERNAB)
- (iii) The Eritrean National Association of the Deaf (ERNAD) and
- (iv) The National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NAIDD).

82. These associations have strengthened their roles in the promotion of the rights of PWDs. The OPWDs advocate for the best interest of PWDs and function independently implementing their respective strategies and programs in line to national goals and interest. During the reporting period the OPWDs reached a total of 3854 poor households of PWDs with support, including income generating interventions, appropriate mobility and vision and hearing appliances to improve the livelihoods of the CWDs. But, still the enormity of the challenges encountering PWDs is greatly recognized.

(iii) Freedom of Movement – Article 12

83. Within the Eritrean borders there is no restriction of movement imposed on nationals throughout the country except during certain times as a result of COVID 19 guidelines and lockdown measures but the lockdown has ended.

84. As has been explained in the initial report as well as in the subsequent clarifications given on the observations of the Commission, every Eritrean has the legal right to return back to the country without any restriction. Citizens who illegally crossed out of the country through human traffickers and smugglers in violation of the immigration law and procedures have been pardoned. This has been done in consideration of the human trafficking conspiracy and the politics of migration imposed upon Eritrea to lure the young generation from the national service and national development during the difficult situation of existential external threats for almost two decades. The institutional arrangement made to fill the pardon form B.4 at Eritrean missions abroad continues to be used and addresses the issue.

Freedom to Public Participation – Article 13

85. Reference is made to the initial report on public participation. In general, The PFDJ (Peoples Front for Democracy and Justice) National Charter, as a political road map, continues to drive the vision and praxis of nation building consolidating the people-participation-power nexus as critical drive in the political process of nation building strengthening public participation in all aspects.
86. The functional tasks and responsibilities for policy, monitoring, training and human resources development rests primarily on the line ministries. Moreover, regional administrations continue to shoulder governance responsibilities and the organization of implementation. The elected local and regional assemblies (established by Proclamation 86/1996) continue to provide leverage for citizens and communities alike the oversight mechanisms and participation on public affairs. Furthermore, elected local administrations (in 2862 villages, 751 localities) serve as the instruments of judicious governance and continue to serve as basis for exercising rights and responsible role in public affairs and additionally are a reflection of the principle of the freedom to public participation as stipulated in Article 13 of the African Charter.
87. In this regard, Eritrea continues to rely on the extended mobilization, higher organization and creation of reliable capacity through self-reliance as central to the dynamics of public participation at all levels. The role and function of various levels and categories of organizations and associations is significant in this respect.

III. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Brief Introduction

88. The promotion of economic, social and cultural rights in Eritrea reflects the basic tenets and goals outlined in the PFDJ National Charter and accordingly in Eritrea's National Development Plan. During the reporting period, the post-border war Warsay Yikealo Development Programme aimed at accelerating socio-economic progress and eradicating poverty in the difficult situation of external existential threats. Accordingly, significant investment has been made to advance socio-economic progress by focusing on vulnerable groups and areas, including women, children, disabled and rural communities. Moreover, poverty elimination initiatives (Reference is made to Paragraphs 255-257, 273-275, 241-245 of the First and Initial Report) have continued by strengthening and expanding model agricultural transformations, the minimum integrated household agriculture package, transformation of life in isolated settlements and villages and establishing saving and micro-credit schemes for the poor and the vulnerable.

89. Implementation of Cultural rights enshrined in all national laws, the National Charter, the Macro Policy and all other legal and institutional instruments, and practices have been consolidated. Various cultural, folklore, artistic, drama, literature groups of the different ethnic groups have consolidated their efforts at local, regional and national levels. Annual festivals have continued regularly at home and in the Eritrean Diaspora communities to maintain the transfer of national values as cultural heritage to the next generation. Moreover, as a result of the Government cultural policy and effort, UNESCO recognized the city of Asmara as a World Cultural Heritage for its futurist and modernist architecture.

3.2. *Civil Service Salary Increment improving the livelihoods*

90. In line to the modest growth of the economy and the on-going effort to create macro-economic stability, a new remuneration system that introduces substantial increase of civil service salary has been introduced in 2017. The effort is managed as a process and requires time to finalize but a gradual integration of national service members into this system is being implemented as a priority. The following are the main attributes of the effort:-

- For the last two decades Government employees have been working for nominal salary. After the 2015 currency reform, the government has introduced a new salary scale after 20 years of difficult times entailing state of war and unjust covert and overt sanctions. That year 70% of the citizens in the National Service and Civil Service saw their salary increased and the increment for the rest continues to take place.
- This new measure has put pressure over the fiscal and monetary systems but has impacted positively in the livelihood of the population. This measure was taken to address challenges in the country's economy beyond the improvement in the salaries of government employees and the objective is coupled with raising higher productivity and innovation. Ensuring wealth distribution particularly to those in the lowest pay is thus among the prime objectives of the decision. Salary increase alone can't improve livelihoods and standard of life of the population. It is with this understanding that the government has also worked to ensure availability of basic supplies with fair prices and price control mechanism in the market.

3.3. *Right to Work - Article 15*

91. Every individual shall have the right to work under equitable and satisfactory conditions, and shall receive equal pay for equal work. As mentioned earlier, Labor unions have been registered and collective agreements have been established in accordance to the law. In line

to its commitment on decent work, job opportunities and social justice, as well as experience gained in the last 2 decades, the following measures are being taken:-

- The labor Proclamation No. 118/2001 is under revision and two levels of tripartite discussion were made awaiting finalization at the upcoming third level of discussion.
- The drafting process on private employment agencies regulation is also at the final stage and will soon be submitted for decision.

92. Furthermore, the Government is party to all eight conventions the latest being the ratification of Convention 1999 No. 182 on “Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention” (joined in 2019) thereby contributing to the universal ratification of the convention.

93. For effective and efficient labor administration the MLSW in 2015/2016 conducted Labor Force survey (ELFS) to distinctly assess the labor supply structure and the key labor market indicators. The table below designates the 2016 – 2019 labor force supply size and rates disaggregated by gender for the year. The working age population in 2016 was 1,921,000 and increased to 2,084,000 in 2019 and labor absorption rate increased from 74.7 to 74.8 %.

94. In line to Article 143(1) of the Labor Proclamation, the labor inspection service supervises the workplaces, monitors the execution of the proclamation, enforces corrective measures and brings any offenders to justice. Currently there are 45 institutions and enterprises with occupational health and safety committees. The pandemic containment measures have been incorporated in the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) protection measures.

95. NCEW has worked for the success of the Collective agreements made between trade unions and employers applicable under the Labor Proclamation. In this regard, all undertakings which have collective agreements have abided by the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. This takes into consideration national condition and practice, as well as article 102 (3) of the labor proclamation and the principle of equal remuneration has been determined through the collective agreements. The 2016 Labor department documents show that there were 136 collective agreements but were reduced to 98 in 2019 and in 2020.

96. Employment opportunity is extended to expatriates when scarcities of skills occur in particular occupations. In such circumstances, the Government levels the ground for transfer of knowledge, skills and professional capabilities to local employees by co-working together with expatriates. Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdown and travel ban, in 2020 total number of expatriates in Eritrea is 463 (89 new work permits and 374 renewed). Similarly, in trades where there is no shortage of capacity in the labor market, Eritrean citizens are allowed to work abroad to gain both skills and acquire economic benefits (See table below).

The requirements of Article 23 of the Labor Proclamation 118/2001 has been strictly adhered and monitored effectively during the reporting period and no discrimination between citizens and migrant workers in the place of work has been seen

Year	M	F	Total
2017	2	86	88
2018	59	530	589
2019	65	503	568
2020	26	195	221
Av./Year	38	329	367

Table 7: Data of Eritreans who went for overseas for employment

97. Focus has been made on monitoring equal opportunities in employment and remuneration, prohibition of child labor, guaranteeing of health and safety in the work place, maintaining minimum labor conditions, the right to form associations, collective bargaining and capacity building for skill enhancement. However, these working conditions are only the minimum standards set, and both employer and employee have been encouraged to agree on more favorable working conditions that benefit the worker. In this regard, contracting parties determine the amount of wage, but it may not be less than the minimum wage fixed by collective agreement in any undertaking.

98. Pursuant to the relevant articles of the Labor Proclamation, the labor inspection service has monitored the working conditions to ensure the observance of the minimum conditions of safety, health and environment as well as the provision of protective equipment in the work place. During the reporting period 35 trained and skilled inspectors have been on duty. Employers, who violated the basic principles and conditions, have been brought to justice as indicated in the table below. The inspection performance in 2020 is low because of COVID-19 lockdown and only reflects the first three months of the year.

Year	No of establishments inspected	Inspection Results			
		Fulfilled	Directive given	Warning	reported to legal authority
2017	1,019	220	660	195	4
2018	1,304	119	137	124	1
2019	1,166	306	463	356	41
2020	536	153	147	86	150
Av/ Year	1,006	200	352	190	49
% Av/ Year		19.88	34.99	18.89	4.87

Table8: Data on Labor Inspections and Measures taken

99. The role of the tripartite court of Labor Relation Board is significant. It is composed of 2 representatives of workers, 2 representatives of employers and 2 representative of the government and serves all six administrative regions. The courts (First instance labor courts

and the Tripartite Labor Relations Board) which are a combination of the ordinary courts and tribunals continue to independently deal with matters pertaining to labor cases. The labour dispute settlement during the reporting period is presented in the table below. The establishment of a Labor Advisory Board is also on progress.

Year	Labor Disputes Settled through legal procedures and results					Total
	Settled by Conciliation	Conciliation not accepted	Settled by Decision	Disputes rejected	Appointment given	
2017	3,013	169	71	15	27	3,646
2018	1,891	80	99	8	34	2,228
2019	3,013	177	73	17	28	3,675
2020	781	82	-	8	34	994
Av/year	2,175	127	61	12	31	2,636

Table 9: Labor Disputes Settled through legal procedures and results

100. An update in the Labor Proclamation 8/1991 of 1991 that featured in Proclamation 118/2001 was the further clarification and consolidation of the right to organize and set up collective agreements in the work places. By virtue of the Labor proclamation 118/2001. In 2017 there were 154 trade unions with 19,123 members. The number of female members increased to 42.75% by 2020. The overall situation is reflected in the table below:-

Number of Base Unions by number of workers according to gender				
Year	Male	Female	Total	Total No of Unions
2017	10,960	8,163	19,123	154
2018	11,868	8,470	20,338	155
2019	12,028	8,611	20,639	159
2020	11,375	8,495	19,870	156
Average/year	11,558	8,435	19,993	156

Table 10: Number of base unions by number of workers according to gender

101. The unions were entitled to set-up their own collective agreements in negotiation with the employers and continue renewing it every year as need arise.

No of Registered collective agreements by number of workers				
Year	Male	Female	Total	Total No of Collective Agreements
2017	9,400	6,600	16,000	95
2018	9,442	6,672	16,114	96
2019	10,498	7,096	17,594	98
2020	10,499	7,099	17,598	98
Av./year	9,960	6,867	16,827	97

Table 11 - Data: on Collective Agreements by number of workers

102. Trade Unions have worked to implement and strengthen the provisions stipulated in Article 90 of the Labor Proclamation No 118/2001. There has been no incidence of interference by public authorities to restrict or impede the lawful exercise of the basic rights. No trade union has also been dissolved or suspended by any administrative authority and decision. The Government frequently consults and conducts social dialogue with its social partners on major issues of policy, implementation and progress including during revision of the labour laws as well as the implementation of labour policies. To strengthen the social dialogue, the MoLSW has currently been developing directives to build up an advisory board comprising of the representatives of Government, Employers and Employees.

103. The National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW) is the umbrella organization of the Eritrean Trade Unions organized in five Federations (*Details in section on freedom of association and assembly*). The NCEW has led the trade union movement with the vision of contributing towards the creation of a highly disciplined, organized, educated and skilled Eritrean workforce as well as in the promotion of decent working and living conditions.

3.4. Social Sector Strategy and Basic Securities and rights

3.4.1. Right to Food and nutrition security

104. Reference made to Paragraphs 88-139 of the Initial Report and Food and Nutrition Security has continued as one of the top national priorities, a cornerstone for Eritrea's sustainable economic growth and poverty elimination in Eritrea. Achievement of national as well as household levels of food and nutrition security has continued as a prime objective during the reporting period. Pragmatic steps include the following:-

- The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) continued to maintain the policy of transforming traditional farming system into modern commercial farming and develop market-lead economy supported by a comprehensive array of government provided services including research and extension, regulatory and advisory services, training and education.
- Soil and water conservation (SWC) has continued as a mandatory and prime measure of maintaining soil health and fertility indicating an important progress:
 - So far numerous water storage infrastructures have been built throughout the country: 9 strategic dams, 3 large size dams, 747 micro dams, 206 medium dams and 7 diversion schemes in Northern Red Sea, Gash Barka and Southern Regions.
 - Currently, 60,030 hectares of land is under irrigation (potential irrigable land is about 600,000ha) of which 23,400 ha is under spate, 32,500 ha under furrow, 1450 ha under drip and 2,680 ha under sprinkler irrigation.

- 374,895ha enclosures, 51,000 ha protected forest and 165,231 farmlands have been treated to conserve soil and water and enhance vegetation cover. In this respect, strategic interventions on crops, dairy, beekeeping, poultry and meat have been consolidated ensuring availability, accessibility and affordability in food security.
- In the above context, National Food and Nutrition Security Strategy that promotes food and nutrition security and the right to food has been strengthened and expanded during the reporting period focusing on two pillars namely, enhancing domestic production capacity in agriculture and fisheries and enhancing national capacity.

(i) *Domestic production capacity in agriculture and fisheries enhanced*

105. By 2020 area under cereal crops cultivation has reached 500,091 hectares (37% of the land was plowed by tractors and 63% by traditional means). *The balance in the area under cereal, pulses and oil seeds cultivation is still 90%, 6% and 4% respectively. The goal is however to attain 50%, 25% and 25% crop ratio and continuous effort continues to address the gaps. In this regard improved seeds distribution by the Ministry of Agriculture has continued.*
106. Crop production reached 312,786 tons in 2020. During the reporting period the average per year production stands at 278,605.5 tons (in an average area of 448,087Ha). Crop harvests of 2017 were poor because of the low and erratic distribution of rainfall; the reason for the slightly lower yield in 2020 was rain started at the end of July and was torrential. During the same period a yearly average of 276,540.8 tons of vegetables (in an average of 18915 Ha of land yearly) and 89,578 tons of vegetables (in an average of 4902 Ha every year) was produced throughout the country. Production in vegetables and fruits reached 225,490 and 94479 tons respectively by 2020 and the area covered increased.
107. Consumers have benefited from year round access to vegetables and fruits in the market and availability of citrus fruits, tomato and potato have shown a drastic increase. On average an ordinary farmer has been able to produce 150 quintals of potato and 350 quintals of tomato from a hectare. Yearly, per capita consumption is 64 Kgs of vegetables and 27 kgs fruits (*FAO recommended intake is 43.8 Kgs and 36.5 Kgs respectively*). To boost production fruit tree seedlings have been expanded and distributed to farmers. Furthermore, promising results have been made in the introduction of temperate and fruit seedlings (apple, peach, olive tree). Date palm production has also shown promising results along the red sea coast.
108. Bee hives and accessories were distributed and training given on beekeeping to raise production and an average 2970 quintals per year and availability and accessibility has

improved in the market but effort will be made to raise the production and avoid fluctuations in honey production mainly attributed to adverse climatic conditions. However, honey collected in 2020 has increased by 75% from the previous year.

109. Poultry production is another aspect given considerable attention, and during the reporting period an average of 193,546 day old backyard chicks were produced and distributed to 7742 households every year. 15,256 women headed households have received 25 chicks each in year 2020

110. In dairy production the number of intensively managed dairy cattle has increased and reached 20,560 in 2020. Intensively managed cows have increased, dairy processing has increased, and area under forage cultivation and dairy equipment machinery is increasing. Accordingly, milk production has reached 11,787,137 liters about 12 small to large scale dairy processing being involved by 2020. Area under forage crops cultivation has increased. dairy equipment namely Portable milking machines, food grade milk cans, Butter Churners, etc have been introduced and distributed to dairy farmers. During the reporting period the average number of dairy cows/year reached 22,538 producing an average of 15, 729,104 liters of milk yearly.

111. Meat production has also expanded. Livestock and Rangeland development activities like delineation of enclosures, development of water points and micro dams, importation and distribution of better quality forage seeds either for zero grazing or reseeding have been done in order to improve rangeland and range livestock productivity. Furthermore, efforts are under way to increase availability of affordable and healthy meat from unconventional sources of meat like pork and rabbit. Hence, in 2020 about 671 pork and 171 rabbits have been sold to consumers and for breeding, respectively.

(ii) Institutional Capabilities expanded and strengthened

112. In addition to the above mentioned achievements, the MoA has made functional and technical achievements through its various departments and branches as well as institutions. The following can be taken as highlights during the reporting period:-

- National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) conducted many adaptive researches in all agro ecological zones and different improved varieties of cereal crops, fruits and vegetables have been developed and distributed. Researched on animal feed resources, Tissue culture laboratory established; and Soil survey and research conducted
- Agricultural Extension Department (AED) in collaboration with NARI and other regional and international agro-tech agencies conducted intensive work on awareness raising among

farmers and introduction of new agricultural technologies. This has served as a bridge between research and farmers. Extension services have been strengthened through the assignment of 75% of agricultural college graduates at the level of administrative localities, training of trainers (ToT) to extension officers, production of training materials, distribution of thousands of agricultural inputs and technological packages (MIHAP, BEEKEEPING, etc.) to boost production and surveillance and control of migratory pests (Desert Locust, Fall Army Worm, brucellosis, *Queala queala*, etc.)

- Provided compulsory vaccination against major infectious diseases like Sheep Pox, Lumpy Skin Disease, Peste Des Petit Ruminants (PPR), Foot and Mouth Disease, TB and Brucellosis, Rabies, Poultry diseases, etc. Accordingly, over 2.7 million ruminant livestock, poultry, equines, canine and feline species were vaccinated against various diseases in 2020.
- Besides, AED together with the NAPHL has been conducting tests on brucellosis and tuberculosis in order to prevent the spread of the 2 zoonotic diseases to consumers.
- It is also jointly working with regional partners to eradicate PPR disease which is highly infectious and lethal disease of small ruminants.
- Regulatory Services Department (RSD) has also Provided regulatory services, Developed and proclaimed internationally accepted standards and regulations, safeguards and disposes obsolete pesticides, developed and enacted laws regarding quarantine, forestry and wild life and food standards, A full-fledged NAPHL has been established and is equipped with various technologically advanced equipment and instruments so as to carry out diagnostics, tests and vaccine production.

3.4.2. Right to Health and care - Article 16

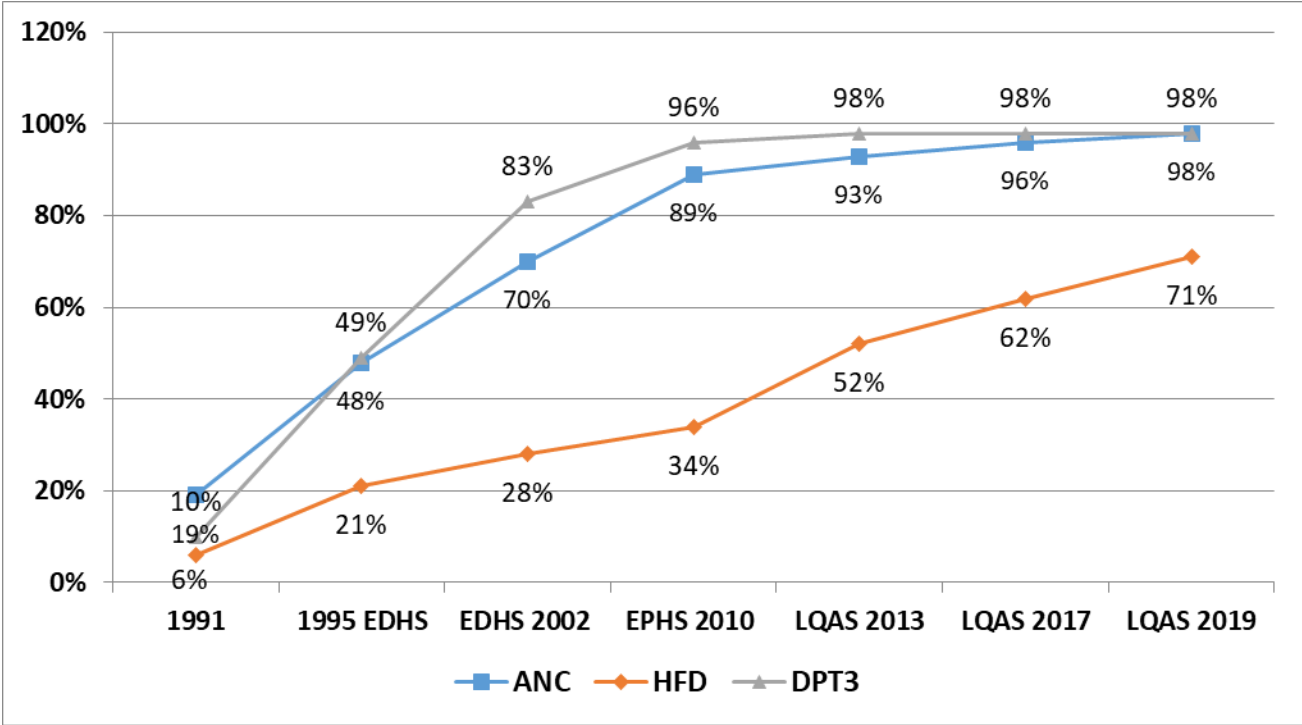
(i) Pragmatic Policies and Measures Consolidated

113. Reference is made to Paragraphs 140-143-157 of the initial Report and reflecting Article 16 of the African Charter. Health care in Eritrea has continued either free or nominal at any level during 2017-2020 for anyone who provides poverty certificate from local administration. The HSSDP 2017 – 2021 provides policy and strategic guidance and based on this all health programs (such as family and community health; communicable diseases control; non-communicable diseases control etc.) as well as regional departments developed their own strategic five year plans and annual operational plans.

114. The focus has continued on communicable disease while strengthening the control of non-communicable diseases and injuries. Environmental sanitation (including building latrines in rural communities), increasing health facility delivery, and continuation of service during the COVID-19 pandemic remained primary targets. . The National Health Policy (NHP)-2020, which replaced the NHP-2010, was developed in recognition of the evolving national, regional, and global health context, and is consistent with the country’s resolve to maximize the health and wellbeing for all Eritreans and Residents of Eritrea at all ages and the global 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Accordingly, the NHP-2020 shall guide the country in strengthening its health systems towards the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the health SDG (SDG-3). In doing so, the NHP-2020 renewed the Government’s commitment to Primary Health Care (PHC) as the health policy’s overall orientation and overarching strategy.

(ii) Improvements in health Service Provision

Figure 12: Coverage of Immunization (DPT3/MCV1), at least one Antenatal Care Attendance (ANC), Delivery at Health Facility (HFD), 1991-2019



115. As a result of the concerted efforts to expand health services by building health facilities and equipping them with the necessary equipment and skilled health personnel, access to health care within 10 Km radius, increased from 46 % in 1991 to 80 % in 2020. Currently,

over 60 percent of the population lives within 5 kms radius from a health facility. In this regard, there are notable successes in areas of service provision which include:

- At least one antenatal coverage, which progressively increased from 19 percent in 1991 to 96% in 2017, and to 98% in 2019.
- 64 % of mothers of children with 0-11 months attended ANC services, 4 or more times.
- Institutional delivery (delivery in a health facility), showed twelve fold increase from almost non-existent- 6 percent in 1991 to 62% in 2017 and to 71 percent in 2019;
- Immunization, increased from 10 % for six antigens in 1991 to virtually universal (98 percent) in 2013 and this high level was sustained for 12 antigens, including the 3rd dose of Pentavalent, pneumococcal conjugate, measles rubella vaccine etc

(iii) Concrete health security achievements

116. Life expectancy at birth increased significantly from 48 years in 1991 to 66 years in 2018. The increase during the reporting period was from 65.5 in 2017 to 67 in 2020.

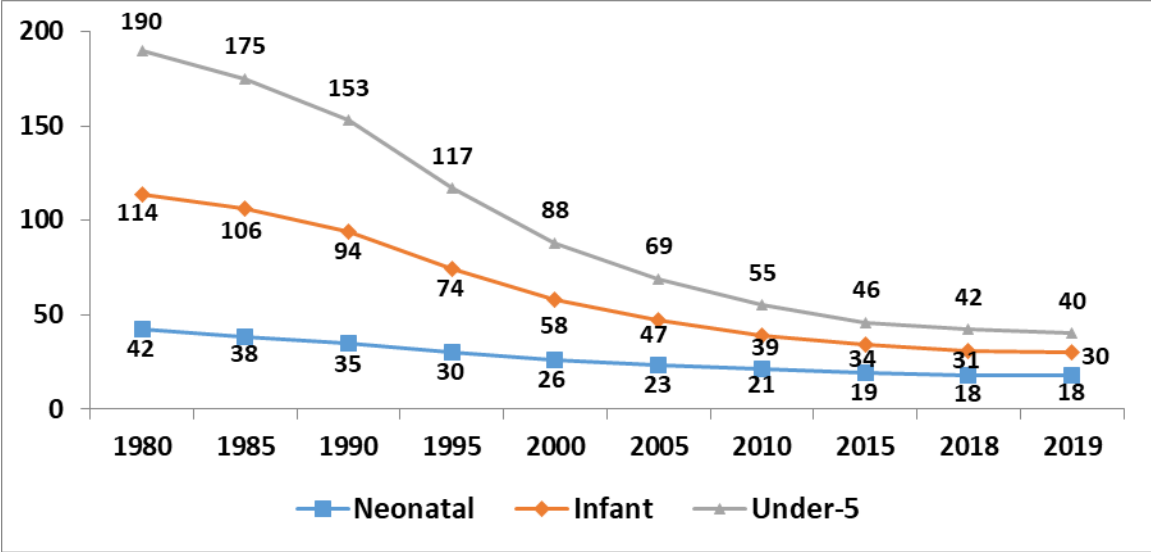
There has been a reduction in the incidence, prevalence and mortality due to communicable diseases, including HIV, TB and Malaria. Malaria incidence rate dramatically declined from 157/1,000 population/year in 1998 to about 10 in 2018 while malaria-related mortalities also declined from 0.186 per 1,000 populations in 1998 to 0.0015 in 2018. There has been an exponential decline in malaria deaths from a total of 405 in 1998 to five in 2018. The achieved low level of new infection (incidence) and mortality rate is sustained. The decline in malaria incidence rate over the last 20 years at national level was observed in all of the six regions of the country but with great variations between and within the different regions from zero per 1,000 population/year to 33.1/1,000 population/year. Incidence levels below 5 per 1,000 population/year, meeting requirements for elimination, have been reported recently in the central highlands and eastern lowlands of the country

117. Since 2011, HIV prevalence was halted at a low level, below 1 percent. According to the 2019 SPECTRUM modeling, the estimated overall HIV prevalence in adults has declined from peak of 1.6 percent in 1996 to 0.60 percent at the end of 2019. HIV prevalence among adult population decreased from 0.72 percent in 2017 to 0.6 percent in 2019.

118. Based on WHO modeling estimation methods, TB incidence has shown a marked reduction from 484 in 1990 to 86 per 100,000 population in 2018. Based on the WHO estimation methods, TB mortality rate (excluding TB/HIV deaths), has steadily declined from 36 per 100,000 population in 2001 to 16 per 100,000 population in 2019, with an average annual fall of 6.9 percent.

119. Under-five Mortality Rate was reduced by 74 % from 153 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 40 in 2019. Infant Mortality Rate was reduced by 68 %, from 94 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 30 in 2019; Neonatal Mortality Rate was reduced by 49 % from 35 per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 18 in 2019. Under-five Mortality Rate was reduced, from 43 per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 40 in 2019. Infant Mortality Rate was reduced from 32 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 30 in 2019; Neonatal Mortality Rate was reduced from 19 per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 18 in 2019.

Figure 13: Trend in neonatal, infant and under-five mortality



120. The MOH estimates that the Maternal Mortality Ratio was reduced from 998 per 100,000 LB in 1990 (EDHS,1995) to 484 in 2007 (EPHS, 2010) and to 184 per 100,000 LB in 2019 (MOH, estimate). However, according to the UN MMEIG (the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency Group), the maternal mortality ratio decreased from 1590 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 480 in 2017. Hence, the UN MMR estimate for 2017 (480 per 100,000 LB) is 2.6 fold of the Government (MOH) estimate for 2019 (184 per 100,000 LB).

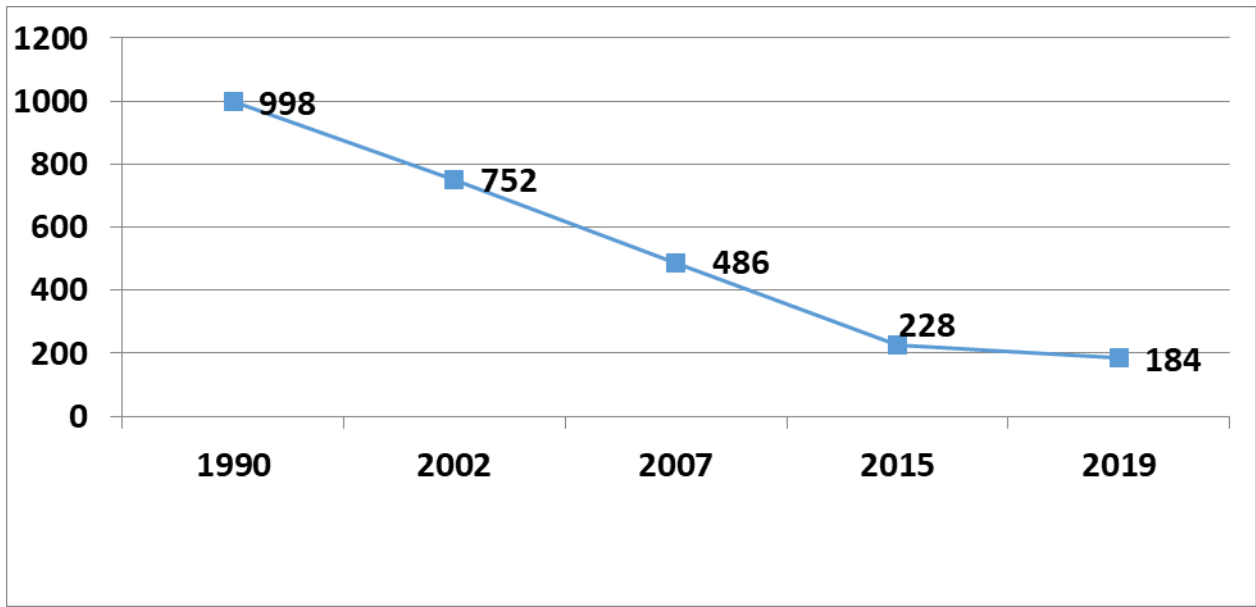


Figure 14: Trend in Maternal Mortality ratio per 100,000 live births

121. The 1995 EDHS survey found that FGM was virtually universal (95%) in the age range 15-49 women in Eritrea. This fell to 89 percent in 2002 and to 83% in 2010. The 2016 and 2018 mapping studies data revealed that the practice of FGM/C among daughters has further declined, to 3.8% among daughters under 15. The Prevalence has shown significant decline from 9.5% among girls aged 10-14 years to 3.3% in the age category 5-9 years and to only 1.1% among girls under-five years of age.
122. The NSO estimates the percentage of married adolescents within the age range 15-19 at 1.2% for males and 16.9% for females in 2018. Early childbearing is not common in Eritrea with the majority of women becoming mothers after the age of 20. The UN DESA (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) estimates the percentage of births to women under age 20 years at 6 percent (6 births per 100 women aged 15-49 years) for the years 2015-2020. The Government of Eritrea, through the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the National Union of Eritrean Women and other stakeholders is working to end early marriage and FGM/C.
123. The National strategic plan 2020 – 2024 for ensuring woman and child right and elimination of FGM, underage marriage and other harmful traditional practices has been developed. Moreover, National hand book for ensuring women and children rights and elimination of harmful traditional practices (such as FGM, UAM, gender-based discrimination and other HTPs) and reporting formats at regional and Sub-regional levels have been developed. As continuation to the previous similar studies, the MoH, MoLSW,

and NUEW have conducted FGM community mapping study in 2020. The prevalence of circumcision among girls under 15 and under five years of age was 2.3% and 0.54%, respectively; while the corresponding prevalence in the 2010 EDHS was 33.2% and 12%

124. To combat major non-communicable diseases (MNCDs), which consist of cardiovascular diseases, Diabetes, Cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, Eritrea developed a policy and Five Year Strategic Plan. This plan aims to reduce the risk factors for chronic diseases. Beyond MNCD prevention activities, emphasis is given to diagnose and treat chronic diseases. By 2019, Eritrea has established 251 NCD corners, exceeding its midterm target of 130 and ensuring that health facilities in every Zoba could provide chronic disease screening and support services. By 2020, the number of NCD corners increased to 351. In 2019, Eritrea conducted a Rapid Avoidable Blindness Survey, which revealed that 6.7% of the population suffered from blindness and 9.4% from severe visual impairment.
125. Eritrea has made significant progress in improving sanitation and hygiene. To evaluate the situation, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Bottleneck Analysis (WASH-BAT) was conducted. On the basis of the analysis informing the development of a One WASH Strategy and One WASH Investment Plan for 2019-2030, a number of reforms have been implemented. Furthermore, local ownership of hygiene and sanitation interventions has been strengthened, by developing the Roadmap to End Open Defecation in Eritrea. The plan relies on a Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach to end open defecation. Out of the 2,837 villages in Eritrea, 1311 (40%) were Open Defecation Free by 2019, an increase from 21% in 2016. This is a remarkable success in the effort to improve rural sanitation.
126. To further improve preparedness, Eritrea developed several health security programs, trainings and tools. This includes the development of the national action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), guidelines on disaster preparedness, and conducted meningitis risk assessment and mapping in 2017. In response to the risk assessment results on meningitis, Eritrea conducted a mass meningitis vaccination program for 1-3 year-old children, demonstrating the country's commitment to use data to inform program design.

(iv) Health Security and the Way Forward

127. Based on the assessment, health services are being redesigned through the NHP-2020 to provide through a more resilient fit that takes cognizance of the changing environment and guarantee the best possible health of the people of Eritrea. A twin focus on improving health security and achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) with required essential services shall be ensured as the country moves forward. The National Health Policy 2020 (NHP-2020) is expected to serve for the coming decade (2021-2030). The NHP-2020 shall:

- respond to the growing calls for strengthening of health systems and the renewal of Primary Health Care (PHC): Universal Health Coverage (UHC), people-centered care, health security, and a general emphasis on public health and health in all policies;
- serve to guide, steward and steer the entire health sector;
- go beyond the boundaries of health systems, addressing the social determinants of health and the interaction between the health sector and other sectors in society; and
- respond to the urgent need to build resilient health system and strengthen the health security capacity and emergency preparedness response system

3.4.3. Right to Education - Article 17

Educational opportunity expanded

(i) Enrolment growth

128. The pre-school and formal school systems enrolment at all levels up to secondary education reached 670,174 (54.03% male and 45.97% female) and an increase of 5.3% (5.2% male, 6.1% female increases) in relation to 2016,-2017 – see table below). Elementary enrolment constitutes 53.2% of total student population in the school system (was 54.5% in 2016/17). Despite the progress, about 17% of primary school age children are still out of school. Furthermore, significant increases at pre-primary and middle schools levels are to be noted.

Level	2016/17			2019/20			% Increase		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Pre-primary	44,898	23,196	21,702	50,958	26,244	24,714	13.5	6.54	13.9
Elementary	347,009	90,231	56,778	356,252	94,948	161,304	2.7	2.5	2.9
Middle	158,123	85,628	72,495	175,581	94,712	80,869	11.0	10.6	11.6
Secondary	86,621	45,387	41,234	87,383	46,203	43,180	0.9	1.8	4.7
Total	636,651	344,442	292,209	670,174	362,107	310,067	5.32	5.1	6.1

Table 15 - Data on Enrolment growth

129. *Leisure, recreation and cultural activities* are integral parts of Eritrea’s national education system. Physical education is provided at all levels. Sport competitions, games and cultural activities are institutionalized at the national, regional, sub-regional and school levels. A health focal person, who checks students’ health conditions, is assigned in every school. Students with minor ailments are provided with first aid. However, those who have serious health problems are referred to clinics and hospitals for further treatment.

(ii) Growing investment on teachers and schools

130. The above progress required significant investment in particular on teachers and schools. The number of teachers increased by 7.7% (6% male and 10.4% female). Similarly the number of schools overall has increased by 12.42%. At the same time the number of schools at national level increased by 12.42%. The increase in pre-primary institutions in particular is considerable (25.38%). Generally, the increase in number of schools is high, in particular at pre-school levels (25.38%) and elementary/middle levels (19.26%) and indicates the high priority made in investing on basic education.

Table 16: Number of Teachers and % increase at various levels

Level	2016/17			2019/20			% Increase		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Pre-primary	1,541	38	1503	1,789	67	1,722	16.1	76.3	14.6
Elementary	8,842	5,424	3,418	9,110	5,602	3,508	3.0	3.3	2.6
Middle	3,920	3,068	852	4,643	3,530	1,113	18.4	15.1	30.6
Secondary	2,547	1,956	591	2,599	1,919	680	2.0	1.9	15.1
Total	16,850	10,486	6,364	18,141	11,118	7,023	7.7	6.0	10.4

Table 17: Number of Schools at various levels

Levels	2016/17	2019/20	% Increase
Pre-primary	524	657	25.38
Elementary	970	1,039	7.11
Middle	371	416	12.13
Secondary	108	106	1.85
Total	1,973	2,218	12.42

(iii) Focus on Early Childhood investment

131. Total number of children at the preprimary level in 2019-2020 academic year was 50,985 and increased by 13.5% during the reporting period (6.54% for male and 13.9% for female) and rural children encompass 46.95% of the total. During the reporting period rural pre-primary increased by 15.9% while in urban areas the increase is about 1% . In general taking demographic projections into consideration, early child education (ECE) provision is very low and raises the need for further assessment and viable approach to help address the gap. A notable transitional approach noted is incorporating ECE centers into primary schools.

(iv) Mother Tongue Education as a basic right

132. The right to basic education has been consolidated through Mother tongue education provision (in all the 9 ethnic languages of Eritrea). In comparison to 2016/2017 academic year a 7.11% increase of schools in the mother tongue teaching has been achieved during the

reporting period. In the 2019/2020 academic year the number of schools reached 1060 (compared to 993 during the 2016/17 academic year) and reflects the wider demographic composition and distribution of the population. As a result, enrolment increased by 2.7% in total (2.5% for male and 2.9% for female) – Refer table below.

Year	Language	Afar	Arabic	Bilen	Bdawyet	Kunama	Nara	Saho	Tigre	Tigrigna	Total
2016/17	School	61	81	31	5	28	20	56	210	501	993
	Student	5,456	30,509	6,639	137	4,468	3,340	7,206	47,697	240,451	345,903
2019/20	School	65	82	32	6	32	21	57	237	528	1060
	Student	5,818	31,324	6,934	426	6,463	4,521	7,972	53,451	238,699	355,608

Table18: Number of Mother tongue Schools and enrolment levels

(v) Continuing Opportunity at middle and secondary levels

133. Enrolment at the middle school level showed increase of 11% (11.6% for females) during the reporting period and has become instrumental in laying a strong foundation of 7 years basic education. The expansion of Secondary Education is one of the critical efforts made during the reporting period. In this regard, opening new secondary schools in rural areas, especially for hard-to-reach groups was pursued seriously by the government. This in particular created opportunities for girls. Enrolment at the secondary level increased by 0.9% between 2016/17 and 2019/20 and reached 87987 (51.66 boys 48.34% girls) both GER and NER increasing slightly for both boys and girls. Female enrolment has also shown an increase to 4.7% in 2019/20 as compared to 1.8% for male.

Equity Considerations and measures strengthened

(i) Female participation in Education

134. A notable progress is the higher percentage increase of females at all levels. During the reporting period the general female participation throughout the school system is 46.3% and enrolment increased by 6.1% in comparison to the 2016/17 academic year (male increase 5.1%) while the total student population increase was 5.3%. In general the female participation at each level is described in the following (Female Net Enrolment Ratio also shows a promising trend as indicated in the table below):-

- ✓ At pre-primary 13.9% increase and girls constitute 48.5% of the total
At primary 2.9% increase and female participation is 45.3%
- ✓ At middle level 11.6% increase and females constituted 46.1%
- ✓ At secondary level 4.7% increase in secondary education and constituted 49.4%

Acad. Year	Elementary			Middle			Secondary		
	Enrolment		NER %	Enrolment		NER %	Enrolment		NER %
	Total	Female	Female	Total	Female	Female	Total	Female	Female
2016/17	289,174	134,886	80.4	84,179	41,468	45.3	58,077	29,244	19.2
2017/18	349,753	157,758	81.2	88,492	43,884	47.0	55,900	28,449	18.3
2018/19	347,482	156,980	81.5	87,816	43,602	46.3	59,647	30,650	19.6
2019/20	356,252	161,304	80.8	84,909	41,783	44.0	60,413	30,559	19.4

Table19: Female participation and enrolment levels

135. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) as indicated in the following table shows the progress made and the challenges that have to be faced to reach a GPI of 1 (equal gender presentation) at all levels of education.

Level of Education	Pre-primary	Elementary	Middle	Secondary
2016/17 Academic Year	0.93	0.82	0.85	0.91
2019/20 Academic Year	0.94	0.83	0.86	0.94

Table20: Gender Parity Index across levels

136. A number of strategies and interventions have been put in place to bridge the gender disparity that exists in the education. Some of the highlights are the following:-

- During the indicated period, equitable access to education expanded, and the number of schools increased at all levels.
- On the basis of studies about factors that affect girls' education, the MoE has prepared a National Communication Strategy on Girls' Education, 2010. The main objective is to increase access to education for girls and other disadvantaged groups. This includes six strategy recommendations namely, initiate a nation-wide movement, mass media campaign, mobilize a coalition for change, social mobilization and capacity enhancement, and build a media environment, and institute prizes and awards.
- Intensive awareness-raising campaigns on sending children to school in general and the girl child in particular were carried out in collaboration with various partners, such as Communal Leaders, Local Administrations, the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS), and other non-governmental organizations.
- A study on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in Eritrean Middle Schools was conducted in collaboration with UNICEF (2017). The main objective was to identify the challenges girls face in schools during their menstrual periods and to come up with recommendations for addressing these challenges. As a pilot project, in the Maekel

(Central) region, some schools have already started to provide sanitation facilities to girls. This project is expected to be expanded to the rest of the regions in the future.

- A comprehensive study on out-of-school children was conducted by the MoE in 2016. The overall objectives of the study were to identify the distribution of out- of -school children and the core barriers for their exclusion from schooling, and to minimize the number of out-of-school children in the country. One of the major findings was that a considerable number of children are excluded from schooling, especially at the pre-primary and secondary levels, and that many of them were females, rural children, and children from low income families.
- Expanding the Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) program is in progress. The main objective of the CEE program is to provide three years of elementary education for out- of- school children aged 9-14 years. This is expected to be largely equivalent to the five years of formal elementary education. The beneficiaries of this program are mainly disadvantaged children who come from remote, rural areas.
- To ensure equitable access to education, financial and material incentives, including stationery and sanitary materials, were provided to children at school. Girls in disadvantaged areas were the main beneficiaries.
- Peer education, students’ festivals, various incentives, including free stationery, exempting needy students from nominal school payments (registration fee, etc), and other measures to redress existing inequities and thereby provide opportunities to as many children as possible.

(ii) Rural Consideration and Progress

137. As part of the social sector strategy and the goal of ensuring equitable distribution of opportunities and resources, an important consideration is expanding education opportunities in rural, disadvantaged areas of the country and nomadic communities (see table below). The rural student population has in total increased from 53.25% to 56.1% of the total student population at all levels. Enrolment in urban areas increased at each stage except at secondary school level which slightly decreased from 41.43% in 2016/17 to 40.56% in 2019/2020 academic year. Rural schools constituted 75.2% of the total in the system and an increase to 75.2% from 73.14% in total.

	2016/17		2019/20	
Level	Student %	schools %	Student %	schools %
Pre Primary	40.55	64.88	47.05	70.6
Primary	60.47	80.72	64.08	81.33
Middle	47.48	71.7	48.78	73.1
Secondary	41.43	50	40.56	51.9
Total	53.25	73.14	56.1	75.2

Table21: Rural Schools and student numbers across levels

(iii) Disadvantaged Children

138. Nomadic education:- Strengthening right of education to nomadic children has been given more emphasis during the reporting period. The government is taking notable measures to improve the educational situation of nomadic people. In the year 2019/20, 65 schools served nomadic communities in Eritrea, and 10 of these being boarding schools. The total enrolment in these schools was 7,528, of which 46% are female students.

139. Contribution of Boarding Schools to ensure equity:- The GoSE has made concerted efforts to provide education access in all parts of the country. Moreover, it has ensured opportunities for school children from rural and remote areas by opening up boarding schools and hostels. These have helped disadvantaged children from rural and remote areas and girls in particular to access and continue education. The dropout rate at the elementary education showed a slight increase however at middle levels has decreased in 2018/19 as compared to 2017/18. This is partly the result of the additional boarding and Para-boarding schools and hostels that have been opened in many parts of the country. In general both dropout rate and repetition rates are lower for girls than boys during the reporting period.

140. Out of School children and Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) - The MoE is running a program of Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) for out- of- school children. The main objective of the CEE program is to provide three years’ education for out of school children aged 9-14 years. This program is equivalent to the five years of formal elementary education provided to younger children. The main beneficiaries of this program are girls from disadvantaged and remote, rural areas. During the 2019/20 academic year, a total of 11,690 children enrolled, 46 % of who were girls.

Academic year	Enrolment		Dropout %		Completion %	
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female
2016/17	6,538	2,930	18	17	82	83
2017/18	8589	3994	15	15	85	85
2018/19	13,286	6002	14	13	86	87
2019/20	11,690	5,347	15	15	85	85

Table22: CEE Program: Enrolment, Dropout and Completion by year and sex

(iv) CWDs and Special Educational needs

141. From the outset it is vital to note that prioritization of integrated early childhood interventions has enabled early detection of any problem or disability and reduce effects and severity. Early intervention is integrated in school health programmes through the joint effort of the Ministries of Health and Education. Moreover, children get eye, ear, and dental screening through health focal teachers with the support of mobile vehicle clinics.

142. In this context, continued efforts by the MOE towards addressing the problems of the CWDs include;

- an inclusive Education Policy by the MOE, providing facilities and resources for CWDs in schools;
- efforts by the MOE to promote education for CWDs such as the vision and hearing impaired in special elementary schools, children affected by autism and down syndrome; and
- Mainstreaming education continuity to CWDs at secondary schools and colleges; the three special elementary schools (*one governmental and two non-governmental elementary schools for children with vision and hearing impairments respectively*) continued their service but at the same capacity. However, construction is underway to expand the school for the deaf in city of Keren (Anseba Region), in order to accommodate more children. As usual, students who complete their studies in these three schools are mainstreamed at the next levels and they receive special support and consultations. Moreover, in 2018/19 academic year 6,835 visually impaired, 2,553 hearing impaired, 1,508 mentally handicapped and 840 physically handicapped students attended schools in regular classes with special assistance being given as deemed necessary.

Academic year	Abraha Bahta School for the blind		The Two Schools for the deaf	
	Total	Female	Total	Female
2016/17	35	15	145	40
2017/18	33	15	144	66
2018/19	33	15	144	66

Table 23: Special Needs Education: Enrolment by year and sex

143. According to the report of the National Association of Intellectual Developmental Disability (NAIDD), the schools for children with intellectual and developmental disability have increased from 8 in 2014 to 9 in 2019 and the student population increased from 255 to 646 in 2019. The following table shows the number of IDD students (*Among them there are 210 visually impaired 7-17 year old children enrolled both in inclusive*

schools and under special education). Moreover, Sample projects are underway in some parts of the country for children with Autism and Down’s syndrome.

Regions	No of schools		IDD students in					
			2014			2019		
	2014	2019	Female	Male	Total	female	Male	Total
Central	7	11	123	93	216	146	264	410
Anseba	1	2	21	18	39	21	53	74
S/Red Sea		1				20	31	51
Gash Barka		1				9	11	20
N/Red Sea		3				26	30	56
Southern		1				14	21	35
Total	8	19	144	111	255	236	410	646

Table 24: IDD Students Enrolment

144. *Inclusive education in main stream primary level schools* - sample special classes have been constructed and are functional in *main stream primary level schools* in some selected regions of the country to alleviate the critical shortage and problem. The “endeavour to improve and increase inclusive schools staffed with qualified teachers”, is reflected in the effort to develop functioning special sample classes. Currently, there are a number of special classes attached to primary schools in some selected regions of the country. There is a plan to expand the approach in the remaining regions. Continuous in-service training programs have been conducted to enhance the capacity of teachers in special needs education. In general, providing access to all children with special needs still remains one of the major challenges in the national education system.

(v) Internal efficiency of the School system

145. The education policy and the national effort is to provide quality education but despite the major investment and effort made internal efficiency of the school system at all levels remain a cause for concern and affects overall quality. As indicated in the table on School flow rates (comparing 2016/17 with 2018/29, by academic year and gender across all levels), more efforts at systemic level to reduce wastage and raise the internal efficiency of the system is needed in particular at middle and secondary school level by lowering drop out and repetition rates. Drop out and repetition rates increased reducing the promotion rates marginally during the reporting period, for both male and female. Nevertheless, the rates for females at all school levels are much higher than for males. Expanding and strengthening the intervention strategies introduced as explained in Paragraph 113 is important to further raise the progress.

Academic Year	Levels	Dropout%			Repetition%			Promotion%		
		Male	Fem.	Tot	Male	Fem.	Tot.	Male	Fem.	Tot.
2016/17	Elementary	6.3	4.4	5.5	10.4	7.9	9.3	83.3	87.6	85.2
	Middle	9.5	5.1	7.5	20.2	12.3	16.5	70.3	82.7	76.0
	Secondary	14.5	10.8	12.8	20	11	15.8	65.6	78.1	71.5
2018-19	Elementary	7.1	5	6.1	10.9	8.4	9.8	82.1	86.6	84.1
	Middle	12.7	7.2	10.1	21.5	13.7	17.9	65.9	79.1	72
	Secondary	14.8	12	13.4	16.4	8.9	12.8	68.8	79.1	73.8

Table 25 - School flow rates (comparing 2016/17 with 2018/29, by academic year and Gender across all levels)

(vi) Focus on technical and vocational Education

146. The Ministry of Education has exerted much effort to produce skilled and semi-skilled workers, with the aim of creating opportunities for gainful employment. Various types of training are provided in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Centers. Students are trained for two years after completing grade 10 of secondary education, or for one year after they have completed grade 12. In 2019/20 a total 4,911 students (46% females) enrolled in various technical schools.

Academic year	Technical Schools			National Centre for Vocational Training		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2016/17	1416	1264	2680	978	1089	2067
2017/18	1505	1317	2822	NA	NA	NA
2018/19	1525	1310	2835	1144	932	2076
2019/20	1525	1310	2835	1144	932	2076

Table26 – Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Training

(vi) Adult Literacy and Continuing Education

147. In 2019/20, a total of 42,962 participants enrolled in the National Adult Literacy Program. 88% of the total participants were women, and 76% of them completed the program. A total of 2,844 teachers were deployed in this program, and female teachers constituted 25% (*see table below*). The Adult Literacy Program also provides short vocational skills training for employability and entrepreneurship.

Academic year	Total number Of participants	Females	%	Females who completed	% of Females who completed
2016/17	40,203	35,690		27,183	76

2019/20	42,962	37,706		28,821	76
---------	--------	--------	--	--------	----

Table27 – Enrolment in Adult Literacy and Continuing Education

148. Furthermore, continuing education opportunities are provided at the middle and secondary school levels to adults and youth who have discontinued their education for various reasons. During the 2018/19 academic year, a total of 2,458 people enrolled in this program, and 46% of them were females. On the other hand, concerted efforts were made to provide literacy and post-literacy programs and various levels of education opportunities through national programmes in prisons and rehabilitation centres. MoE supported these institutions through teacher training and the provision of teaching-learning materials and other technical assistance.

Academic year	Total Enrolment	Female Enrolment
2016/17	6,034	2,167
2017/18	4,087	1,562
2018/19	2,458	1,131

Table28 – Enrolment in Adult Continuing Education

(vii) Progress in higher education and Prospects

ESECE Results (compare with 2017-2019 and 2018-2019)

149. In 2019-2020 academic year 14,642 students (almost 50% females - GPI=1.0) took the ESECE and a total of 6207 – 42.4% of the total achieved results for opportunity to continue in the higher learning institutions 2379 (38.33) for degree, 1950 (31.3%) for diploma and 1878 (30.3%) for certificate level. 49.5% (3076 students) from those enrolled in higher learning institutions were females (GPI=0.95,). For information it is vital to note that in the beginning of 2020/21 academic year enrolment in all the six colleges of higher learning attending degree and diploma programmes is 9,125 (45.7% female and 54.3% male).

Enrolment and Progress at tertiary Level

150. The rights and opportunities of free higher learning and polytechnic education is a critical aspect in the creation of human capital and significant progress has been achieved during the reporting period. Continuity and the right of education in higher institutions has been consolidated and the following facts indicate the situation:-

- Total student population in all Eritrean Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), during the 1st semester (2017/2018 Academic Year) was **10,818**, (**58.2%** enrolled in Degree; **41%**

in Diploma Programs; and **0.8%** in Graduate programs at Masters level. Out of the total students enrolled, about **43.8%** were females. The female student population slightly increased by **(1.8%)**. (**N.B.** This statistical report doesn't include Orotta School of Medicine and Dentistry (**OSMD**).

- In comparison to this, total student population in all Eritrean Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), at the end of the 2nd semester (2019/2020 Academic Year) was **8,006** out of which **64.05%** were enrolled in Degree; **35.8%** in Diploma Programs and Post graduate **10 (0.12%)**. During the current semester, Out of the total students enrolled, about **45.2%** are females. *Enrolment by field of study and gender at the beginning of 2019/2020 academic year as well as by level study is given in the tables below. It is to be noted that the number of students is less by 26% but female enrolment increased by 1.8 percentage points.*

IHEs	Female		Male		Total	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Mai-nefhi College of Science (MCS)	851	49.4	871	50.6	1,722	21
Mai-nefhi College of Engineering (MCET)	511	31	1138	69	1649	21
Asmara College of Education (ACS)	76	27	203	73	279	3.5
College of Business and Social Science (CBSS)	1209	47.7	1328	52.3	2,537	32
Hamelmalo Agricultural College (HAC)	559	60.5	365	39.5	924	3.5
Orotta School of Medicine & Health Science (OSMHS)	415	46	480	54	895	11
Total 2019/2020 student enrolment	3,621	45.2	4385	54.8	8006	100
<i>2017/18 Student enrolment</i>	<i>4738</i>	<i>43.8</i>	<i>6080</i>	<i>56.2</i>	<i>10818</i>	

Table 29 - Enrolment by field of study and gender at the beginning of 2019/20 academic year

IHEs	Post Grad	Dipl	Degree	Masters	Total	% of T
Mai-nefhi College of Science (MCS)	-	-	1722	-	1722	21
Mai-nefhi College of Engineering (MCET)	-	906	743	-	1649	3.5
Asmara College of Education (ACS)	-	145	134	-	279	3.5
College of Buss. and Social Science (CBSS)	-	956	1581	-	2537	32
Hamelmalo Agricultural College (HAC)	-	401	523	-	924	11.5
Orotta School of Medicine & Health Science (OSMHS)	10	460	425	-	895	11
Total students	10	2868	5128	-	8006	100%
<i>% according to level of study 2020/21</i>	<i>0.125</i>	<i>35.8</i>	<i>64.05</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>10818</i>	
<i>% during 2017/18 academic year</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>58.2</i>	<i>0.8</i>		<i>100%</i>

N.B. Statistical report of 2000/2021 doesn't include Orotta School of Medicine & Dentistry (OSMD)

Table 30 - Enrolment by field of study and level at the beginning of 2019/2020 academic year

Gender Representation In Higher Education Enrolment

151. The gender parity index at higher learning institutions has assumed a positive trend and growth. 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 to the on-going effort to create a reliable human capital formation for a diversified growth of the Eritrean economy (see table below). The average **female** student enrolment in all IHEs during the 2nd Semester of 2019/20 Academic Year was 45.2%. (0.1% Post graduate degree certificate, 64% in Bachelors, and 35.8% in diploma programs). Female enrolment is steadily increasing every year; however, much more is required to promote **gender equity**.

IHEs	Female		Male		Total	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Mai-nefhi College of Science (MCS)	851	49.4	871	50.6	1,722	21
Mai-nefhi College of Engineering (MCET)	511	31	1138	69	1,649	21
Asmara College of Education (ACS)	76	27	203	73	279	3.50
College of Business and Social Science CBSS)	1209	47.7	1328	52.3	2,537	32
Hamelmallo Agricultural College (HAC)	559	60.5	365	39.5	924	11.5
Orotta School of Medicine & Health Science (OSM & HS)	415	46	480	54	895	11
2017/18 Gender composition Summary	3,621	45.2	4385	54.8	8006	100
2019/20 Gender composition Summary	4,742	43.8	6,076	56.2	10818	

Table 31 - Gender Representation In Higher Education Enrolment

Internal Efficiency in Higher Education

152. The average rates of attrition and dropout are higher in the Diploma compared to the Degree programs. It should be noted that the rates of attrition and dropout are higher compared to 2019/2020

Academic years	Attrition rate (%)		Dropout rate (%)	
	Degree	Diploma	Degree	Diploma
2017/18	19.3%	21.7%	0.7%	1.4%
2019/20	8.3%	6.4%	0.37%	0.5%

Table 32 – Internal Efficiency In Higher Education Enrolment

153. The composition of the staff during 2019/20 was 344 nationals (42 females) and 170 expatriate (13 female). In comparison there was 636 academic staff at the end of the 1st semester of 2017/2018 academic year. Out of these **457 (72%)** were national staff (68 female) and the rest **179 (28%)** were expatriate staff (20 females). In this regard significant

effort has been made to invest on staff capabilities and effectiveness and in 2017 there was a National staff capability of 457 (69 females) with 1.7% professor, 3% ass Prof, 7% assistant prof, 26 % lecturer, 12.3 ass lecturer, GA 50% (A comparison is given during the reporting period – See table above). This has an important bearing in terms of the teaching-learning process and research development. The staff development plan, promotion, and the initiation of the local graduate programs in IHEs, are believed to play a role in reducing the ratio.

IHEs	Academic staff	Students	Staff : Student ratio
2017/18	636	10,818	1:17
2019/20	514	8,006	1:16

Table 33– Level and Composition of staff In Higher Education Enrolment

3.4.4. Social protection and Security

154. Social protection and Social security has continued as a central strategic intervention and reference is made to the initial report on paragraphs 198 -202 on social security, 210 on family, 258-268 on upbringing and 324-341 on Social protection.

(i) Mapping/Stocktaking of Social Protection Programs

155. During 2018 and beginning of 2019, a mapping/stock-taking study of Eritrea’s social protection programs was conducted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) to take stock of the social protection approaches and interventions by all sectors and civil society organizations. The exercise assessed the nature of intervention, objectives, target group, resource mobilization, implementers, delivery eligibility criteria and impact of programmes. The study indicates that 114 Social Protection Programs (SPPs) have been implemented by since 1992 and the following are the main findings on SPPs programmes:

- 24% were on vulnerable children, women and girls and food insecure households
- 19% on persons with disabilities (PWDs)
- the rest targeted families of martyrs, the elderly, commercial sex workers and farmers
- the programs contributed to enhanced resilience of the majority of the vulnerable groups and even changed the lives of some for the better

156. Based on the recommendations of the study, the MLSW during 2020-2021 is in the process of drafting National Social Protection Policy and a five years strategic plan. The objective is enhancing/strengthening the national SPS. The national policy and strategic plan define a national social safety net and guide the implementation of comprehensive social protection. The policy and the strategic plan recognizes the social protection measures and assistances deeply embedded in the social values of the society providing community based assistances to vulnerable groups. Moreover, the GoSE provides free medical services and education, cash and food support to the vulnerable the martyrs fund and fair price commodities through subsidy shops including in basic necessities such as bread, cereals, cooking oil and sugar.

(ii) Social Welfare interventions

157. The MoLSW community based social welfare interventions focused on vulnerable families hosting orphans, martyrs' families, vulnerable street children, persons with disabilities and women headed households through IGAs. Vocational training and provision of orthopedic appliances also contribute to the participation of the vulnerable groups in their own development and improving the livelihoods of their families and groups in the society.

158. Accordingly, during the reporting period (2017-2020), the MoLSW provided social protection interventions to;

- 605 families hosting orphans
- 4,449 cash assistance to vulnerable children living with HIV/AIDS
- 27,061 critical war veterans
- 240 families hosting children with disabilities provided with donkeys and pulling carts (as a main means of transportation of goods and commodities and source of income in rural and semi-urban areas)
- IGAs to 210 women headed households and 46 elderly persons areas
- 2,206 pulling carts for vulnerable families in five regional administrations to generate income and improve their livelihood.

Addressing effects of disasters and drought

159. During the reporting period 2017-2020, there has not been declared emergency or major humanitarian crisis. However, there have been pockets of areas affected by floods during the rainy season, drought stricken areas in Southern Red Sea Zonal Administrations due to shortage of rain, locust infestation and corona virus pandemics. Effects of floods were contained by mobilizing community resources in terms of availing food stuffs. The MoLSW provided mats, blankets, sanitary materials such as soap and kitchen utensils to those affected. Food shortage in the Southern region, as these areas are drought prone, has been addressed through food rations from the Government contingency stores. Effects of corona virus pandemic have been contained through pragmatic government approach with high discipline and responsibility by the population at large. Moreover, locust infestation has been contained through the coordinated efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, with strong community participation in the affected areas and the support of the Eritrean defense forces.

Pension Scheme

160. The GoSE refers to the initial report paragraph 201 with regard to the government mechanisms set up for the collection of contributions as well as eventual management of the pension scheme once collected. In accordance to the macro policy of the country the objective of the social security is "to introduce stage by stage a comprehensive national social security scheme in line with the pace of the economic development of the country. Pension schemes will be introduced for public sector employees and traditional social security will be encouraged". To this effect, appropriate proclamations have been put in

place. During the reporting period 2017-2020, an amount of ERN 97,385,447 has been collected from the employer (7%) and the employee (5%).

161. Pension payments to 22,956 ex-Ethiopian government public servants were paid amounting to ERN 27,771,862.

Group Life Insurance as part of Social Security

162. As of 2018, National Insurance Corporation of Eritrea (NICE) initiated a unique group life insurance scheme, taking the current economic situation into account offered impressively reduced price to benefit aged people. This group life insurance scheme is extended to both individuals and associated employees who formed group of: professionals; former co-workers; collaborative associations; community based local associations in different sectors, organizations and communities. The primary objective of the scheme is to support in case of permanent disability, critical illness and upon the death of the holder, provide Natural and Accidental death insurance coverage to their survivors. So far, in total about 9 groups from different sectors with over 45 associations are registered with total number of 18,267 persons with group life insurance coverage. To date, over 8 million premium is collected, and already about 120 families became beneficiaries of the scheme.

(iii) The right and development of children

Organization and mobilization

163. The GoSE exerts efforts within its powers towards the promotion of the Rights and Welfare of the Child, demonstrating its commitment to the furtherance and observance of the rights set forth in the African Charter and other Regional and international conventions to which Eritrea is a party. The GoSE regularly allocates annual budget towards the implementation of diverse national programmes, including the promotion and protection of child rights. The government budget is topped up by various partnership programmes. Under the supervision of MoLSW sub-regional offices, social workers and women & child rights committees at grassroots level continuously conduct supervision to ensure that children are provided with the necessary attention and support.

Age	Total	Male	Female
0-4	468,612	247,326	221,286
5-9	449,151	231,430	217,721
10-14	432,853	220,650	212,203
15-18	306,344	157,956	148,388
0-18	1,656,960	857,362	799,598

Table 34:- Social Distribution of Children across age and gender

164. During the reporting period of 2017-2020, the MoLSW conducted community mobilization campaigns through its 400 social workers stationed in all regional and sub-regional administrations on positive parenting and on preventing violence and abuse against children by reaching out to 411,308 persons (230,686 females) including children and adolescents, social workers and parents/guardians. Issues of violence against children were discussed openly with the aim of breaking silence on the challenges.

165. The International Children’s Day is celebrated at the national level and contributes in raising the awareness of the communities including children in the realization of child rights. This event is also disseminated on mass-media at national level. During the commemoration, over 1000 children participate annually demonstrating on the streets, presenting poems, songs and drama to reflect on their rights. During the occasions, the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare and UNICEF Representative deliver key note messages reaffirming their commitment to pursue the rights and welfare of all children

166. To realize the rights and welfare of the child, stronger coordination of the concerned stake holders and establishment of well-functioning committees for ensuring women & child rights & elimination of FGM/C, underage marriage & other harmful traditional practices at all levels of implementation have been established. There are five committees established namely; the National Steering Committee (NSC), the National Technical Committee (NTC), the Regional Coordination & Implementation Committee (ZCIC), sub-regional and administrative locality committees. The committees at national, regional and sub-regional have been established so far (*See table below*). All committees are comprised of government representatives, NUEW, NUEYS & children. **22.4%** of the members of the committees established at sub regional level are women.

No	Regional	No. of sub regional committees established	Members of the committees		
			male	female	Total
1	Maekel	16	103	56	159
2	Dehub	12	159	39	198
3	Anseba	9	138	44	181
4	Gash Barka	16	206	40	246
5	Northern Red Sea	10	118	27	145
6	Southern Red Sea	4	41	14	55
	Total	67	765	220	984

Table 35: committees for ensuring women & child rights

167. During the reporting period, the committees at different levels have undertaken activities in organizing themselves, creating awareness and behaviour change among the population ensuring Children's and Women's Rights to abolish Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Underage Marriage (UAM) and other harmful traditional practices. For example, two sub-zones, namely Asmat and Haboro which have a total of 70 villages have declared FGM/C free sub-regions and currently there are many villages on the way to do the same.
168. With regard to under age marriage, in addition to the national laws that prohibit the action, it is worth mentioning that some communities at sub zone level are enforcing a bylaw to ensure all marriages are made after the age of 18. These communities sanction and approve marriage after the following process: (i) The family applies for marriage approval to the village administrator (ii) the administrator verifies the age through the register kept at the administrative office and provides support letter to the nearest health facility for HIV/AIDS testing (iii) the health facility undertakes the HIV/AIDS test and sends the result to the sheik or priest (iv) the sheik or priest sanctions the marriage (v) the sheik or priest does not approve marriage without verifying the age. These community based bylaws are found to be effective and will be scaled up in other communities.
169. Eritrea's 5th and 6th combined periodic country report, and the 2nd and 3rd combined ACRWC report which highlights implementation progress on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was prepared by the coordination of the MoLSW and the participation of all national partners (appropriate government institutions and civil society organizations). It provides an update on the post-fourth country report period covering the years 2014 - 2019, as well as responses to the "Concluding Observations & recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's on the fourth periodic report of Eritrea and the ACRWC Committee regarding Eritrea's initial report.

Vulnerable Children

170. The state party refers to paragraph 331-332 of the initial report on vulnerable children. To secure the welfare of children without parental care, several programmes and mechanisms have been consolidated, namely i) Re-unification programme, ii) Community-based group homes, iii) Adoption iv) orphans hosted in orphanages and children hosted in families of martyrs' survivors v) supporting HIV/AIDS affected families. Moreover, families which host orphans in orphanages and children hosted in families of martyrs' are provided with financial support. This is mainly in order to make family reunification with extended families more sustainable and to avoid the psychosocial problems that arise as they grow up.

- **The Re-unification programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs)**

171. During 2017-2020, the MoLSW placed 1,882 orphans (882 females) into 627 Families, providing care and protection in family settings. The GoSE supported the host families through financial support for Income-Generating Activities (IGAs). The support provided includes livestock, small businesses, animal driven carts and agricultural inputs. This grant is one-time package worth USD 667.00 per family. Continuous field monitoring and follow-up has shown that the IGA has improved access of the vulnerable families to basic social services, including education, health, protection, food security and nutritional status of children. There is shortage of funding to cover the waiting list of already assessed vulnerable children and families who need support.

- **Community Based Group Homes for Orphaned Children**

172. The State party refers to paragraph 333 of the initial report with regard to the Community-Based Group Homes (CBGH) for orphaned children. It continues to provide family care and protection, with a limited number of children having figure parents. The CBGH also builds a sense of belonging to community members and allows orphaned children to share community resources. During the reporting period, orphans were placed in community based group homes pursuing their education with their peers in the regional administrations. Currently, there are five group homes with a total of 40 children. The MoLSW has a structured mechanism with clear guidelines and directives for monitoring the situations of children in group homes.

- **Orphan Children Cared in Orphanages**

173. Hosting orphans in orphanages is a last resort and continuous effort has been made to de-institutionalize them. In this regard, the cumulative numbers of orphans cared in orphanage centres from the year 2017 to 2020 is 1132 (54.15% girls).

- **Adoption**

174. The total number of orphans reunified with volunteer adoptive parents during 2017-2020 was 28 (14 females). A post-adoption monitoring conducted in the Central Zone by the Child and Family Welfare Division of the MoLSW on the basis of the guideline developed by the MoLSW revealed that the orphans were in good health, attended classes and enjoyed more meaningful lives than those hosted in group homes and orphanages.

- **HIV/AIDS and Affected Families**

175. In response to the dire need of HIV/AIDS-affected children and families, the MoLSW, in collaboration with its partners has continued to mitigate their difficulties, despite the

meagre resources available. The provision of cash has improved the capacity to meet their daily needs. The MoLSW provides overall care to HIV-affected families and children in terms of psycho-social support, case-management and facilitating cash-support. During the reporting period, 4,937 HIV/AIDs infected and affected orphans living with families have been assisted (see table below)

Age in years	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
0-4	80	66	146	74	76	150	71	67	138	38	44	82
5-9	172	165	337	188	160	348	117	135	252	99	97	196
10-14	274	222	496	320	305	625	205	245	450	170	145	315
15-17	145	145	290	167	150	317	181	219	400	216	179	395
Total	671	598	1,269	749	691	1,440	574	666	1,240	523	465	988

Table 36: HIV/AIDs infected and affected orphans living with families and assisted

(iv) The Family and social security – (articles 16-18, 16.2)

Protection of Family as a Social Institution

176. The State party refers to the initial report paragraph 210 on protection of family as a social institution. During the reporting period, the MoLSW sensitized communities on good parenting skills. The community based approach is one of the social capitals preserved in the effort to tackle social and economic challenges of disadvantaged families. The overriding value and practice is that communities contribute towards mitigating the social problems and disadvantaged members also share community resources. Members of the extended family and local community also serve as vehicles for the socialization of the child, where all members of the community play crucial roles. They are also expected to take care of orphans in the absence of their immediate family members. Moreover, vulnerable children, PWDs and elderly are taken care not only by their immediate families but by community members as well. Disadvantaged members of the community are also supported by community resources.

Social protection

177. During the reporting period, the MoLSW provided social protection interventions to (i) 605 families hosting orphans (ii) A total of 4,449 cash assistance to vulnerable children living with HIV/AIDS (III) A total of 27,061 critical war veterans (iv) 240 families hosting children with disabilities with donkeys and accessories; In the rural and semi-urban areas, the donkey pulling carts are the main means of transportation of goods and commodities and source of income. Based on this, the MoLSW distributed 2,206 pulling carts for vulnerable families situated in five zonal administrations to generate income and improve their livelihood (v) 210 women headed households and 46 elderly persons with IGAs.

178. Under the facilitation of the MoLSW, a considerable amount of government fund has continued to cover social protection support to significant number of Martyrs' families (USD 22,000,000 million per year). Furthermore, Eritrean nationals residing inside the country and in the diaspora have augmented this effort in terms of material, financial and psychosocial supports. The fund reaches to the vulnerable families on monthly bases in the form of social cash transfer through designated community-based distribution points, banks and regional/sub-regional administration offices. Members of Martyrs' families improved their livelihoods and have better access to social services as a result of the cash-support through Government's Martyr's Fund. The Communities' support to martyrs' families in renovating damaged homes, ploughing their farms and helping them during harvesting are also contributing in promoting their social protection.

179. In 2018, National Insurance Corporation of Eritrea (NICE) reinitiated a unique group life insurance scheme, which extended the age coverage, and taking the current economic situation into account and impressively offering reduced price to benefit aged people. So far, in total about 9 groups from different sectors with over 45 associations are registered with total number of 18,267 persons with group life insurance coverage. To date, over 8 million premium is collected, and already about 120 families became beneficiaries of the scheme.

(v) Right and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

180. Reference is made to the Initial Report paragraphs 342-357, 360-365 including the legal, institutional and organizational basis outlining the rights of persons with disability. The 2015/16 ELFS notes that PWDs account 7% (225,156) of the total population out of which 13% are children with disabilities in the age group of 0-17. In this regard, the GoSE has intensified the development of Management Information Systems (MIS) in ministries and civil society organizations (CSOs) to collect, compile and verify data, including that of vulnerable and children with disabilities. Data and information collected are used for informed decision making and policy formulation and being used for the effective follow-up and reporting including regional and international obligations and reporting.

Identification at early stage

181. In this vein, the MoH has developed a strategy enabling health professionals to identify developmental disabilities in early childhood and is incorporated in the Integrated Management of New Born and Childhood Illness (IMNCI). The MoH conducted training for health workers in primary health care facilities, who on returning to their respective duty stations, would incorporate the skills to identify any developmental disabilities and take appropriate remedial action. Furthermore, the MoH has opened wings in some health facilities where congenital and acquired disabilities such as Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), clubfoot, cleft palate and motor defects of children, etc. are addressed. Moreover, the 'polio free status' is sustained by vaccinating all children 0-50 month.

CBRD and Impact

182. The MoLSW has been engaged in continuous advocacy and awareness raising activities aimed at promoting equal access and opportunities for PWDs in preventive measures against disability. They are implemented through MoLSW extensive structure and the community based rehabilitation and development programme (CBRD). During the reporting period, the CBRD programme has been expanded to 67 sub regional administrations and further down to districts (known as kebeles/village administrations). Many PWDs have now been able to get early medical services, access to rehabilitation centres, education and training, and to participate in social and daily activities. CBRD is bringing significant difference on the lives of PWDs in terms of providing psychosocial support, access to education, socio-economic reintegration and rehabilitation in their communities. Sensitization and advocacy have also resulted in changing people's perception. Furthermore, to support children with disabilities from poor households the Government has allocated ERN 60,000,000.00 in cash assistance annually.
183. The four associations for persons with disabilities: (i) The Eritrean National War Disabled Veterans' Association (ENWDVA) (ii) The Eritrean Association of the Blind (ERNAB) (iii) The Eritrean National Association of the Deaf (ERNAD) and (iv) The National Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NAIDD) play important roles in the promotion of the rights of PWDs. The four OPWDs also advocate for the best interest of PWDs and function independently implementing their respective strategies and programs in line to national goals and interest. During the reporting period 2017-2020 the four organizations for PWDs (OPWDs) reached a total of 3854 poor households of PWDs with support, including income generating interventions, appropriate mobility and vision and hearing appliances to improve the livelihoods of the CWDs. The initiatives have helped families of CWDs to send their children to school and promote love and affection. But, still the enormity of the problems encountering PWDs is recognized.
184. During the period under review, the MoLHW, with funding support from the National Association of the Disabled (Norway) and UNDP, strengthened and expanded the CBRP for persons with disability in 51 sub-regions covering over 90 per cent of the country. CBRVs in sub-regions numbered around 2690, of which 25% were female. The overall objective of the program was to promote and advocate for the human rights of persons with disabilities and to improve their livelihoods in particular for children. Besides enhancing community awareness, the CBRVs played a critical role in the advocacy for equal access to opportunities for disabled families. Hence, disabled people of both sexes were able to: (i) access resources such as land for farming and/or for residence; (ii) access educational institutions (schools for disabled children and other formal and non-formal education and training opportunities for

the disabled youth); (iii) access health service facilities; (iv) actively participate in communal meetings; and last but not least (v) establish families.

Mobility Appliances for PWDs

185. To enhance the mobility of Persons with disability including children with disabilities, the MoLSW continues to run two orthopaedic workshops located in the Maekel and Anseba regions. During the reporting period 2017-2020, a total of 2847 out of which 2493 are males and 83 are children with disabilities have been provided with appliances such as above and below knee prosthesis, orthotic double dock, club foot, wheel chair, crunch, medical shoe, corset..etc. contributing to augmentation of their mobility enabling them to participate in social and economic activities and improving their livelihoods.. Majority of the beneficiaries are from poor families which have been identified through the community-based rehabilitation and development committees and MoLSW social workers to be provided by the orthopaedic workshops managed by the MoLSW.

186. The Donkeys for School project continues to provide donkeys and accessories to CWDs with greater focus on those residing in hard to reach and difficult terrains in order to ease their mobility/transport problems. The notable impacts of the ‘Donkey for School’ initiative has increased school enrolment, reduced dropouts, improved attendance and improved academic performance. During the reporting period of 2017-2020, the number of beneficiaries of the Donkey for School project rose from 1200 to over 1,400 and girls constituted 40%. The Donkey for school initiative is making difference on the lives of CWD in terms of access to education, participation, promoting well-being of the child & making easy to the house hold responsibility for girls and women in transportation of goods, fetching water & fire woods from remote distances. This initiative needs to be scaled-up to support more CWDs in hard-to-reach communities

Education and upbringing for disabled children

187. Initiatives taken by the MoE towards addressing the problems of disabled children include: (i) an Inclusive Education Policy by the MoE, which provides for the provision of facilities and resources for disabled children in schools; (ii) efforts to promote education for CWDs such as the vision and hearing impaired, children affected by autism and Down’s syndrome; and (iii) mainstreaming persons with disabilities into secondary schools and colleges. The MoH’s efforts included sustaining ‘polio-free status by vaccinating all children 0-50 months old. (Note that Special Needs Education is included in the education part - (Refer - CWDs and Special Needs education [pp 114-117](#))

188. The MoLHW, in cooperation with the National Association for the Deaf, published the first Sign Language Dictionary, which was disseminated throughout the country, including in schools, public libraries and book-stores and stationeries. This undertaking is expected to contribute to the education of deaf children to help them express themselves more clearly, to enable them to communicate more easily with the general public, to interact more easily and to play a more active role in social life.

189. The International Disability Day is one of the main events celebrated every year at the national level. It encourages the participation and inclusion of PWDs and promotes public awareness. Under the coordination of the MoLSW, yearly this public event annually involves the participation of over 1500 children/persons with disabilities who perform various awareness raising activities. The dissemination of the events through mass-media increases public awareness on the protection and rights of persons with disabilities against discrimination.

IV. People's Rights

4.1. Right to development (Articles 21/22)

4.1.1. A successful Post-border war Development Campaign

190. Eritrea underlines the centrality of the UN international principle that peace and security, and human right and development are interlinked demanding shared and collective responsibility to the ideals of humanity and in line to the UN Charter. In this regard, reference is made to the Initial Report paragraphs 377-382 on international cooperation and engagement, paragraphs 287-294 on people's right to peace and international security and paragraphs 241 – 254 on the right to development.

191. Eritrea's effort in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs) has been consolidated on the basis of the principles of social justice and the interlink of peace and security and human right and development. In this regard, sovereign equality, equitable distribution of wealth and resources, *Sovereignty on Eritrea's wealth and resources and investment in decisive human capital have been consolidated ensuring the right of self-determination and* driving the progress in the enjoyment of the right to development.

192. The development conviction and pragmatic position has thus been consolidated through the independent political stance predicated on national ownership, priorities and implementation. On the other hand, engagement that is dignified and international cooperation grounded on mutual respect, understanding and benefit i.e. partnership has been

consolidated. Accordingly, Eritrea continues to harmonize its action with likeminded countries to promote the sustenance of regional and international peace in accordance to the UN and AU Charters.

193. Despite the more than two decades of existential external threats imposed by the inequitable and unjust international order, Eritrea enjoys peace and stability. This is a result of the nation building dynamics and in particular the post-border war (1998-2000) Warsay-Yikealo Development campaign (2003-2018) that laid the basis for the ongoing development and has affirmed the following:-

- Strong national unity and citizenship
- equal rights and opportunities
- responsible participation of the people
- functioning local governance architecture
- people based and people driven development dynamics predicated on self-reliance
- pragmatic foreign policy and international relations based on dignified engagement and cooperation based on partnerships with particular emphasis given to regional dynamics of peace, security and development.

194. The development campaign achieved its goals and the economic, social and cultural situation steadily progressed and national capacity and institutions evolved at a reasonable and healthy pace. In particular, the campaign consolidated human capital, structural diversification of agriculture which has contributed in the transformation of the sector and in fulfilling the right to food, mining development and expansion of economic infrastructure (in particular physical infrastructure). This has consolidated internal peace, resilience and growth of the economy and improvement in livelihoods addressing the economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, and contributing to a new Horn of Africa peace and security initiative.

4.1.2. Eritrea's National Road Map and. the New Development Drive

195. Under the favorable conditions of internal and regional peace and development, Eritrea has seized the opportunity to redouble its development efforts, address past challenges and consolidate an inclusive and rapid economic growth predicated on social justice. The aim is to strengthen two dimensions, namely the internal dynamics of development and engagement and international cooperation. To this effect, a new National Road Map of Development entailing 11 national strategic objectives and areas has been declared in 2019 with this new positive outlook in sight and encompassing the following dimensions:-

- This is a development paradigm driven by Eritrea's long held commitment asserting national ownership, priorities, and implementation.
- The overall strategy relies on the extended mobilization, higher organization, and effective harnessing of national capacity and decisive role of the people.
- The Road Map is seen in relation to a new development structure organized across four development zones (Central, Eastern, Western development zones inside Eritrea and the fourth zone relating to Eritreans living abroad).
- The 11 strategic programmes of the National Road Map address the following:-
 - ✓ Water supply and services programs for all purposes to be developed with requisite policy and technology as a priority of priorities
 - ✓ Network of roads railroads, rope rails and fuel pipes in three stages, namely rehabilitation of existing, transformation for creating efficiency, and new with requisite efficiency and effectiveness in implementation
 - ✓ Ports and coast lines development revitalize projects stalled through updated planning and promote broader partnerships in the effort
 - ✓ Production of Energy and electric supply service, transform the unreliable system into transitional stage, promote plan and implement a reliable system
 - ✓ Reliable and efficient land, sea, air communication to be developed through an updated comprehensive plan and fit to regional networks
 - ✓ As one of the requirements for dignified life, revitalize the housing sector with a renewed plan , improved new technology and capacity
 - ✓ In a broader qualitative coverage, Health and education services, health infrastructure will be developed, the human capital as driving force for development and construction of the nation will be strengthened through an all-round investment in order to strengthen the supply system
 - ✓ Sector and industrial development will be reviewed comprehensively programme by programme and enterprise by enterprise and new road map of investment will be outlines and implemented
 - ✓ Implementation and effectiveness in all development zones will be consolidated by consolidating the mechanisms and in particular review mechanism, structures and programmes to consolidate the contribution and participation of Eritreans abroad

- ✓ Unreserved struggle to combat speculation and mismanagement to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of efforts
- ✓ Regional partnership and stability as enabler of domestic development programmes and the nurturing of a genuine partnership predicated on respect and understanding

196. Accordingly, Eritrea is set to redouble its efforts to achieve a qualitative leap within a short period of time. Unfortunately, Eritrea's development implementation has been impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the impact, however, the plan is being used to address the development effects of the hostilities imposed on Eritrea and as a basis for post-Covid development dynamics. In this regard, critical sectors of the plan continued in the areas of agriculture and food security, soil and water conservation, physical economic infrastructure, human resource development and health security. But again as usual, challenges to peace and security again continued!

4.2. National and International Peace (Art 23)

4.2.1. Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace and regional dynamics/Progress

197. Until ousted from power in 2018 (after 27 years of draconian rule in Ethiopia), the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), served the political ill-intent to vilify, isolate and destabilize Eritrea as part of the US Horn of Africa destructive strategy. Eritrea's resilience coupled with the promising internal political developments in Ethiopia, led to the Eritrea-Ethiopia rapprochement on July 2018 leading to a new regional dynamics of peace, security and development including the following notable dividends:-

- Ethiopia's 1998 declaration of war on Eritrea rescinded,
- Ethiopia's unconditional declaration to implement the final and binding ruling of the Eritrea-Ethiopia International Boundary Commission (EEBC)
- Respect for Eritrea's sovereignty
- Normalization of relations between the two countries leading to the signing of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace, security and development Cooperation Framework

198. Furthermore, Eritrea and Somalia signed a Peace and Cooperation Agreement on August 2018 followed by the Eritrea-Ethiopia-Somalia Tri-Partite Peace and Cooperation Declaration. The new dynamics also consolidated Eritrea's relations with Sudan and South Sudan. Furthermore, the joint visit and meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia with the President of the Republic of Djibouti was an important development. Moreover, President Isaias of Eritrea and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti agreed to establish a new chapter of cooperation and good neighborhood between the two countries

during a meeting in Jeddah. After decades, a new dynamics and hope of regional peace, security, development reemerged and Eritrea declared a new national drive!

4.2.2. Geopolitical agendas, renewed hostilities and Eritrea's resolve to defend its national security and sustain the regional dynamics

199. From the outset note is to be made that the objective reality underpinning the prevalence of the uni-polar international global order is undergoing a seismic shift due to new emerging power and influence dynamics. The peace, security and development dynamics of the Horn Africa Region has thus remained one of the hot spot crisis management targets of this emerging reality. This is part of the geopolitical aim and rationale considered desirable to US foreign policy elites and allies. The TPLF served this aim and with the encouragement of its usual handlers, mainly USA and some western countries that harbor the ambition of continuing control of the Horn of Africa Region worked to undermine the Horn of Africa new regional reality and prospect. Accordingly, the TPLF, with the support of its handlers

- posed a threat to the implementation of the 2018 Peace, Friendship and Cooperation declaration between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the new emerging regional dynamics
- continued to compromise Eritrea's national security including the continued occupation of its sovereign territories in defiance to the international EEBC ruling,
- threatened Eritrea's right to live in peace without any threats and the right to development

200. Furthermore, after the TPLF was ousted from power, with the encouragement of its handlers, acted to undermine the new reality and prospect owned by the countries of the region. The following hostile actions describe the political ill-intent:-

- The TPLF unleashed an insurrectionist war in 4 November 2020. The objective of this massive, premeditated and unprovoked attack launched on Ethiopian Northern Command was to totally neutralize the Northern Command which possessed around 80% of the Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF) total arsenal. The overall plan was to topple the central government once it had pacified the Northern Command.
- Subsequent plans included military action against Eritrea to advance its avowed "regime change" agenda as well as incorporation of Eritrean sovereign territories for its long-term, multi-layered, aims and aspirations that it had pursued for about two decades until ousted from power after 27 of rule in Ethiopia.
- In the early days after it attacked Ethiopia's Northern Command posts, the TPLF launched missile attacks on multiple civilian targets in several cities of Eritrea.

201. Ethiopia's law enforcement operation in the Tigray region was thus undertaken in response to the TPLF's attack on Ethiopia's Northern Military Command stationed in the region and subsequent attacks. Eritrea had no choice other than to defend its national security and its right to live in peace without any threats in accordance to the UN Charter. From the beginning, the US and the EU and their media and institutions have desperately tried to downplay and whitewash the TPLF's high crimes of War of Insurrection with all its security and humanitarian ramifications in Ethiopia, Eritrea and the region at large. The ploy invariably included unwarranted accusations and scapegoating of Eritrea. Once the plan started to fail, the clique and its handlers, its diaspora stooges, hired lobbyists, and western media resorted to disinformation campaign using concocted baseless allegations of sexual violence, looting and crimes. This is pursued through fabrications, recycling of fake news and photo-shopped images from other conflicts.

202. Allegations singling out and defaming the Eritrean army in particular are unwarranted and unacceptable and an insult to the history and culture of Eritreans. This is an institution anchored on ethical values of the society, values of humanity and respect for human dignity in any situation. The country's strong advocacy and practice of adherence to human rights during its 30-year national liberation struggle including the human treatment of Ethiopian POWs is well documented. The same is true of the experience during the 1998-2000 TPLF led minority government of Ethiopia war of aggression on Eritrea in the pretext of the border dispute. The allegations are meant to deflect attention from the war launched and atrocities committed by the TPLF clique and merit accountability.

203. Moreover, the same external entities and handlers of the TPLF clique that aided and abetted its murderous reign in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa for 27 years desperately continue to resuscitate the clique from death, attempt to deflect attention from the crimes the clique perpetrated and downplay its culpability. This compromises the cause of peace and security, and human right and development in the region. The various intentions/attempts under any name to create a breathing space to the TPLF clique and scapegoat Eritrea for other political ill-intent remains a threat to the emerging prospect of peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa. It is also an outright denial of the unparalleled damage the TPLF clique created during its 27 years of power.

4.2.3. Eritrea's Engagements and cooperation on Human Rights

204. Eritrea continues to consolidate dignified engagement and international cooperation based on partnership including in the human rights sector. In this regard, engagement and cooperation with the ACHPR is given high consideration. Eritrea participates in all ACHPR regular and special sessions, presents its critical and objective stance and contributes to the

success of deliberations in all aspects. The present 2017-2020 report on the African Charter (delayed due to prevailing situations) is also part of the obligations and commitment. The 2nd – 3rd Combined Periodic Report (2014-2019) on the African Charter for the Rights and welfare of Children was submitted to the Africa Committee of Experts on the Right and Welfare of Children (ACERWC) was discussed during the 39th Session of the Committee.

205. Participation and measures taken to engage and cooperate with the UN human rights international architecture are also notable. Eritrea is presently a member of the HRC for the second term ending in 2024 and modestly contributes to raise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. Eritrea also participates actively in all HRC Sessions and sessions of several Treaty Bodies and submits reports including on UPR Cycle and the CRC and CEDAW. In particular the following have been submitted during the same period:-

- ✓ 5th and 6th combined report (2014-2019) on the implementation of CRC
- ✓ 6th CEDAW Report (2013-2017) submitted on 1-3-2019 and discussed by the Committee on 14 February 2020.
- ✓ 3rd Cycle UN-UPR mid-term formative sectorial reports have been prepared and will be compiled until the end of 2022

4.3. Tackling the COVID 19 Pandemic

17. The global health security and economy has been affected after the outbreak of COVID-19 since the end of 2019. The measures taken to control the pandemic both at national and international levels have significantly disrupted the supply chain and exposed the countries' economies and citizens to difficult situation. Eritrea is not spared from economic challenge experienced in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic since the end of 2019. Nonetheless, it has managed to limit the effect of the pandemic to the lowest possible level through a pragmatic approach.

18. Eritrea's resilient effort to combat the global COVID 19 pandemic highlights the centrality of health security to uphold basic human rights. The experience highlights four parameters including the requirements of a pragmatic approach, high discipline, responsible participation and centrality of an effective public health system. The Government developed a comprehensive assessment, identified potential challenges and developed a guideline for managing forthcoming challenges and effects of the Pandemic. This was done a long time before the first case was found at the airport in the capital city Asmara.

19. After the first case, lockdown measures were declared, international borders closed, and air traffic suspended. The public response to the COVID 19 National Guidelines and approach has been strong. The high level of discipline, responsibility by every citizen, successful mobilization and initiatives of the people and resources and pragmatic measures of control

and restrictions that utilized the highly established public health system of the nation and mobilization inherent in the national health system have been the critical drives in the success of containing the dreadful effects of the pandemic.

20. To ensure that the pandemic does not overwhelm or paralyze the country underway within the appropriate social distancing, sanitation requirements, and control mechanisms, the Government
 - exempted vital sectors including productive manufacturing, agriculture and food security, mining, construction of major roads, dams including soil and water conservation projects and the associated supply chains
 - applied multiple control mechanisms so as to avoid speculation in the market and sustain prices at pre pandemic level
 - community mobilization took place by Eritreans abroad and in the country and established COVID-19 Trust Fund; Nationals in the diaspora, in the public service, civil society organizations, NGO's, private investors and parastatal enterprises and raised hundreds of millions of dollars and Nakfa
 - The measures curbed the damage over the economy and strengthened the almost free healthcare system during the challenging times. With the advent of the outbreak, food and basic utilities support for the vulnerable section of the society (elderly, disabled & unemployed) have been revitalized temporarily and subsidy shops scaled up their contribution to alleviate the burden of disadvantaged families in particular.
21. To implement a pragmatic approach, a high level national task force has been charged to oversee the situation with similar arrangements at all levels of governance (regional, sub0regional and local). Preventive measures were administered before the first case was diagnosed and after the first case from an overseas traveller, 'stay at home' directive was enforced. Critical sectors including food security and agriculture, health and water security, essential productive sectors, infrastructure and finance services continued unhindered. The prevalence of the health security system that depends on public health service remains an asset. To mitigate the effects of lockdown in particular, provision of health services in antenatal care, child health, delivery of women, immunization and emergency services remained open as a priority.
22. Leveraging on social capital helped in the mobilization, organization and creation of national capacity. Raising knowledge, consciousness and motivation through all available means provided clear, consistent, and frequent communication upholding discipline and

responsibility. Communal support initiatives to vulnerable groups were organized, generously mobilizing money, resources and assistance from Eritreans at home and abroad.

(For information updated during the finalization of this report, since the end of March 2021 the partial lockdown measure has been lifted, government enterprises started to work at full capacity, transportation service resumed, businesses opened with some arrangements and the informal sector back to business. The lockdown ended as of mid-May 2021, with strict adherence to COVID-19 prevention procedures enforced. As of 21 June 2021, 5421 persons tested positive of whom 4897 (90.4%) fully recovered, 505 hospitalized (9.4%) and 19 deaths. The lockdown ended as of mid-May 2021, with strict adherence to COVID-19 prevention procedures enforced. As of 21 June 2021, 5421 persons have tested positive of whom 4897 (90.4%) fully recovered, 505 hospitalized (9.4%) and 19 deaths.)

23. Overall the effect of the global pandemic is contained. There is however no complacency! Moreover, a national road map outline was declared by the President in his address to the nation on the occasion of the 29th Independence Anniversary on 24 May 2020. It states the vision, praxis and organization as a basis for any long term health emergency preparedness.

4.4. Promote Awareness of the Charter and Duties (Articles 25, 27, 28, 29)

25. As one of the vital instruments on human right, the African Charter follow up and reporting is managed as part of the international/regional architecture for follow up and reporting of human rights ideals and development. Most ministries and National level associations for women, youth, workers and disabled are engaged and report through the coordination and follow up mechanisms on the basic tenets of human rights and the Charter and considerable knowledge, participation and organization has been laid. Through continuous assessment, more effort will be made in the future to expand and consolidate the gains.

V. CONCLUSION

26. The present 2017-2020 Report has outlined the continued effort and progress as well as achievements and challenges in Eritrea's effort to mainstream human rights in the nation building process and reflect the African charter obligations.
27. During the reporting period, new hopes and developments have raised the optimism for a new dawn in the Horn of Africa, and in particular the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace and its impact on the regional dynamics of peace, security and development has been critical in this respect. Significant progress has been achieved despite the ongoing challenges and in particular, the US and its western allies continued threats on Eritrea and obstacles to the subsequent emerging regional dynamics of peace, security and development. Furthermore, the

unwarranted effort to scapegoat Eritrea in the new crisis situation in Ethiopia under the guise of human rights violations in the Tigray crisis is unacceptable.

28. Nonetheless, mainstreaming of human rights is being strengthened and expanded through the systemic approach as reflected in this report. This will underline commitments to human dignity, security and development and will cover all areas of respect, protection and fulfillment of all human and people's rights in all programmes of the Eritrea's National Macro-level Development Framework. In this regard, Eritrea will consolidate engagement and cooperation with the ACHPR and other regional and international organizations on genuine human right issues. This will be an engagement based on dignity and national interest that furthers genuine promotion, respect and protection of human rights. However, it will continue to reject any attempt to politicize human rights for other ulterior motives.

List of Tables and Figures in the Report

Ref	Description	Page
Table 1:	Data on settlements by arbitration	10
Table 2	Distribution of Community policing capacity across regions	10
Table 3	Meetings/seminars and level of public participation	11
Table 4	Health Service to inmates provided by ECRS Health facilities	12
Table 5	Seminars and lectures to inmates provided by experts	14
Table 6	Cases and actions in defending worker's rights	23
Table 7	Data of Eritreans who went for overseas for employment	30
Table 8	Data on Labor Inspections and Measures taken	30
Table 9	Labor Disputes Settled through legal procedures and results	31
Table 10	Number of base unions by number of workers according to gender	31
Table 11	Data: on Collective Agreements by number of workers	31
Fig 12	Coverage of Immunization (DPT3/MCV1), at least one Antenatal Care Attendance (ANC), Delivery at Health Facility (HFD), 1991-2019	
Fig 13	Trend in neonatal, infant and under-five mortality	38
Fig 14	Trend in Maternal Mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	39
Table 15	Data on Enrolment growth	41
Table 16	Number of Teachers and % increase at various levels	42
Table 17	Number of Schools at various levels	42
Table 18	Number of Mother tongue Schools and enrolment levels	43
Table 19	Female participation and enrolment levels	44
Table 20	Gender Parity Index across levels	44
Table 21	Rural Schools and student numbers across levels	45
Table 22	CEE Program: Enrolment, Dropout and Completion by year and sex	46
Table 23	Special Needs Education: Enrolment by year and sex	47
Table 24	IDD Students Enrolment	48
Table 25	School flow rates (comparing 2016/17 & 2018/29, by acad year, gender & levels)	49
Table 26	Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Training	49
Table 27	Enrolment in Adult Literacy and Continuing Education	49
Table 28	Enrolment in Adult Continuing Education	50
Table 29	Enrolment by field of study & gender at the beginning of 2019/20 acad. year	51
Table 30	Enrolment by field of study & level at the beginning of 2019/2020 acad. year	51
Table 31	Gender Representation In Higher Education Enrolment	52
Table 32	Internal Efficiency In Higher Education Enrolment	52
Table 33	Level and Composition of staff In Higher Education Enrolment	53
Table 34	Social Distribution of Children across age and gender	55
Table 35	committees for ensuring women & child rights	56