



Republic of Tunisia
Presidency of the Government
(The Office of the Prime Minister)

**National Commission for the Coordination, Preparation and Submission of Reports
and Follow-up to Recommendations in the Field of Human Rights**

**Initial Report on the Protocol to the African Charter of Rights
Of Men and Peoples on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo
Protocol)**

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1. Tunisia signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa — hereinafter referred to as "the Maputo Protocol" — on January 30, 2015, and ratified it on June 6, 2018, without making any reservations.
2. The present initial report is submitted by Tunisia in accordance with the provisions of article 26 of the Protocol and article 62 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
3. The report presents all the legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures adopted for the full realization of the rights enshrined in the Protocol, for the period from 2018 to 2024.
4. It was developed by the permanent national reporting mechanism, the "National Commission for the Coordination, Drafting and Submission of Reports and Follow-up to Recommendations in the Field of Human Rights¹", using a participatory approach and drawing on the guidelines adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Methodology and process for preparing the report

5. The National Commission for the Coordination, Drafting and Submission of Reports and Follow-up to Recommendations in the Field of Human Rights organized a training workshop on the main standards enshrined in the Protocol for the promotion and protection of women's rights, as well as on the obligations of States parties following their ratification. This workshop was held from 13 to 15 May 2024, with technical support from the Human Rights Centre of the University of Pretoria and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.
6. As part of the participatory approach adopted in the preparation of this report, the National Commission, in collaboration with the same partners, conducted four consultations structured as follows:
 - Two national consultations in Tunis, on 28 June 2024:
 - ✓ A consultation dedicated to children, with the participation of 26 children from Greater Tunis.
 - ✓ A consultation dedicated to young people, with the participation of 20 young people from Greater Tunis.
 - Two regional consultations in Zaghouan, on July 10, 2024:

¹ This commission was established by Government Order No. 1593 of 2015 of 30 October 2015, as amended by Government Order No. 663 of 2016 of 30 May 2016.

- ✓ A consultation dedicated to children, with the participation of 24 children.
 - ✓ A consultation dedicated to young people, with the participation of 33 young people from the districts of Zaghouan, Siliana and Nabeul.
7. The recommendations resulting from these consultations have been annexed to this report (Annex 1).
 8. Drafting workshops were also held from 24 to 26 June 2024, under the supervision of experts from the Pretoria Human Rights Centre and a former Commissioner of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

I: General data on the current situation of women

9. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics and information provided by statistical producing bodies, the Tunisian population in 2021 was about 11.7 million, 50.3% of whom were women.
10. Life expectancy at birth increased in 2022 compared to 2021, reaching 74.7 years for men and 79.3 years for women, compared to 70.8 years and 75.2 years respectively in 2021.
11. The number of births registered in 2021 was 160,268, of which 48.5% were girls. The number of deaths recorded in the same year was 107,006, of which 44.5% were women.
12. The infant mortality rate (per thousand live births) decreased in 2021 compared to 2019, reaching 14.9 for boys and 13.3 for girls, compared to 16.9 and 14.3 respectively in 2019.
13. The number of marriages registered in 2021 was 77,283, compared to 65,630 in 2020 and 83,105 in 2019.
14. In 2018, the number of divorces registered was 14,527, compared to 16,452 in 2017 and 15,632 in 2016.²
15. In the 2022-2023 school year, the enrolment rate for six-year-olds was 99.6% for both girls and boys. For the 6-11 age group, the enrolment rate was 99.7 per cent for girls and 99.6 per cent for boys. For girls aged 12 to 18, the rate was 87.8 per cent, compared with 72 per cent for boys.

² National Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health, p. 18

16. In the 2022-2023 academic year, the number of female students in higher education institutions was 172,227, compared to 88,420 students. Women accounted for more than 66.7% of tertiary education graduates in 2023.
17. In 2023, the employed labour force was 422,300 people. The activity rate for women remains lower than that of men (28.1 per cent compared to 71.8 per cent), while the unemployment rate for women is 16.1 per cent, compared with 13.1 per cent for men.
18. The rate of women's affiliation to the National Pension and Social Insurance Fund increased in 2021, reaching 17.3% compared to 12.3% in 2020. Similarly, the rate of women's affiliation to the National Social Security Fund has increased, reaching 35.2% compared to 25.3% in 2020.
19. The health coverage rate for women in 2021 was 82.8%, compared to 74.5% for men.
20. In the area of politics and participation in decision-making, although women accounted for 37.6 per cent of the civil service, they constituted only 6.9 per cent of the holders of ministerial secretaries-general, director-generals or equivalent positions. In the last parliamentary elections, women accounted for 16.2 per cent of the members of the first parliamentary chamber (Assembly of People's Representatives) and 13 per cent of the second chamber (National Council of Regions and Districts).
21. The report contains several statistics illustrating the situation of women in various fields.

II: General legal framework relating to women's rights

• Constitution of 25 July 2022

22. The Constitution adopted in 2022 imposes on the State the obligation to guarantee citizens the rights and freedoms, both individual and collective, and to ensure them the conditions for a dignified life (Article 22). It enshrines equality between citizens in rights and duties, affirming their equality before the law without any form of discrimination (Article 23). It also recognizes the right to work for every citizen, and enjoins the State to take the necessary measures to guarantee this right on the basis of competence and equity (Article 46, paragraph 1), under decent conditions and in return for fair remuneration (Article 46, paragraph 2).
23. Article 51 of the said Constitution is specifically dedicated to women's rights. It stipulates that the State undertakes to preserve, strengthen and develop the achievements of women's rights (paragraph 1). It guarantees equal opportunities for women and men in the exercise of responsibilities and in all spheres (paragraph 2), works to achieve parity in elected assemblies (paragraph 3), and takes the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women (paragraph 4).
24. Other constitutional provisions enshrined political rights for women, including the right to stand as a candidate in legislative elections (article 58) and the right to run for the presidency of the Republic (article 89), which was granted to all Tunisians.

• International Conventions Ratified

25. The Republic of Tunisia has ratified the majority of international human rights instruments, and in particular those on women's rights, including:

- The Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1968)
 - The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1968)
 - The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1968)
 - The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1969)
 - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985) and its Optional Protocol (2008)
 - Convention No. 89 of the International Labour Organization (1948) concerning Night Work of Women (ratified in 1957), and its Additional Protocol (1992)
 - ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) (ratified in 1968)
 - ILO Equal Treatment in Workers' Compensation Convention, 1925 (No. 1925) (ratified in 1956)
 - ILO Convention No. 111 (1958) concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (ratified in 1959)
 - The Convention on the Establishment of the Arab Women's Organization (2001)
 - The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)
26. In 2011, Tunisia formally announced the withdrawal of its declaration and reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), through Decree No. 103 of 24 October 2011. The ratification procedures were finalized with the deposit of an official notification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 23 April 2014.
27. The Council of Europe also approved Tunisia's application to accede to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Ratification processes are currently underway.
- **Legislation and regulations**
28. The national legal framework on women's rights has been the subject of particular attention since the promulgation of the Personal Status Code in 1956. This text abolished polygamy, set a minimum legal age for marriage, abolished the father's right to coerce in the marriage of his daughter, and introduced judicial divorce.
29. This Code has been considered a pioneering advance in the Arab-Muslim world, due to its progressive interpretation of religious texts and its use of *ijtihad* (*Effort to understand and interpret the Qur'an and Sharia*). It laid the foundation for subsequent legislation to ensure equality between women and men in the areas of economic, social, civil and political rights, personal status, the fight against violence, and others. The table in Appendix 2 details the main laws and regulations in this area.

• **Implementation of the Protocol in the domestic legal order**

30. Article 74, paragraph 4, of the Constitution provides that "treaties ratified by the President of the Republic and approved by the Assembly of the Representatives of the People have a higher authority than the laws and less than that of the Constitution". Thus, Tunisian law recognizes ratified international instruments, including those relating to human rights, and integrates them into its domestic legal order, giving them primacy over national laws, subject to their conformity with the Constitution. In the event of a conflict between a domestic law and a ratified international convention, the courts may apply the provisions of that convention directly, with the exception of instruments requiring specific national legislation on criminalisation and sanctions. Individuals may also invoke the provisions of these conventions before national courts, including specialised courts.
31. Several judgments handed down by Tunisian courts have enshrined women's rights in perfect coherence with the Maputo Protocol. The following table provides illustrative examples of these decisions.

Purpose of the judgment	Number and date of the judgment	Summary of the content of the judgment
Violence against women	Judgment No. 91104 of 10 January 2020	The court considered that, contrary to the pleas raised by the applicant, the deletion of the fourth paragraph of Article 218 of the Tunisian Penal Code, carried out by Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women, has the effect of depriving the victim of any impact on the conduct of the proceedings and on the assessment of the penalty incurred. This legislative change is part of the recognition that offences of gender-based violence are detrimental to social public order.
The right to education	The judgment of the Administrative Court No. 12200338 of December 16, 2021	The court considered that the failure of the administration concerned to exhaust all the means and procedures likely to enable the execution of the judicial decision ordering the suspension of the administrative act issued by the director of the college — an act refusing to enrol the pupil — until the delivery of the judgment in the main case, and the fact of relying on the existence of an allegedly insurmountable legal obstacle, reflect a manifest failure to fulfil its obligation to perform. This deficiency is all the more serious because judicial decisions with suspensive effect are, by nature, marked by urgency and certainty.
The right to a healthy environment	Interim order issued by the Administrative Court in case No.	The court recognised that, since it is apparent from the expert report ordered by the investigating judge that the landfill at issue is located in the immediate vicinity of residential and industrial areas, that it constitutes a source of harmful fumes and odour nuisances, and that it is likely to cause

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	6300110 of 23 June 2021	dermatological and respiratory diseases as well as contamination of the water table and soil by toxic pathogens, The municipality should be ordered to implement, without delay, the urgent and necessary measures recommended in the said report, with a view to limiting the serious environmental risks.
Trafficking in women (economic exploitation)	Order to close the investigation issued by the investigating judge of the Court of First Instance of Sfax in case No. 2/46655 of April 30, 2018	The investigating judge considered that the defendant's exploitation of his daughter in begging activities brought together, in the present case, the two constituent elements of the material aspect of the offence of trafficking in persons of which the victim is a child. This classification is based on the fact that the minor was transported in order to force her to beg, as well as on the proven state of vulnerability resulting from her young age and physical disability. In addition, the defendant manifestly intended to make a material profit from the said situation.
Co-parental responsibility in the care of children	The decision of the Court of Cassation No. 65963 of December 11, 2019	The court considered that it is not disputed that the father has the duty to provide for the needs of his minor children, which the legislator enshrined in the Personal Status Code, which in turn recognized the wife's contribution to the expenses. It also considered that the wife's contribution to maintenance does not relieve the husband of his duty, so that he remains obliged to do so.
Affirmative action (women with disabilities)	The judgment of first instance rendered by the administrative court in case No. 155703 dated June 28, 2019.	The court recognized that the harmonization by the State of its laws and regulatory arrangements with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which it has acceded, remains insufficient to ensure effective protection of the rights of this category. It is therefore incumbent on the Commission to implement concrete and effective measures, in particular those aimed at facilitating the mobility of persons with disabilities in the field of air transport, at an affordable cost.
Purpose of the decision	Number and date of the judgment	Summary of the content of the judgment
Equal Employment Opportunity	The judgment rendered by the Administrative Court in case No. 12200256 of July 8, 2021.	The court affirmed that the administration, in the context of the organisation of competitions for the recruitment of its staff, is required to ensure the implementation of all measures guaranteeing the impartiality and objectivity of all the members of the selection committees or selection boards that it appoints, with a view to ensuring equal treatment between candidates.

Wife's rights after divorce	The decision of the Court of Cassation No. 2018.66779 of January 9, 2019	The court held that the husband's financial situation remains the fundamental criterion to be considered in determining the standard of living to which the wife was accustomed during her life with her children, with a view to equitably determining the amount of the subsistence allowance, child maintenance and housing allowance, having regard to their interests.
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III: Information on the implementation of the provisions of the Maputo Protocol

1. Equality and non-discrimination

1.1 Elimination of Discrimination (Article 2)

Has. At the constitutional and legislative level

32. The Constitution of 25 July 2022 explicitly enshrines the principle of equality and non-discrimination against women through its article 21, which states that "citizens are equal in rights and duties, and are equal before the law without any discrimination".
33. Several pieces of legislation reaffirm this principle, including the Civil Service Act (section 11) and the Labour Code (section 5 bis), which clearly state that there is no gender distinction in the application of these laws.
34. Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women introduces for the first time an explicit definition of discrimination against women. Article 3 defines it as *any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing the recognition of women's human rights and freedoms, on the basis of complete and effective equality, in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural fields, or of impairing such recognition or the enjoyment or exercise of these rights by women, regardless of colour, race, religion, thought, age, nationality, economic and social conditions, marital status, state of health, language or disability* ".
35. This definition is inspired by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and adds that "positive measures aimed at accelerating gender equality shall not be considered discriminatory".
36. In addition to the definition, the Act provides for criminal penalties for those who discriminate, ranging from fines to imprisonment, depending on the consequences of the discriminatory behaviour (Articles 19 and 21).
37. The Tunisian legislative framework also incorporates the notion of intersectional discrimination, in particular through Organic Law No. 50 of 2018, dated October 23, 2018, on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.
38. Aware of the need to harmonize the legal system with constitutional requirements and international and regional human rights standards, including women's rights, Tunisia established, by Government Decree No. 1196 of 2019 dated December 24, 2019, a "National Commission for

the Harmonization of Human Rights Legal Texts with Constitutional Provisions and Ratified International Conventions" placed under the authority of the Presidency of the Government. This commission has drawn up a map of discriminatory provisions requiring compliance, including those relating to women's rights.

39. Several measures have been adopted in recent years to strengthen the principle of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender in various areas, including:

- Organic Law No. 22 of 11 March 2024 amending and supplementing Law No. 27 of 1993 on the National Identity Card, which enshrines equality between parents in the authorization given to the minor child to obtain the said card, removes the mention of the profession in order to avoid discrimination against unemployed or widowed women, and allows for the optional inclusion of data relating to the spouse, whether husband or wife.
- Organic Law No. 46 of 2015 of 23 November 2015 amending Law No. 40 of 1975 on Passports and Travel Documents, which authorizes both parents to issue travel documents and authorize their children to travel.
- Law No. 55 of 1 December 2010 amending certain provisions of the Tunisian Nationality Code, Article 6 of which (new) stipulates that "a child born of a Tunisian father or a Tunisian mother is Tunisian".
- Act No. 17 of 7 February 2000 of 7 February 2000 repealing certain provisions of the Code of Obligations and Contracts relating to the requirement of the husband's consent for his wife to engage in a professional activity.
- The lifting of the ban on the marriage of a Tunisian Muslim woman to a non-Muslim, enshrined in the Minister of Justice's circular No. 216 of 1973, repealed by a new circular in September 2017. The Ministries of Local Affairs and Foreign Affairs have also rescinded all circulars restricting women's freedom to choose their spouses.

B. At the institutional level

40. Tunisia has an adequate institutional framework responsible for implementing national guidelines for the protection of women's rights and the promotion of their status.

- **Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly**

41. Decree No. 2020 of 2003 of 22 September 2003 defines the responsibilities of the Ministry, which is responsible for implementing government policy in the fields of women, family and children, paying special attention to women and children with "special needs", providing information services relating to these groups, to conduct research and studies in these areas, and to supervise institutions working in the same sectors.

42. Under Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women, the Ministry is also responsible for receiving reports and data from other ministries and public agencies, transmitting them to the National Observatory to Combat Violence against Women, and ensuring coordination between the various institutional actors involved in this area.

- **Regional Delegations for Women and Family Affairs**

43. Created by Decree No. 4063 of 2013 of 16 September 2013, amended by Decree No. 3673 of 2014 of 3 October 2014, these delegations are established in each district of the Republic. They represent the Ministry at the regional level, participate in the committees concerned by their field of intervention, implement ministerial policy in coordination with local and regional authorities, and monitor the programmes of associations benefiting from ministerial subsidies.

- **Regional coordination to combat violence against women**

44. These structures were created in application of the intersectoral agreement for the care of women victims of violence, concluded in January 2018 between the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Health, Social Affairs, and Women, Family, Children and the Elderly. They bring together representatives from the front-line sectors (justice, security, health, social affairs, women and family), as well as relevant local associations. Other partners may be associated depending on regional specificities. Since 2023, these coordinations have been attached to the National Observatory for the Fight against Violence against Women.

45. Regional coordination is a mechanism for networking at the local level, facilitating the exchange of data between stakeholders, the monitoring of the implementation of laws and sectoral procedures, and the resolution of difficulties hindering victims' access to services and adequate protection. They are also responsible for the development of joint regional programmes for the implementation of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, the monitoring of their implementation, the collection and dissemination of regional statistics on violence against women and the care of victims. They hold regular meetings to discuss cases requiring a coordinated response, with the aim of improving synergy between actors and overcoming obstacles.

- **Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF)**

46. CREDIF was established by Act No. 121 of 29 December 1992 of 1992, and its organization was established by Decree No. 1205 of 31 May 1999. The mission of the Centre is to promote studies and research on the status of women, to collect information, data and documents relating to the situation of women, to ensure their dissemination, to develop communication that values their rights, to broaden the areas of their participation and to combat sexist stereotypes. It also provides advice and guidance to ministries and agencies upon request on women's issues.

47. Among its structures, the centre houses the "Observatory for Gender and Equal Opportunities", which is responsible for monitoring the evolution of the situation of women through the collection of gender-disaggregated statistical data and indicators in five fundamental areas: demographic data, education and training, employment, health, public life and politics.

48. The observatory reformulates and analyses data according to a gender-based approach, and makes them available to users through its publications and specific studies on qualitative aspects that cannot be understood by quantitative indicators alone.

49. With the aim of promoting gender equality in the management of local affairs, the centre initiated in 2015 the establishment of a "National Committee to Support Gender Equality in the Management of Local Affairs", which has implemented several training programmes and awareness-raising activities in this area.

• **Peer Council for Equity and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**

50. This council was established by Government Decree No. 626 of 2016 dated May 25, 2016. It is chaired by the Head of Government, and may be replaced by the Minister responsible for women's affairs.
51. It is composed of representatives of the Presidency of the Republic, the Presidency of the Government, the Assembly of People's Representatives, the High Authority for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the National Office for the Family and Population, CREDIF, the National Youth Observatory, the National Institute of Statistics, as well as four representatives of associations working for the empowerment of women and the head of the gender approach within each ministry.
52. The Council works mainly to integrate the gender approach into planning, evaluation and budgeting, with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination between women and men and achieving equality in rights and duties. To this end, it is responsible for:
- Develop the National Plan for the Integration of the Gender Approach
 - Approve the annual sectoral implementation plans of the National Plan and ensure their monitoring and evaluation
 - Identify obstacles to gender mainstreaming and propose legislative, regulatory and administrative reforms to overcome them
 - Develop a national gender training programme
 - Draft annual monitoring reports on the National Plan, including quantitative and qualitative indicators on women's empowerment in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres
 - To issue an opinion on draft legislation on women's rights submitted by the Head of Government

• **National Observatory to Combat Violence against Women**

53. Article 40 of Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women provides for the establishment of the "National Observatory to Combat Violence against Women". Its administrative and financial organization as well as its operating procedures were set by Government Decree No. 126 of 2020 of 25 February 2020, which specifies in its article 2 that the observatory is a public institution of an administrative nature, with legal personality and financial autonomy, placed under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of women's affairs.
54. The observatory's responsibilities include identifying and documenting cases of violence against women, monitoring the implementation of relevant legislation and policies, conducting academic and field research, contributing to the development of national strategies and guidelines,

cooperating with civil society organisations and relevant constitutional bodies, and to provide advice on training and qualification programmes for those involved in this field.

• **Centers for the care of women and children victims of violence**

55. These centers were established by Government Decree No. 582 of 2020 of August 14, 2020 on centers for the care of women and children victims of violence. They can be created and managed by legally constituted associations active in the fields of women's rights, children's rights, the family or human rights in general. They may also be created at the initiative of the State or local authorities within the framework of partnership agreements with the above-mentioned associations.
56. These centres mainly provide care services for women and children who are victims of violence, in accordance with the legislation in force, including Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 and the Child Protection Code.

• **National Office for Family and Population**

57. The Office was established by Act No. 70 of 6 August 1984 of 1984, as amended by Act No. 1 of 1987 of 13 January 1987. It is a public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.
58. Within the framework of the Government's policy on human urbanization and the promotion of the family, the Office is responsible for several missions, including awareness-raising, training and care in reproductive health and family planning, with particular emphasis on contraceptive methods, premarital consultations, pregnancy and postpartum monitoring, early detection of breast and cervical cancer, the fight against infertility and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the health of young people from adolescence to marriage.
59. The Office carries out its missions through its central services and its 24 regional delegations, which have 36 reproductive health centres.

• **The alimony and divorce pension guarantee fund**

60. The fund was established by Act No. 65 of 5 July 1993 of 5 July 1993 on the establishment of the Maintenance and Divorce Pensions Guarantee Fund. It ensures the payment of the amounts due in respect of alimony or divorce pension to divorced women and their children, when the final court decisions in their favour cannot be enforced due to the debtor's insolvency, upon application to the fund.

• **Regional committees for the social protection of women agricultural workers**

61. These committees were created by Decree No. 4 of 2024 of October 22, 2022 on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers. They are set up within each regional directorate of social affairs and bring together representatives of the various ministries and structures concerned. They are responsible for assessing the feasibility and selecting projects to be implemented to promote the economic integration of women agricultural workers.

- **Social Protection Fund for Agricultural Workers**

62. This fund is provided for by Decree No. 4 of 2024 of October 22, 2022 on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, and was established by Law No. 48 of 2024 of December 9, 2024 on the Finance Law for the year 2025. It covers expenditure related to programmes, interventions and mechanisms aimed at the economic integration and social protection of women agricultural workers.

- **National Anti-Trafficking Authority**

63. This body was established by Organic Law No. 61 of 2016, dated August 3, 2016, on the prevention and fight against trafficking in persons. Attached to the Ministry of Justice, it is entrusted with several missions, including the development of a national strategy to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, the receipt of reports relating to trafficking operations and their transmission to the competent courts, as well as the collection of data, information and statistics with a view to building a database used in the performance of its missions. It is also responsible for raising awareness of the dangers of trafficking in persons through awareness-raising campaigns, cultural and educational programmes, the organization of conferences and seminars, the publication of newsletters and guides, the holding of training sessions, and the supervision of capacity-building programmes at the national and international levels in the areas within its scope of action.

- **Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication**

64. This authority was established by Decree No. 116 of 2011, dated 2 November 2011, on the freedom of audiovisual communication and the creation of an independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication.
65. It shall enjoy legal personality and financial autonomy, and shall carry out its tasks in complete independence, without interference from any party whatsoever likely to influence its members or its activities. It is responsible for ensuring the guarantee of the freedom and plurality of audiovisual communication.
66. In addition to its advisory powers, the authority exercises regulatory and decision-making functions, particularly in terms of the organisation and regulation of the audiovisual landscape, in accordance with several principles, including that of "the establishment of a pluralistic, diversified and balanced audiovisual media landscape, enshrining the values of freedom, justice and the rejection of any discrimination based on origin, sex or religion".

- **Committee on Health, Women's Affairs, Family, Social Affairs and Persons with Disabilities in the Assembly of People's Representatives**

67. The creation of this standing committee was provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of People's Representatives, dated May 2, 2023. It is a member of the thirteen standing committees of the Parliament.
68. It is competent to examine projects, proposals and questions relating to health, social protection, social security, industrial relations, women's affairs, the family, children's affairs, the elderly and disabled persons. It has the right of access to all required files and documents, and may, in the context of the in-depth examination of the subjects submitted to it, seek the opinion of any person deemed relevant.
69. The committee may also request to hear a member of the government or an official of a public body or institution.
70. It endeavours to interact with proposals from civil society via the dedicated electronic platform, and may invite specialised organisations and associations to participate in hearing sessions.

• **Standing committees in municipal and regional councils**

71. Article 210 of Organic Law No. 29 of 9 May 2018 on the Local Government Code provides that the municipal council, as soon as it is installed, establishes an appropriate number of standing committees, at least four, responsible for examining issues submitted to the council, which must include areas such as women's affairs, of the family, equity and equal opportunities between the sexes.
72. In the same spirit, article 308 of the same text stipulates that the regional council shall constitute eleven standing committees, including one called the "Commission for Equity and Equal Opportunities between the Sexes".

C. Gender mainstreaming

• **Gender-responsive budgeting**

73. The Organic Law on the Budget No. 15 for the year 2019, dated February 13, 2019, and more specifically paragraph 4 of its Article 18, constitutes the basis for the adoption of the gender-sensitive budget. It stipulates that the programme manager "shall draw up the budget on the basis of objectives and indicators guaranteeing equity and equal opportunities between women and men, and more generally between all categories of society, without discrimination".
74. This approach was also enshrined in Organic Law No. 29 of 2018 on the Local Government Code, in particular through its Article 156, which provides that local authorities "allocate credits in their annual budgets according to missions and programmes intended for the implementation of the development plan and development plans, taking into account compulsory expenditure and the need to ensure social justice and equal opportunities between the sexes, on the basis of available statistical data".

75. Since 2019, the circulars of the Head of Government relating to the development of the State's annual budgets have called on the various ministries to integrate the gender approach into their budgets. These circulars adopted a gradual approach, leading to the generalization of this approach in the 2021 budget, and the inclusion of a gender sheet in the structuring of each ministry's annual performance projects in the 2023 budget.
76. In 2023, 19 ministries out of a total of 25 were able to develop their gender sheets, bringing to 23 the number of ministries engaged in the gender-sensitive budget process for the year 2024.
77. The services of the Ministry of Finance, in coordination with the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly, developed a series of guides and references between 2020 and 2024 to support ministries in the implementation of the gender-responsive budget.
78. All the policy documents were published on the website of the Ministry of Finance, as well as the annual project scorecards of the ministries concerned, and transmitted to the Assembly of People's Representatives as an annex to the draft finance law for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, in accordance with Article 46³ of Organic Law No. 15 of the year 2019.
79. In 2023, the Ministry of Finance proceeded with the structuring and definition of the components of the gender-sensitive budget ranking.
80. A central nucleus has been formed, bringing together the main stakeholders in the implementation of the gender-sensitive budget, including representatives of the Council of Peers, budget management units by objectives, managers of the State budget, representatives of programme managers, with the mission of strengthening their capacities in this area.
81. The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly, has launched the development of a national report on the gender-responsive budget, under the supervision of a steering committee established within the Ministry of Finance. This committee brings together the Ministries of Finance, Family, Education, Higher Education, Justice, the Interior, Health, Social Affairs and the Environment. The report is intended to be transmitted to the Assembly of the Representatives of the People as an annex to the budget documents.

• **Mainstreaming the gender approach**

³ www.gbo.tn

82. With a view to mainstreaming the gender approach, the Peer Council for Equity and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has been set up (see paragraph 50 et seq. of this report).
83. To implement this mission, the Council of Peers has developed a "National Plan for the Integration and Institutionalization of the Gender Approach", following training sessions scheduled and implemented in order to strengthen the capacities of government structures and civil society organizations in the integration of the gender approach in planning, programming, budgets and statistical systems.
84. The Head of Government personally attended a training session on the gender approach, alongside all the members of the government, in order to appropriate the methodological foundations of this approach, with a view to integration into global public policies.
85. The Council of Peers adopted the "National Plan for the Integration and Institutionalization of the Gender Approach" on 20 April 2018, and it was approved by the Government on 21 June 2018.
86. The main benefits of the plan are as follows:
 - Establishment of an accountability system to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in law and practice
 - Strengthening women's representation and participation in elected bodies and decision-making bodies at the national, regional and local levels
 - Policies to ensure women's economic and financial empowerment, the right to decent work and fair remuneration
 - Public policies, development plans and budgets integrating the gender approach
 - Development of a national communication plan on the gender approach
 - The Ministry of Women's Affairs monitors the preparation and implementation of this plan, in coordination with all the structures concerned, which are responsible for drawing up annual sectoral implementation plans.

D. Revision of social standards

88. Since 2002, the Tunisian government has introduced several reforms in the field of education, aimed at adapting school curricula and pedagogical tools through the integration of the principles of gender equality and human rights, in particular through specific modules in civic education on women's rights and the Tunisian reformist approach in this area. Content related to human rights and fundamental freedoms has also been integrated into all higher education institutions, in recognition of their role in raising awareness of the principles of gender equity and equal opportunities.
89. Since 2011, the media sector has undergone major transformations, including the dissolution of the Ministry of Communication, the restructuring of several media outlets, and the creation of private media outlets.

90. In this context, the specifications published by the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication, relating to the granting of licences for the creation and operation of private or associative radio or television stations, require beneficiaries to respect fundamental principles, including the "protection of women's rights and the breaking with stereotypes concerning them in the media". in order to promote a balanced audiovisual landscape.
91. Paragraph 2 of Article 11 of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the Elimination of Violence against Women prohibits the advertising and dissemination of media content containing stereotypes, scenes, comments or acts that damage the image of women, trivializing or legitimizing violence against them. and this, on all media and media channels.
92. As part of its partnership with civil society, the Ministry of Women's Affairs signed an agreement in 2014 with the Arab Institute for Human Rights to launch an awareness-raising campaign entitled "Tunisian Women, National Competence", aimed at promoting women's skills in all fields, and combating devaluing and stereotypical representations. and to encourage voters to support women committed to the values of equality, freedom and the universal principles of human rights during elections.
93. Numerous partnership programmes have been implemented with civil society components and international and regional organizations to disseminate and teach the culture of human rights. These programs target a variety of audiences: children, youth, men and women, in both urban and rural settings.
94. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has intensified its awareness-raising activities on the central role of women, including through the production of spots broadcast on several national public and private channels.
95. CREDIF has set up a monitoring mechanism to monitor the media coverage of women's issues in the written press. In this context, he carried out a study on "the media treatment of violence against women in the written press" and another on "the media treatment of women's political participation in 2019". These studies were accompanied by training sessions for journalists, aimed at presenting the results and encouraging them to deal with women's issues objectively, avoiding stereotypes and pre-established patterns.
96. CREDIF also conducts awareness campaigns to deconstruct stereotypes, including its latest Facebook campaign against cyberharassment against women: " هَاؤُ وَجْهِي – This is my face", claiming that women are not required to conform to the image that society imposes on them. This initiative is a follow-up to the study on online gender-based violence. Other campaigns will be launched depending on the results of the studies resulting from the monitoring mechanism.
97. As a continuation of efforts to reform the social and cultural norms that underpin discrimination, a positive parenting programme was launched in 2020, aimed in particular at raising awareness among parents of the need to change discriminatory practices against girls, particularly during early childhood.
98. In the same spirit, youth-friendly spaces have been created within the 24 regional delegations of the National Office for Family and Population, contributing to the promotion of the culture of human rights and gender equality among adolescents and young people.

99. It should be stressed that, despite all these efforts, the main challenge remains the low level of media coverage of issues relating to women's rights and their contribution to public life. The presence of women in media content remains limited, whether in television or radio debate programmes, or in journalistic investigations. This reflects a low level of appropriation by media professionals of the gender approach and the principle of equal opportunities between the sexes. Moreover, the feminization of the media sector has not necessarily led to better access for women to decision-making positions in the media.
100. The low participation of women in leadership positions in political parties and trade union structures has also contributed to the predominance of male discourse in media spaces, regardless of the issues addressed.

Access to justice, including legal aid and training for law enforcement officials (Article 8)

A. Access to Justice

95. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has implemented a programme to sensitize women from various backgrounds to their human rights. Since 2011, a programme to promote citizenship among rural women has been implemented in partnership with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. In addition, the action plans of the family guidance and counselling centres, the centres for the protection of women victims of violence and the listening and guidance centres include a number of activities in the area of legal advice, in collaboration with associations working in this field.
96. As part of the "Moussawat" (Equality) programme, implemented in partnership with the European Union and UN Women, the Ministry has developed a legal advice guide for women victims of violence, and organized numerous training sessions for stakeholders, including regional women's affairs delegates, to enable them to transmit legal information to women, especially in rural areas.
97. Legal advice activities have been strengthened, particularly following the adoption of Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women. Articles 4 (item 6) and 13 of the Act expressly stipulate that the State is obliged to provide legal advice to women victims of violence and to guarantee them access to legal aid.
98. To this end, the Ministry has drawn up an annotated guide to the above-mentioned organic law, with a view to clarifying its provisions and standardizing its application. Training sessions have been organized to ensure its effective implementation. A Braille version of the law has also been made available to visually impaired women, so that they can access and use it when needed.
99. In the same vein, the institution of the judicial council, which is present in each court of first instance, is an essential mechanism for guaranteeing the right to legal advice. The judicial counsellor (assistant to the public prosecutor) is on duty every day during administrative hours, welcomes women victims of violence, listens to them and directs them to the appropriate legal and judicial channels to prosecute the perpetrator, defend their rights and protect their interests.
100. A representative of the military prosecutor's office has also been appointed to provide judicial advice for the benefit of military personnel, including military women or military workers who are victims of gender-based violence.

101. Efforts are being made to further strengthen judicial and administrative counselling within the courts, including women victims of violence. This orientation is included in the 2023–2025 Sectoral Plan for the Reform of the Judicial and Prison System, within the framework of Strategic Objective No. 5 on facilitating access to justice, as part of the first strategic axis.
102. In partnership with international actors, a project entitled "Facilitating women's access to justice and supporting them in claiming their rights", funded by the Dutch government, has been launched. This project aims to facilitate women's access to justice, particularly survivors of gender-based violence. Activities focus on capacity building and opening dialogue around the main obstacles hindering women's access to justice. The project was implemented in the districts of Tunis and Kef, which were selected for the pilot phase. Currently, the "Social Support and Legal Aid" project is being implemented. In addition to identifying potential beneficiaries of legal aid in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, on the basis of its classification systems, in particular the "Amen" system, it aims to set up legal aid offices in the courts of first instance.
103. With regard to the development of independent spaces within the courts to accommodate victims of violence against women and the children accompanying them, the Ministry of Justice is working to generalize these facilities so that they comply with international standards and adapt to the specific needs of this vulnerable population. Since the entry into force of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, in February 2018, which provides for the creation of independent spaces for the reception of women victims of violence, ten family spaces have been set up out of a total of twenty-eight planned. Orientation panels have been programmed to equip the courts, and training has been provided to reception workers on how to care for women victims of violence.

B. Legal aid

104. Act No. 52 of 3 June 2002 on the granting of legal aid allows litigants who do not have the necessary resources to request that the State cover the costs of proceedings, whether in criminal or civil matters, and whether they are plaintiffs or defendants. In order to further facilitate access to justice, the Ministry of Justice's sectoral plan provides for the revision of the Act.
105. In view of the special situation of victims of certain offences, such as terrorist acts or violence against women, which can give rise to high legal costs, the State guarantees them access to compulsory legal aid.
106. Pursuant to the provisions of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, the courts issued 2,996 decisions to grant legal aid to women victims of violence.
104. It should be noted that this mechanism has also been strengthened in the context of administrative litigation, through Law No. 3 of 2011, dated 3 January 2011, on legal aid before the administrative court.

C. Training of Law Enforcement Officers

108. Training is a fundamental pillar of intervention programs for all law enforcement officers. The training structures under the Ministry of the Interior have included in their in-service training programmes several modules for the heads of judicial police brigades, their deputies, the heads of units specializing in the investigation of violence against women and children, heads of police

stations and their assistants, and officers in charge of judicial investigations. Hours of classes were devoted to human rights, and basic training programmes were implemented on fundamental rights and public freedoms in the context of security work, in accordance with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

109. A network of trainers of trainers has been established, and unified teaching kits have been developed for police and national guard academies. A specific subject has been introduced into the in-service training programmes for the specialised units (specialisation phase), and field visits have been organised to the structures responsible for dealing with cases of violence against women (see annex 3).
110. With regard to the training of magistrates, clerks and officials of the Ministry of Justice, several training sessions, symposia and awareness-raising meetings have been organized as part of a cooperation programme with the International Organization for Development Law (IDLO), targeting the main actors in the judicial sector, such as judges and lawyers.
111. Training workshops have been held for judicial stakeholders, including magistrates, lawyers, clerks, civil servants, bailiffs, police officers, as well as local government officials and civil society representatives, with the aim of strengthening their capacity to implement the legal aid plan.
112. As part of the cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and the "Programme of Support for Justice Reform for Human Rights Capacity Building", and in application of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, several training sessions and study days were organized on gender-related issues (see Annex No. 4).
113. The Higher Institute of the Judiciary organized, between 2018 and 2020, several meetings and training activities, including the continuous training of magistrates and the basic training of judicial auditors. These activities covered many themes related to human rights, with particular attention paid to the issue of violence against women. In this context, the judicial auditors have written several briefs from the period 2018–2019 to date. In addition, a series of lectures was given in 2023, focusing on violence against women, gender issues, equality and children's rights (see annex 5).
114. For its part, the General Directorate of Prisons and Reintegration is training new officers and retraining managers and civil servants in the field of human rights. This subject is permanently integrated into all the training courses provided at the National School of Prisons and Reintegration, both at the level of leadership and operational functions, the acquisition of skills and specialization. Dynamic training sessions have also been organized within the prison and rehabilitation units, focusing on the modalities of care for vulnerable populations.
115. The fight against violence against women has been introduced as a permanent subject in the initial and applied training programme for officers who have graduated from the Military Academy, officer cadets and directly recruited officers. Study days have also been scheduled as part of continuing education, in collaboration with the Directorate General of National Security Training (see annex No. 6).

3.1 Participation in political life and decision-making positions (Article 9)

116. The National Plan for the Integration and Institutionalization of Gender includes a focus on strengthening women's participation in political life and in the management of public affairs. It also includes, as part of the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1315 on "Women, Peace and Security", a specific component relating to women's participation in political life and governance, with a view to preserving peace, resolving conflicts and combating terrorism.
117. Tunisia is the first Arab and African country to have recognized and criminalized political violence against women, as a specific form of violence, in accordance with Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women, thus going beyond international legal instruments.
118. In October 2019, the Arab Network of Women in Elections was founded in Tunis, with the aim of promoting Arab women's participation in political and electoral life. On the occasion of the parliamentary elections of 17 December 2022, the network launched a national campaign to encourage women's participation, with the support of the Arab Organization of Electoral Management Bodies, as part of a regional campaign entitled "Her participation is our future".
119. The Independent High Authority for Elections has produced awareness-raising capsules to provide Tunisians with all the information related to the electoral deadlines, with a particular focus on updating the electoral register and rural women.
120. Political violence against women has been included in the Guide to Election Campaign Rules and Procedures, as one of the offences to be monitored by campaign control officers, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 on the Elimination of Violence against Women⁴.
121. The National Union of Tunisian Women is making efforts to encourage women to register at polling centers, including through the organization of a mock election for learners at the Adult Education Center in May 2023, in coordination with the Independent High Authority for Elections.
122. In 2021, CREDIF launched a digital campaign under the slogan "Politics is not just for men", to highlight the importance of women's involvement in political life. In 2019, it also set up the

⁴ Guide to the rules and procedures of the electoral campaign for the 2022 legislative elections, pp. 7 and 32.

"Political Academy" to strengthen the presence of women in the central structures of parties, in regional coordinations, and to develop mechanisms to promote women's alliances in the political field.

123. These efforts have resulted in near-parity between women and men in voter registration. In the first round of the legislative elections on 17 December 2022, the total number of registered voters in the interior of the country was 8,981,476, 51% of whom were women. For the second round, held on January 29, 2023, the number of registered voters was 7,853,447, 49% of whom were women.
124. The number of women elected to the Assembly of the Representatives of the People is 25, compared to 128 men, representing a female representation of 16.2 per cent.
125. For the elections to the National Council of Regions and Districts (second parliamentary chamber), 77 deputies were elected to represent the five regions of Tunisia, including 10 women, i.e. a proportion of 13%.
126. In the presidential election of October 6, 2024, the participation rate of women reached 42%, compared to 58% for men.
127. With regard to access to higher positions, the last five years have been marked by the adoption of several circulars and decisions enshrining the principle of equal opportunities, in particular:
- The Circular of the Head of Government No. 20 of 15 September 2020 on the procedures for appointment to senior civilian functions, requiring the proposal of three candidates for each position, taking into account the gender approach;
 - Circular No. 22 of 25 September 2023 on the development of training plans for the years 2024–2026, enshrining the principle of equal opportunities in the participation of agents.
128. Decisions have also been taken to organize training sessions for administrative managers at the Administrative Leadership Institute of the National School of Administration, stipulating that the ministries and structures concerned must propose two candidates (one woman and one man), the choice of the participant being based on the principle of parity.
129. In October 2024, the government has 7 women out of a total of 30 members (ministers and secretaries of state), i.e. a female representation of 23.33%.
130. It should be noted that a woman became Prime Minister for the first time (October 2021 – July 2023), a woman served as Secretary General of the Government (2021–2022), and another was appointed Director of the Office of the Head of Government (October 2023 – August 2024). Women magistrates regularly headed the Ministry of Justice, and women were appointed to head technical ministries such as Finance, Equipment, Housing, Trade, Environment, Economy, Planning and Industry.
131. With regard to the representation of women in judicial institutions and law enforcement structures, in 2024 there were 1,332 female magistrates, of whom 349 belonged to the third grade, representing a proportion of 26.20 per cent of women in senior judicial positions. It should be noted that, on May 29, 2023, a woman was appointed to head the General Inspectorate of

the Ministry of Justice, one of the most prestigious judicial positions, historically reserved for men.

132. The brigades specializing in the investigation of violence against women and children, under the General Directorate of National Security, have 141 women, or 37.2 per cent of the workforce. The National Guard brigades have 130, or 35.6%.
133. With regard to the presence of women in the civil service, and in addition to paragraph 20 of the report, annex No. 7 presented detailed statistics on the evolution of the civil service workforce by sex, while annex No. 8 provided data on the distribution of civil servants by functional position and gender.

4.1 Education (Article 12)

134. Article 44 of the Constitution stipulates that "education is compulsory until the age of sixteen" and that the State "guarantees the right to free public education at all levels and endeavours to mobilise the necessary means to ensure the quality of teaching, education and training".
135. Article 135 of the Constitution established a new constitutional entity: the "Higher Council for Education and Teaching", which is responsible for formulating opinions on the main national orientations in the field of education, teaching, scientific research, vocational training and employment prospects. Decree No. 2 of the year 2024, dated September 16, 2024, was promulgated to organize the functioning of this Council.
136. Framework Law No. 80 of 2002, dated 23 July 2002, on education and school teaching⁵, affirms that "education is a fundamental right guaranteed to all Tunisians, without discrimination based on sex, social origin, colour or religion" (Article 1), and that the State "shall ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to enjoy the right to free education in public schools" (Article 4).
137. Article 6 of Law No. 19 of 25 February 2008 on higher education provides that "access to higher education is open to holders of the baccalaureate or a foreign diploma recognized as equivalent, according to ability and without discrimination".
138. In application of these texts, the Ministry of Education works, through its continuous programs, to strengthen the values of equity and equal opportunities, based in particular on goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), relating to "ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality

⁵ Amended and supplemented by Law No. 9 of 2008 of 11 February 2008.

education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all". This objective is the basis of the 2023–2025 sector plan, the 2026–2035 education strategic plan and the Tunisia Education 2035 Vision.

139. This orientation is in line with the reforms undertaken since 2002 in the field of education, in particular through the revision of school curricula and pedagogical tools, with a view to integrating the principles of gender equality and human rights, as well as the introduction of specific modules in civic education courses on women's rights and Tunisian reforms in this area.
140. Subjects relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms have also been integrated into all higher education institutions, thus helping to raise students' awareness of the principles of gender equality and equity.
141. As part of the continuation of the educational reform process, a national consultation on the reform of the education system was launched between September and December 2023, aimed at defining the future general orientations to improve the performance of the education system in the fields of education, vocational training and higher education, while consolidating the principles of equal opportunities, lifelong learning, continuous skills development and broadening the employability prospects of graduates.
142. The statistical data recorded revealed a steady increase in the enrolment rate of girls in educational institutions, exceeding that of boys, especially in the 6-11 and 12-18 age groups (see annex 9).
143. At the level of the preparatory class, efforts have been focused on its generalization, particularly in rural areas and high-density working-class neighborhoods. Thus, for the 2022–2023 school year, the number of children enrolled in preparatory classes amounted to 54,325, including 26,727 girls, or 49.2%.
144. In terms of primary education, the number of students enrolled in public schools reached 1,215,948 in the 2022–2023 school year, with a proportion of girls of 48.1%.
145. The failure rate at this level is 6.6 per cent for girls compared to 4.0 per cent for boys, while the drop-out rate is 0.4 per cent for girls and 0.2 per cent for boys, respectively.
146. Secondary education is divided into two cycles: the first, called preparatory education, complements basic education; The second, called secondary education, is accessible to those who have met the conditions for passing the preparatory cycle, in accordance with article 25 of the Framework Law No. 80 of 2002.
147. The number of students in the preparatory and secondary cycles amounted to 1,011,474 for the 2022–2023 school year, of which 55.2% were girls, with a gap of 10 percentage points in their favour.
148. The failure rate in these cycles is 13.1 per cent for girls compared to 18.8 per cent for boys, while the drop-out rate is 5.7 per cent for girls compared to 11.5 per cent for boys.
149. For the baccalaureate exam, the success rate in the 2023 session was 63.27% for girls compared to 36.73% for boys, a positive gap of more than 26 percentage points in favor of girls.

150. In higher education, the number of female students has increased in recent years, while the number of male students has decreased. For the academic year 2022–2023, the total number of students was 260,647, of which 66.07% were women (see Annex 10).
151. The proportion of female students enrolled in science and engineering courses surpassed that of male students, reaching 69.49% in 2022–2023.
152. The share of women among tertiary graduates has also improved, with a total of 55,670 graduates for the 2022–2023 academic year, of which 69.96% were women (see Annex 11).
153. In the field of technical and vocational education, several measures have been implemented to improve it, in order to strengthen the skills and qualifications of students. Thus, the "technical training schools" were initially created, transformed into "trade schools" from the 2000-2001 school year. Subsequently, technical preparatory education was introduced in the 2007-2008 school year, through the "technical colleges".
154. In this context, the number of people trained in the national vocational training system reached about 64,000 learners in 2022, including nearly 20,500 young girls.
155. With regard to children in vulnerable situations, a programme for the integration of children with disabilities into educational institutions has been in place since 2003. The number of students with disabilities reached about 7,024 students in the 2021-2022 school year, divided between 4,477 boys and 2,547 girls.
156. In 2022, the first "National Program for the Integration of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Kindergartens" was launched, providing for the payment of school fees as well as the necessary medical and paramedical services, through a monthly allowance of 200 dinars for 9 months, for two consecutive years. Thanks to this program, about 589 children benefited from it during the 2023-2024 school year, 27% of whom were girls. In addition, an "Educator's Guide for the Integration of Autistic Children in Early Childhood Institutions" and a "Guide for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders" have been developed.
157. In the same spirit, the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly is implementing the "Programme for the Strengthening of Parental Capacities and Support for Families in the Care of Children with Learning Disabilities", aimed at screening and identifying indicators of learning disabilities in preschool children (kindergartens), as well as at the primary and preparatory levels (from 6 to 15 years old).
158. With regard to children from poor families or without family support, their integration into kindergartens is ensured within the framework of the national programme "Our garden in our neighbourhood", which is part of the "National Programme for the Promotion of Early Childhood". This programme allows these families to meet the costs of enrolling their children in approved kindergartens, as well as the payment of monthly school fees for a period ranging from one to three years, thus covering the entire period of the child's attendance.
159. The number of children benefiting from this program during the 2023-2024 school year is estimated at 21,959, including 9,546 girls, a rate of 43.47%.

160. In order to ensure an attractive and safe educational environment that guarantees the protection of learners against all forms of violence, the Ministry of Education has undertaken the following actions:

- Development of an action plan to combat all forms of violence in schools (physical and verbal violence, sexual harassment, drugs, cyberviolence), in coordination with the various actors, including civil society, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and the media sector;
- Establishment of a reference framework for global health education, aimed in particular at the development of life skills among students, the anchoring of the principles of human rights and gender equality, as well as the strengthening of the child's capacity to protect himself, through activities integrated into disciplines such as scientific awakening, life and earth sciences, as well as cultural activities and school clubs. A technical commission composed of primary and secondary school inspectors has been set up to analyse the United Nations international reference guide and identify key concepts related to the 5-8 years, 9-12 years and 12-15 years age groups;
- Strengthening students' social and ethical skills, including through education in citizenship, health, sustainable development, information and media, gender equality and sexual health.

161. In the same vein, the universities have organized awareness-raising programmes and group sessions aimed at prevention in the field of combating violence against women, as well as meetings in homes, cities and university cultural centres, with interventions on the relevant legislation.

162. The illiteracy rate for women is 7.25 per cent, compared with 12.9 per cent for men. This rate is particularly high in rural areas, reaching 41.8 per cent for women and 23.2 per cent for men, respectively.

163. As a result, several measures have been adopted to eradicate illiteracy and promote adult education. Since 2000, the "National Adult Education Programme" has been in place, having welcomed about 20,000 learners in 2023, of which women represent 50%.

164. In terms of combating school dropout, in addition to the creation of the "Second Chance Program" for adolescents (12-18 years old) and the four-dimensional pilot program to combat school dropout and dropout (M4D), the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly has been supervising the implementation of the "Economic Empowerment Program for Mothers of Students at Risk of Dropping Out of School" since 2017. particularly targeting girls in rural areas and in densely populated neighbourhoods. Since its launch, 1,098 mothers have benefited directly from a source of income, allowing 4,438 students, girls and boys, to reintegrate into school.

165. The National Union of Tunisian Women supports the State's efforts to eradicate illiteracy and reduce school dropouts by working to establish as many adult education centres as possible at the regional and local levels, and by encouraging their attendance. The number of centres has increased from 30 in 2018 to 62 in 2022.

2. Protection of women from violence

2.1 Physical safety and dignity, including sexual violence, trafficking in women and their exploitation in scientific and medical experiments (Articles 3 and 4)

166. Article 25 of the Constitution stipulates that the State "shall protect the dignity of the human person and the integrity of the body, prohibit moral and physical torture, and consider that the crime of torture is not subject to a statute of limitations". The first paragraph of Article 36 guarantees every prisoner "the right to humane treatment that preserves his dignity". The fourth paragraph of article 51 stipulates that the State "shall take the necessary measures to eliminate violence against women". Pursuant to these provisions, a number of programmes and measures have been adopted, including:

2.1.1 Protection of Women in Their Interactions with Law Enforcement Officers

167. Decree No. 240 of 2023, dated March 16, 2023, approving the Code of Conduct of the Internal Security Forces under the Ministry of the Interior, devotes the first section of Chapter VI to the modalities of treatment of women. It stipulates that women must be treated with respect and without discrimination, both in and out of the workplace, and be treated in a manner that is tailored to the specific needs of certain categories of women (pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum, accompanied by their child or infant). They must be provided with appropriate legal protection in the event of violence, while guaranteeing the confidentiality of their personal data. It is also specified that any search must be carried out exclusively by a female officer.

168. In the same vein, Act No. 52 of 14 May 2001 on the prison system provides that female prisoners are placed either in a women's prison or in separate wings from other prisons. Their supervision is carried out by officers under the authority of the director of the establishment (Article 7). Pregnant or breastfeeding mothers in prison are accommodated, during the period of pregnancy and breastfeeding, in a specially equipped space guaranteeing the medical, psychological and social care necessary for the mother and child (new article 7 bis).

169. The pregnant inmate receives medical care before and after childbirth. Arrangements are made for the delivery to take place in a hospital outside the prison. If the child is born in detention, it is forbidden to mention the place of birth in the civil registers, the related certificates and extracts (Article 8).

170. The United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Torture, at the end of its visit to Tunisia from 27 March to 2 April 2022, welcomed the respect of these standards within the Manouba women's prison, and confirmed the compliance of the infrastructure and hygiene conditions at the Bouchoucha detention centre.

2.1.2 Establishment of a legal framework and a national strategy to combat violence against women

171. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, dated 11 August 2017, on the elimination of violence against women, is a comprehensive text aimed at establishing the necessary measures to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence, with the aim of promoting equality and guaranteeing the human

dignity of women. It adopts an integrated approach based on prevention, prosecution of perpetrators, their punishment, as well as the protection and care of victims.

172. In the same context, a national strategy to combat violence against women was developed in 2008. It has undergone two evaluations and updates, and its third version was adopted in March 2021. The strategy is based on four fundamental pillars: prevention, protection and care for victims, governance and coordination, and legislative reform and law enforcement.
173. A circular No. 28, issued by the Head of Government on August 12, 2023, called on the public structures concerned to ensure rigorous implementation of the provisions of the aforementioned organic law, in all its dimensions related to prevention, protection, rehabilitation and services.
174. Since 2022, the Ministry of Finance has been supporting the government structures responsible for the execution of the said strategy, with a view to its operational implementation, the assessment of the necessary financial resources and the mobilization of specialized human skills.
175. Pursuant to Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 and the axes of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, the following actions have been undertaken:

❖ **In terms of prevention:**

176. Awareness-raising and education campaigns have been organized, targeting various backgrounds and social categories. These campaigns have used a variety of media such as posters, press releases, radio and television broadcasts, as well as social networks, with the aim of deconstructing stereotypical and devaluing social representations of women, and fighting against the trivialization of the violence inflicted on them.
177. These campaigns also addressed the issue of digital violence against women, through initiatives such as "Stay Safe on the Internet" (9 February each year), "Digital violence is a crime, even here it is punished" (October 2020), "Symbolic violence against women and girls" (October 2021), and "Don't let the monster live" (March 2024).⁶
178. Training is an essential component: between 2019 and 2020, around 140 agents and executives of the Ministry of the Interior, 200 magistrates, 4,000 health sector workers and 167 managers of the Ministry of Social Affairs were trained. In addition, there are the heads of departments of

⁶ These campaigns were organized by the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women.

the Ministry of the Family, Women, Children and the Elderly, the agents of the hotline, as well as service providers from civil society (**see paragraphs 108 to 115 of the report**).

179. In terms of research, the Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women, the National Observatory for the Fight against Violence against Women, and the Center for Training and Research of Arab Women "Kawthar" have carried out several studies between 2019 and 2023, covering all issues related to violence against women, in all spaces, including digital spaces. The Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly is responsible for the preparation of annual national reports on the implementation of the law, published from 2019 to 2023.
180. In terms of indicators, the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women has established a participatory national plan for the production of statistical data on violence against women. In 2019, 38 indicators were established, which are currently being used at the sectoral level by the Ministries of Justice, the Interior, Health, Social Affairs and Women.
181. In 2020, the National Office for Family and Population developed a "Scale for the Assessment of Vital Risk for Women Victims of Violence", accompanied by a user guide and a reference framework for the assessment of psychological impacts on women and girls victims of sexual violence, intended for psychologists and integrated into their training.
182. For its part, the National Institute of Statistics carried out a national survey on violence against women in 2022, based on the data collected in this context. The results revealed a notable increase in intra-family violence. As a follow-up to this initiative, an in-depth study on domestic violence has been initiated, the first results of which were presented in September 2024.

❖ **In terms of protection:**

183. Several measures have been adopted, including:

- The establishment of a toll-free number (1899) dedicated to listening to and guiding women victims of violence. In 2022, this toll-free number recorded nearly 8,300 calls.
- The establishment of a toll-free number (1833) for assistance to persons aged 60 and over, to receive reports of violence and other forms of threats, and to provide counselling and guidance services.
- The launch of the new national program "Samida" (Resilient) for the economic empowerment of women who are victims or at risk of violence. This program aims to strengthen the employability of this category of women, with a budget of 1 million dinars for the year 2023.
- The issuance of Joint Circular No. 5 of the year 2022, dated March 14, 2022, by the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly and the Ministry of Health, on the free initial medical certificate for all women victims of violence, regardless of the perpetrator or the place of the assault, and facilitating medical care and accommodation procedures. A maximum period of 48 hours has been set for the issuance of the certificate.
- The granting of a free health care card or a reduced rate care card to women victims of violence.

- 4,051 decisions taken on the protection of women and children who are victims of violence in 2022.
- 622 decisions taken on legal aid for women victims of violence during the 2021-2022 judicial year.
- The judgment of 160 cases relating to violence against women during the judicial year 2021-2022, compared to 37 cases in 2018-2019.

❖ In terms of services and institutions:

184. In this area, the following actions have been undertaken:

- The appointment of specialized prosecutors in cases of violence against women in all courts of first instance.
- The establishment of two central units and 128 specialized brigades for the investigation of crimes of violence against women and children, divided between the National Security (70) and National Guard (58) zones. Women account for 12.5 per cent of the heads of these specialized squads, and female security officers make up 40 per cent of the total workforce.
- The establishment of a central working group responsible for the annual programming of activities to combat violence against women, as well as the development of projects and proposals aimed at strengthening the specialized brigades.
- The designation of contact points in hospital emergency departments to facilitate administrative procedures related to the medical care of women victims of violence and to strengthen cooperation between the health sector and other relevant sectors.
- The adoption of Decree No. 126 of 2020, dated February 25, 2020, establishing the National Observatory for the Fight against Violence against Women and defining its administrative, financial and operating procedures.
- The adoption of Government Decree No. 582 of 2020, dated August 14, 2020, on centers for the care of women and children victims of violence.
- The finalization of the establishment of a central coordinating body for the fight against violence against women, as well as 24 regional coordinations.
- The development of a national mapping of services for women victims of violence and in vulnerable situations, including an inventory of government structures and civil society components offering services to these populations in the different regions of the country⁷.

⁷ www.sosfemmesviolences.tn

3.1.2 Establishment of a legal framework and a national strategy to combat trafficking in persons, including trafficking in women

185. Organic Law No. 61 of 3 August 2016 on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons aims to prohibit and combat all forms of exploitation to which persons, especially women and children, may be exposed through the prevention and punishment of perpetrators. the protection of victims and their support.
186. One of the main provisions of the Act is the establishment of a National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons, under the Ministry of Justice. This body has developed a national strategy to combat trafficking in persons for the period 2018-2023, based on four fundamental axes: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership and cooperation.
187. In accordance with these pillars, the Forum has carried out a number of training and awareness-raising activities aimed at strengthening understanding of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, including trafficking in women (see annex No. 12).
188. It also worked to strengthen the capacities of judicial police officers under the internal security forces, magistrates, executives of several ministries, as well as university teachers, students, lawyers, members of civil society and journalists (see annex 13).
189. In terms of victim protection, the body has set up a "National Mechanism for Referral and Care of Victims of Trafficking in Persons", published in December 2021 after a two-year pilot phase. This mechanism aims to ensure effective coordination between the various stakeholders in the anti-trafficking process, to identify victims and to refer them to the appropriate care services guaranteeing their protection and support. The body has also developed several complementary tools to this mechanism, including:
- The "Passport to the Rights of Victims of Trafficking in Persons", a simplified document explaining the rights of victims and helping them to identify the forms of exploitation they may have suffered.
 - The "Victims of Trafficking in Persons Rights Maps", annexed to the passport, providing clear and concise information on rights.
 - The "Interview Guide for Victims of Trafficking in Persons", designed to guide professionals in contact with victims on interview techniques and to provide them with the necessary skills to assess their situation and provide them with assistance in accordance with the law.
 - The "List of Sample Questions for Interviewing Victims", comprising more than a hundred questions relating to trafficking offences and their consequences.

- The "Guide to support and reintegration of victims of trafficking in persons", aimed at presenting the rights and services available, and defining a harmonized intervention pathway allowing professionals to guarantee access to rights and effective social care.
 - The "List of General Indicators for the Detection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons", intended for all institutional actors, organizations and associations likely to interact with victims, and constituting a unified reference system for the detection of crimes and the identification of victims.
190. It should also be noted that the National Authority to Combat Trafficking in Persons has drawn up a list of specific indicators for use by judicial police officers, intended to facilitate the detection of offences and the identification of victims.
191. The number of trafficking cases involving women registered with the Mechanism amounted to 725 in 2021, compared to 578 in 2020, 748 in 2019 and 578 in 2018.
192. As of the end of January 2022, 438 cases of trafficking in persons were registered in Tunisian jurisdictions, divided between courts of first instance and courts of appeal. As part of these proceedings, the identities of 339 victims were established, including 246 women.
193. Convictions were handed down in 48 cases, a rate of 11%. In addition, 47% of cases were still in the investigation phase at the end of January 2022, 25.3% were under judicial investigation, and 16.7% were closed without further action.
194. Women victims of trafficking, whether they are Tunisian or foreign nationals, are cared for in social reception centres under the Ministry of Social Affairs. Minors are referred to child protection centres in order to benefit from psychological support and appropriate reintegration.
195. In 2021, the total number of victims treated in the social centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs amounted to 129, including 47 women, representing 36.4% of the total. These victims benefit from essential services in terms of care, social and medical support (psychological support, social support, protection, professional reintegration, family mediation, financial and material assistance). Civil society also plays a key role in supporting and providing services to these people.

4.1.2 Prohibition of any medical or scientific experimentation on women without their free and informed consent

196. With regard to medical or therapeutic experimentation, the second paragraph of Article 103 of the Code of Medical Ethics stipulates that "the doctor must, as far as possible and taking into account the patient's psychology, obtain his or her free and informed consent. In the event of legal incapacity, the consent of the legal representative shall take the place of that of the patient."
197. With regard to scientific or non-therapeutic experiments, the same Code specifies that "no experiment may be carried out on a human being without his or her free and informed consent" (Article 107), that the person concerned must be "in a physical, mental and legal state that allows

him or her to fully exercise his or her free will" (Article 108), and that "consent must be given in writing" (Article 109).

5.1.2 Non-application of the death penalty to pregnant women

198. Article 9 of the Penal Code stipulates that "the death penalty may be carried out against a pregnant convict only after she has given birth". It should be recalled that Tunisia has not carried out any executions since 17 November 1991, although sentences have been handed down. It is among the states that have supported the United Nations General Assembly resolutions calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

2.2 Adoption of the principle of equal access to refugee status and granting refugee women the guarantees provided for in international refugee law

199. The Republic of Tunisia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the International Protection of Refugees and its Additional Protocol since 1967. Although there is no specific national legislation governing the right to asylum, the Tunisian State provides protection and services to this category of persons, within the limits of available resources, in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

200. Between 1 August 2012 and 24 October 2023, the number of asylum applications registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Tunisia amounted to 7,224, involving 8,178 people, divided between 6,337 men and 1,841 women.

201. During the same period, 1,675 asylum applications were accepted, involving 3,673 persons, of whom 2,224 were men and 1,449 were women.

202. UNHCR and its partners work to ensure the international protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, including through their registration, documentation, refugee status determination, emergency assistance to the most vulnerable people — especially women — (shelter, material assistance), as well as monitoring their social and economic integration.

203. Government structures also ensure the protection and care of these populations, within the limits of available means. Several protection measures have been adopted by the Government for refugees, including refugee women, including:

- Accommodation in reception and social orientation centres, particularly for unaccompanied minor children and people with disabilities, enabling them to benefit from appropriate psychological, social and health support;
- Access to basic health care in public hospitals, regardless of their administrative situation. Refugees and asylum-seekers have also been included in the national vaccination plan and intensive vaccination campaigns;
- Access to the University of Tunis's services for lifelong learning, with opportunities for school-age children to develop their knowledge and skills;

- Integration into the labour market and the vocational training system, with facilities such as the adoption of electronic seals for employment contracts in order to obtain the necessary authorisations;
- Membership of the social security system, subject to legal residence in Tunisia and the holding of employment contracts validated by the Ministry of Employment.

204. Article 32 of the Tunisian Constitution enshrines guarantees for refugees, including refugee women, by affirming that the right to political asylum is guaranteed and that the extradition of beneficiaries of this right is prohibited.

3.2 Harmful practices against women, including female genital mutilation (Article 5)

205. There is no practice in the Republic of Tunisia, regardless of cultural or social reference, related to female genital mutilation. In addition, article 221 (new), paragraph 3, of the Penal Code expressly prohibits any mutilation or partial or total removal of the genital organs, and provides for a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment for the perpetrator of such acts.

206. With regard to early marriage of girls (before the age of 18), the national rate is estimated at 3.3 per cent. This figure is explained by the provisions of article 5 (new) of the Personal Status Code, which sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 years of age for both spouses, while authorizing, exceptionally, the conclusion of marriage below that age, subject to special authorization from the president of the court of first instance, on the petition presented by the guardian of the minor and the mother, expressing their consent to the marriage. This authorisation is granted only for serious reasons and in the clear interest of the future spouses.

207. Article 6 of the same Code provides that, in the event that the guardian and the mother refuse their consent, and the minor persists in her desire to marry, the case shall be brought before the president of the competent court of first instance. It should be noted that this marriage authorization cannot be the subject of any judicial appeal.

208. Among the practical cases that have given rise to judicial authorization for marriage before the age of 18 are: the situation of an orphaned minor requiring moral and material support from her husband, or the marriage of two fiancés before their joint departure abroad for study or work, in order to avoid any compromising situation.

209. It should be noted that any girl under the age of 13 is considered to be devoid of discernment and may not under any circumstances enter into marriage, as she is legally incapable of entering into acts or commitments. His acts are deemed null and void in accordance with article 156 of the Personal Status Code.

210. It should also be recalled that Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women repealed article 227 bis of the Criminal Code, which allowed for the suspension of proceedings and the effects of the trial in the event of consensual sexual intercourse with a minor.

4.2 Gender stereotypes against women (Article 4(2)(c))

211. (See paragraphs 88 et seq. of the report.)

5.2 Sexual Harassment

212. Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women repealed article 226 ter of the Penal Code and replaced it with a new article 226 (new), which criminalizes sexual harassment and provides for a two-year prison sentence and a fine of five thousand dinars.
213. The new article defines sexual harassment as any act, gesture or comment with sexual connotations that violates the dignity or modesty of others, with the aim of forcing the victim to satisfy the sexual desires of the perpetrator or a third party, or of exerting serious pressure on the victim that is likely to weaken her ability to resist.
214. The same article provides for increased penalties in the following cases: when the victim is a child; when the perpetrator is an ascendant or descendant of the victim; when the perpetrator exercises authority over the victim or abuses his or her professional position; or when the commission of the offence is facilitated by a situation of manifest or known vulnerability of the perpetrator.

6.2 Domestic violence (Article 4, paragraph 2(a))

215. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 does not explicitly contain the term "domestic violence", but it adopts an approach that allows this concept to be included in its scope of application.
216. Indeed, Article 2 of the said law states that its scope covers "all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence, regardless of the perpetrator (spouse, parent, child or other) and regardless of the place (family, workplace, public space)", which de facto includes domestic violence.
217. This implicit recognition is also manifested through the revision and completion of several articles of the Penal Code, aimed at criminalizing this type of violence, including:
- Its assimilation to an aggravating circumstance when the perpetrator is an ascendant or descendant of the victim, or one of the spouses, in accordance with articles 208 (new), 218 (new), 219 (new), 222 (new), 226 ter (new), 227 (new), 228 (new) and 223 (new) of the Criminal Code;
 - Its classification as an independent offence in the case of ill-treatment of a spouse, as provided for in the second (new) paragraph of Article 224 of the Criminal Code.
218. Although the term "marital rape" is not expressly mentioned in the above-mentioned organic law, article 3, item 6, defines sexual violence as "any act or statement aimed at subjecting the woman to the sexual desires of the perpetrator or of a third party, by coercion, deception, pressure or any other means of suppressing the will, regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim", which makes it possible to include marital rape in this category and to punish the perpetrator.

219. It should be noted that 4,036 cases of violence against married women were tried in the 2021–2022 judicial year, of which 3,445 involved the spouse.

220. Since the entry into force of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017, 14 cases of marital rape have resulted in convictions.

7.2 Care for women victims of violence, including access to health and psychological support services (Article 5(c))

221. Pursuant to the provisions of Article 12 of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women, and in particular the section relating to coordination between the various partners, the Ministry of the Family, Women, Children and the Elderly has concluded several partnership agreements with the components of civil society working in the field of human rights in general and the fight against violence against women in particular.

222. In this context, the Ministry has strengthened local services for women victims of violence, by increasing the number of centres for the care of women victims and the children accompanying them, to reach a total of 24 centres in 2022 (accommodation centres, reception, listening and guidance centres and family counselling centres).

223. In 2022, the accommodation centres provided care for 627 accompanying women and children, for a total of 14,160 overnight stays. It should be noted that the age group most at risk of homelessness and shelter use is women aged 26-45, while children aged 1-5 years account for the majority of children in shelter.

224. In 2023, the first government day centre specialising in listening to and guiding women victims of violence and accompanying children was inaugurated. The centre is a one-stop shop for the services offered by the Ministry, covering psychological, social, legal and economic empowerment aspects, while coordinating with government structures and associations active in this field.

225. In addition, since 2021, the reproductive health centres under the National Office for the Family and Population have provided medical and psychological follow-up to 7,500 women and girls who are victims of violence.

226. The National Union of Tunisian Women and its specialized structures also took care of 13,786 women victims of violence and accompanying children, offering them listening, social support, psychological support and legal advice.

3. Marriage-related rights (Articles 6 and 7)

3.1 Effects of marriage on property, nationality and name (Article 6(e) to (j))

227. The validity of the marriage is subject to the consent of both spouses, in accordance with article 3 of the Personal Status Code, which stipulates that "marriage may be contracted only with the consent of both spouses". Organic Law No. 61 of 2016, dated August 3, 2016, on the prevention and fight against trafficking in persons, considers that "forcing a woman into marriage" constitutes a practice comparable to slavery.

228. As regards the effects of marriage on property, each spouse retains full ownership of his or her property, without the other having any right to it. Article 24 of the Personal Status Code states that "the husband has no authority over his wife's own property".
229. In addition to this basic regime, there is an optional regime established by Law No. 91 of 1998, dated 9 November 1998, relating to the regime of community of property between spouses.
230. According to this regime, and subject to its adoption at the time of the conclusion of the marriage or subsequently, immovable property acquired after the marriage or after the signing of the community contract is considered to be joint property, unless it has been received by inheritance, gift or will, and provided that it has a residential vocation. The dependencies and income from these properties, whatever their nature, are also considered to be common. This regime does not apply to real estate for exclusively professional use.
231. With regard to the effects of marriage on nationality, Tunisian legislation allows married women to retain their nationality or to acquire that of their husband. Article 14 of the Nationality Code provides that "a foreign woman married to a Tunisian, who retains her nationality of origin according to the law of her country, may apply for Tunisian nationality by declaration addressed to the Ministry of Justice, provided that the spouses have resided in Tunisia for at least two years."
232. However, in accordance with article 15 of the same Code, the President of the Republic may oppose the acquisition of this nationality within a maximum period of two years from the date of the declaration or from the day on which the confirmatory judgment becomes final, if the declaration is rejected for non-compliance with the legal conditions.
233. With regard to the nationality of children, since the entry into force of Act No. 55 of 1 December 2010 of 1 December 2010, amending certain provisions of the Nationality Code, women have the same rights as men to transmit Tunisian nationality to their children under article 6 (new).
234. With regard to the effects of marriage on the surname, there is no legal text, either in the Personal Status Code or in Act No. 3 of 1957 of 1 August 1957 on the organization of civil status, which obliges a woman to give up her birth name and adopt that of her husband. In Tunisia, women are free to use either name as they wish.
235. Organic Law No. 22 of 11 March 2024, amending and supplementing Law No. 27 of 1993 on the national identity card, removed the mention of the spouse's name from the mandatory data. The identity card must now include: the card number, the surname and first name in Arabic and Latin characters, the name of the father and grandfather, the gender, the mother's first and last name, the date of birth, the address, the handwritten signature (except for people who are unable to sign), and the period of validity.

3.2 Minimum Age for Marriage (Article 6,(b))

236. (See paras. 206 et seq. of this report.)

3.1.2 Conclusion and registration of marriage contracts (Article 6(d))

237. The conclusion and registration of marriage contracts are governed by Act No. 3 of 1957 of 1 August 1957 on the organization of civil status, as amended and supplemented by subsequent texts, in particular articles 31 to 39.
238. The marriage contract must be drawn up in writing, in accordance with article 4 of the Personal Status Code, which stipulates that "marriage can only be proved by an official act governed by a special law". The spouses choose by mutual agreement the matrimonial regime and their place of residence. Article 9 of the same Code specifies that "the spouses may celebrate their marriage themselves or appoint any person of their choice".
239. Under these provisions, marriage contracts are concluded in Tunisia before two notaries or before a civil registrar, in the presence of two trustworthy witnesses. Abroad, marriages of Tunisian nationals are celebrated before Tunisian diplomatic or consular agents, or in accordance with the laws of the country of residence.
240. Any violation of these provisions shall result in the nullity of the marriage. The spouses are liable to a three-month prison sentence. In the event of continuation or resumption of cohabitation after the declaration of nullity, the penalty shall be increased to six months. Article 53 of the Criminal Code on mitigating circumstances does not apply.
241. Notaries must, within one month of the drafting of the contract, send to the civil registrar of their district a notice of marriage in accordance with the model annexed to the above-mentioned law, before issuing a copy of the contract to the interested parties. Any infringement of these provisions is punishable by a fine. The civil registrar shall enter the contents of the notice of marriage in the register provided for this purpose upon receipt, and shall inform the registrar of the place of birth of each of the spouses, who shall annotate the marriage certificate on the birth certificate of each.
242. Marriage contracts of Tunisians living abroad must be registered in accordance with the laws of the country where they were drawn up in the marriage register of the nearest Tunisian consular representation within three months of their drafting, at the initiative of the spouses. Failure to comply with this obligation is punishable by a fine.
243. Marriage contracts for foreigners in Tunisia must be drawn up in accordance with Tunisian law, on the basis of a certificate issued by their consulate attesting to their capacity to contract marriage. Two foreigners of the same nationality can marry in front of the diplomatic or consular agents of their country in Tunisia. In this case, the diplomatic or consular agent informs the civil registrar of the district where the marriage was celebrated, who registers it in the register provided for that purpose.

4.3 Protection of women in cases of polygamy (Article 6(c))

244. Tunisian law considers polygamy to be a criminal offence. Article 18, paragraph 1, of the Personal Status Code stipulates that "polygamy is prohibited". The following paragraphs specify that any person who enters into a new marriage while already married, without prior dissolution of the first marriage, shall be liable to one year's imprisonment and a fine, or to one of these two penalties, even if the new marriage has not been concluded in accordance with the legal provisions.

245. The same penalties apply to any person who marries in violation of the procedures laid down in Act No. 3 of 1957 and who enters into a second marriage while continuing to cohabit with his or her first spouse.
246. The same penalties shall also apply to a spouse who knowingly enters into a marriage with a person already subject to the penalties provided for in the preceding paragraphs.
247. Article 53 of the Criminal Code on mitigating circumstances does not apply to the above-mentioned offences.

5.3 Protection of women in the event of separation, divorce or nullity of marriage (Article 7)

248. Judicial divorce was instituted as soon as the Personal Status Code was promulgated in 1956. In accordance with article 30 of the Code, divorce can only be pronounced by the court, and is effective only after a final judgment has been pronounced.
249. Divorce can be pronounced either by mutual consent (consensual divorce), or at the request of one of the spouses for damage suffered (fault divorce), or at the initiative of one of the spouses (unilateral divorce).
250. Custody of the child is awarded to one of the parents according to the principle of the best interests of the child. However, if custody is entrusted to the father, he must have a woman in his entourage to take care of the child (article 58 of the Personal Status Code). The non-custodial parent has visitation rights.
251. The father exercises parental authority over the child in custody, in particular with regard to his or her education, discipline and educational guidance (Article 60). However, this authority is not absolute: the father may not travel with the child outside the mother's country of residence without her consent, unless the child's interests so require (Article 62).
252. When custody is entrusted to the mother, she also exercises parental authority with regard to the child's travel, schooling and the management of the child's financial accounts (Article 67, paragraph 4).
253. In the event of divorce, if the regime of community of property has been chosen, the divorced woman is entitled to half of the real estate acquired after the conclusion of the marriage or after the signing of the community agreement. If this regime has not been chosen or if no contract has been signed, only the assets registered in his name belong to him.
254. With regard to a null marriage, described in Tunisian law as a "null and void marriage", article 122 of the Personal Status Code provides that "this union is null and void, without the need for recourse to divorce". However, if cohabitation has taken place, the following effects are recognized: the woman's right to the agreed dowry or to a dowry set by the court, establishment of filiation, obligation to respect the 'iddah period, and prohibition of marriage with relatives by marriage.

6.3 Protection of children within the family (Article 6(i) and (j))

255. Article 52 of the Tunisian Constitution states that "the rights of the child are guaranteed. His parents and the State must ensure his dignity, health, care, education and teaching..."
256. Pursuant to this provision, the Personal Status Code has enshrined the principle of cooperation and equality between spouses in the sharing of family responsibilities since 1993, within the framework of a new distribution of roles within the family. Article 23, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 stipulate that the spouses "shall cooperate in the management of family affairs, the upbringing of children and the conduct of their affairs, including education, travel and financial transactions. The husband, as the head of the family, must provide for his wife and children according to his means and theirs, within the framework of maintenance obligations. The wife must contribute to the household expenses if she has resources."
257. The arrangements for the management of children's affairs after the dissolution of the marital relationship are discussed in **paragraphs 250 et seq. of the present report.**

4. Rights to health and reproductive health

4.1 Access to Health Services (Article 14(2)(a))

258. The Tunisian legal framework includes several texts guaranteeing women's right to access health care without discrimination on the basis of sex. The first of these texts is Article 43 of the Constitution, which states that "health is a right for every person. The State guarantees prevention and medical care to all citizens and provides the necessary means to ensure the safety and quality of health services. The State guarantees free health care to people without support and on low incomes, as well as the right to social security coverage in accordance with the legislation in force".
259. In the same spirit, Law No. 63 of 29 July 1991 on the organisation of health, as amended by Decree No. 50 of 22 August 2022, provides that "everyone has the right to the protection of his or her health in the best possible conditions" (Article 1), that "public health facilities are open to any person whose state of health requires their services" (Article 34), and that "each patient is free to choose the private health establishment where he or she will be cared for" (Article 47).
260. Article 1 of Act No. 71 of 27 July 1992 on communicable diseases stipulates that "no one may be discriminated against in the prevention or treatment of communicable diseases".
261. The first point of the Patient's Charter, issued by the Minister of Health's circular No. 36 of 2009, dated 19 May 2009, states that "everyone has the right to the protection of his or her health in the best possible conditions, without discrimination based on religion, sex, colour, age or social and economic situation, while taking into account the specificities of certain categories of patients whose state of health requires priority care, in accordance with the legislation in force, such as emergency cases, disabled people, the elderly, children and pregnant women".
262. In addition, criminal sanctions are provided for anyone who prevents a woman, whether a minor or an adult, from accessing care. Article 224, paragraph 1, of the Penal Code provides for a

penalty of five years' imprisonment and a fine of 120 dinars for any person in the habit of ill-treating a child or any other minor under his or her guardianship or supervision, and deprivation of food or care is considered a form of ill-treatment. The second paragraph of the same article provides for the same penalty for ill-treatment of a spouse.⁸

263. Due to biological differences between the sexes, which expose women to specific pathologies or increased vulnerability to certain diseases, Tunisia has set up several prevention and lifelong care programmes for women, including:

- The National Programme for Maternal and Newborn Safety (1990)
- The National Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme (1994), including the fight against cervical cancer and the management of sexually transmitted infections
- The National Cancer Control Programme (2001), targeting breast and cervical cancer
- The National Programme to Combat HIV/AIDS and STIs (1987 for HIV, 1998 for the integration of STI care)
- The National Breastfeeding Programme (2014)
- The National Family Planning Programme (1966)
- The National Mental Health Program (1990), including depression, anxiety and sleep disorders
- The National Programme for the Health of the Elderly (1995)
- The National Health Programme for School-Going Adolescents (1990)
- The National Immunization Programme (1959), which included the vaccination of children against targeted diseases such as poliomyelitis, neonatal tetanus and measles.

264. All of these programmes are subject to periodic reviews in order to improve their quality and adapt their content to the needs of the target populations, in accordance with international standards. For example, the following have been developed:

- The National HIV Strategic Plan 2021–2025

⁸ This paragraph was added under Fundamental Law No. 58 of 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women.

- The National Strategy for Maternal and Newborn Health 2020–2024
- The National Multisectoral Strategy for the Promotion of Adolescent and Youth Health for the period 2020–2030.

265. The good geographical distribution of health facilities, including basic health centres ⁹, local hospitals ¹⁰(level 1) and regional hospitals¹¹ (level 2), facilitates women's access to all these programmes. As an indication, the average number of inhabitants per basic health centre was 5,550 in 2020.

266. Women also benefit from mobile health services, including through:

- The provision by the National Office for Family and Population of a mobile HIV screening unit and a mobile breast cancer screening unit by mammography (Mammo Life)
- The organization by the National Union of Tunisian Women of 20 multidisciplinary medical caravans in its regional representations, which allowed free consultations to be carried out for the benefit of about 1,550 women, girls and students, in coordination with the regional directorates of health and the National Office for Family and Population.

4.1.2 Access to medicines and strengthening of health services

267. In terms of access to medicines, the "Pharmacy Unit", established in 1989 within the Ministry of Health, is responsible for supervising the supply and distribution of medicines, vaccines and

⁹ Primary health centres provide preventive and curative health services, as well as health education services. Their mission is to treat common diseases, protect mothers and children, including through family planning, prevent and monitor communicable and infectious diseases, including through health education, and collect and use health and epidemiological statistics

¹⁰. In addition to the activities carried out by the primary health centres, local hospitals offer general medicine, obstetrics and emergency medical services. They have hospital beds and diagnostic equipment adapted to the nature and scope of their activities.

¹¹ In addition to the activities carried out by primary health centres and local hospitals, regional hospitals provide specialized medical and surgical assistance and have hospital beds and diagnostic equipment appropriate to the nature and scale of their activities.

pharmaceutical products for the benefit of health facilities in all regions, within the framework of national health programmes. In the same spirit, Law No. 2 of 2023, dated July 12, 2023, established the "National Agency for Medicines and Health Products", to which several missions have been entrusted, including the promotion of the national production of medicines and health products, the guarantee of their safety, efficacy and quality, the dissemination of appropriate information to healthcare professionals and patients on their rational use, as well as the development of the scientific and technical tests necessary for the performance of its functions.

268. Regarding medical specialists, and within the framework of the "Support Program for Medical Specialists in Priority Areas", a coverage of 96% was achieved in 2022. This proportion is expected to rise to 97% in 2024 and 2025, and to 98% in 2026.
269. In addition, continuous efforts are being made to ensure the training of medical and paramedical staff, particularly in specialties related to women's health, as specified in Annex 14 to this report.
270. With regard to health education for women, it should be recalled that the "Health Education Unit" was established in 1981 within the Directorate of Basic Health Care, with the aim of integrating health education into all national health programmes. Regional health education units have also been established in the regional directorates of basic health care in all districts, with the appointment of a regional coordinator.
271. The Health Education Unit and its affiliated structures rely on the production of educational materials, the organization of exhibitions, the involvement of the governmental and non-governmental sectors for a wider coverage of target groups, the mobilization of the media and the training of executives in the field of information and communication technologies.
272. In the same context, the National Union of Tunisian Women has organized several awareness-raising and information campaigns that have reached about 5,000 women (at the national and regional levels), with the participation of nearly 2,400 young girls (students, trainees in vocational training centres and out-of-school girls) in training sessions on reproductive health, sex education and first aid.
273. In addition, in order to encourage women's access to health care, the Patient's Charter, issued by the Minister of Health's Circular No. 36 of 2009, enshrines the principle of respect for medical confidentiality and the protection of the patient's personal data, as well as the need for free and informed consent prior to treatment.
274. Article 10 bis of Law No. 71 of 27 July 1992 on communicable diseases stipulates that "doctors and biologists practising in health centres and establishments providing anonymous screening for communicable diseases must not reveal the identity of the patient who has opted for this type of screening".
275. Regarding the costs of access to care for women, it should be noted that the health coverage rate for women reached 82.8% in 2021, which means that this proportion benefits from care at a reasonable cost. Women with low incomes or from poor families have access to free or reduced-cost health care in public health facilities. All women, regardless of their social status, benefit from free health care under several programmes, including:

- The national maternal and newborn health programme (including access to contraceptives)
- The national immunization programme
- Testing services for communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

276. These efforts have contributed to a significant improvement in life expectancy at birth for women, from 51.6 years in 1966 to 75 years in 2002, then to 78.7 years in 2014 and 79.3 years in 2021. However, some gaps remain, including:

- The lack of continuity in the provision of services by the basic (first level) health centres, whose activity is limited to the mornings, while only 20% of them provide a service all week long
- The lack of specialist doctors in regional hospitals.

277. To address these shortcomings, the "National Health Policy for 2030" was adopted on April 17, 2021, concretizing the concept of universal health coverage, as part of a societal and participatory dialogue on national health policies, strategies and plans. This policy provides in particular for a reorganization of the health sector, with the establishment of the "family and local health" model as the gateway to the health system.

278. This model is based on the creation of a multidisciplinary network of health professionals from the public and private sectors, providing a range of services (preventive, curative, rehabilitation and health promotion), according to a validated reference of best practices. It also provides for the possibility of seeking the opinion of a specialist doctor or referring the patient to him if necessary. This system will ensure continuity of care and reduce travel time to an approved first-level health centre to less than 30 minutes.

4.1.3 Urgent measures to strengthen equitable access to health

279. It should also be noted that at the end of the Ministerial Council held on 5 November 2024, a set of urgent measures was adopted to promote equitable access to health, in line with the principles of equal opportunities, quality of care, financial sustainability of the system and complementarity between the public and private sectors. These measures include:

- Strengthening the governance of the medication management system;
- Improving coordination between the Ministry of Health and the National Health Insurance Fund for the optimization of conditions and procedures for the coverage of health services, according to international standards and best practices, within the framework of a joint technical committee;
- The creation of a joint committee in charge of the periodic setting of the prices of medicines, under the supervision of the National Agency for Medicines and Health Products, with the participation of the ministries concerned;
- The initiation of a comprehensive review of the health insurance system, based on available evaluation studies and stakeholder opinions;

- The establishment of a steering committee composed of representatives of the Presidency of the Government, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Social Affairs and health professionals, responsible for designing a system aimed at strengthening the attractiveness of public health structures, optimizing the use of medical skills and equipment, and to guarantee decent working conditions for medical and paramedical staff, while preserving the role of the public sector as a reference;
- The strengthening of governance mechanisms, the implementation of the integral digital transformation, the intensification of control and the improvement of management efficiency within public health structures;
- The acceleration of the presentation of the draft decree on the electronic data exchange system between the National Health Insurance Fund and health care providers in the public and private sectors, as well as the provision of the necessary means to generalize the use of the electronic health card, after its distribution to the insured persons.

2.4 Reproductive health services, including the reduction of maternal mortality (Article 14(1)(a) and (b))

280. Tunisia is recognized as a pioneer country in Africa and the Middle East in the field of reproductive health, notably through the adoption of the National Family Planning Program in 1966, including the recognition of the right to abortion.
281. This leading position is also reflected in the establishment in 1984 of the National Office for the Family and Population, which intervenes, within the framework of the Government's policy on human development and the promotion of the family, in the areas of awareness-raising, training and care related to reproductive health and family planning. The World Health Organization has designated, for the fourth time, the Agency's "International Centre for Training and Research in Reproductive and Population Health" as a collaborating centre for the period 2021–2025.

1.2.4 Data on the current state of reproductive health

• Maternal mortality:

282. The National Maternal and Newborn Health Programme has reduced the maternal mortality ratio from 68.9 per 100,000 live births in 1994 to 44.8 in 2008 and 37 in 2020. However, this rate remains below the target of 18 deaths per 100,000 live births. It should be noted that 60% of deaths are preventable.

❖ Assisted reproduction to treat infertility:

283. This issue is governed by Act No. 93 of 7 August 2001 on reproductive medicine. According to this law, reproductive medicine encompasses all clinical and biological acts performed in vitro or any other equivalent technique leading to human procreation outside the natural process.
284. Recourse to reproductive medicine is reserved for married couples, alive, using exclusively their own gametes, of childbearing age, and after obtaining their written consent.

285. Exceptionally, an unmarried person, undergoing treatment or about to undergo a medical procedure that may affect his or her fertility, may freeze his or her gametes for later use in a legal marriage.

286. Reproductive medicine activities and their implementation are defined by Decree No. 1027 of 2003, dated 28 April 2003.

❖ **Contraception :**

287. The majority of women use modern methods of contraception. The utilization rate increased in 2023 to 69%, compared to 62.8% in 2018. The rate of unmet need for contraception fell to 16.1%, a decrease of more than three points compared to 2018 (19.9%). The percentage of married women not using any contraceptive method is 45.9%, down more than three points from 2018 (49.3%).

❖ **Premarital medical examination:**

288. The presentation of a medical certificate is mandatory for the conclusion of the marriage, in accordance with Act No. 46 of 3 November 1964 of 3 November 1964, the Order of the Minister of Health of 28 July 1995, the Order of 16 December 1995 and Circular No. 58 of 8 May 1996.

289. The Ministry of Health works to raise awareness among future spouses by providing them with integrated recommendations to improve women's health, reduce maternal mortality, and prevent infectious and genetic diseases.

❖ **Pregnancy follow-up:**

290. Tunisia has adopted a pregnancy monitoring schedule with five consultations (in the absence of risk factors), divided as follows: one in the first trimester, one in the fourth month, one in the sixth month, one in the eighth month and one in the ninth month. In 2023, about 8 out of 10 pregnant women received at least four antenatal consultations from qualified professionals (78.6%), compared to 84.1% in 2018. This rate is lower among women from the poorest households (64.3 per cent), those with low levels of education (49 per cent) and those living in rural areas (72.4 per cent). In addition, the proportion of women who did not receive any medical follow-up of their pregnancy doubled in 2023 (9.3%), compared to 4.5% in 2018.

❖ **Pregnancy follow-up, delivery assistance and postnatal care**

291. In order to further encourage pregnant women to benefit from antenatal consultations, a communication campaign has been launched as part of a strategy to raise awareness among women of the importance of medical and paramedical examinations during pregnancy.

❖ **Qualified assistance at childbirth:**

292. The rate of deliveries under the supervision of skilled health professionals decreased slightly in 2023 (98%) compared to 2018 (99.5%). More than 4 out of 10 women give birth by caesarean section (44.4%), a rate well above the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended standard

of between 10 and 15%. This practice is more frequent in urban areas (50.8%) than in rural areas (35%).

❖ **Postnatal care:**

293. About 9 in 10 women (89.2%) had at least one postnatal check-up within two days of delivery, compared to 88.8% in 2018. This rate is higher in urban areas (91.9 per cent) than in rural areas (85.1 per cent). However, 61.8 per cent of mothers did not receive any postnatal follow-up, with a marked disparity between urban (54 per cent) and rural (73.2 per cent) areas.

❖ **Breastfeeding:**

294. More than 6 out of 10 newborns are not breastfed within one hour of birth (65.7%). Although the rate of exclusive breastfeeding has increased by 4 points in five years (13.5% in 2018 compared to 17.8% in 2023), it remains very low: more than 8 out of 10 infants are not exclusively breastfed.

295. To address this situation, the Ministry of Health is working to revive the breastfeeding program, including the following measures:

- Circular No. 46 of October 2021 on the advertising of breastmilk substitutes in public and private hospitals and health establishments, as well as in private clinics and pharmacies;
- Circular of November 2022 on the creation of a technical committee to review the legal framework on breastfeeding and child nutrition;
- Circular No. 58 of 2005 on strengthening awareness-raising activities in favour of breastfeeding;
- Law No. 24 of 4 March 1983 on quality control, marketing and information on the use of breast-milk substitutes and similar products.

• **Breast cancer and cervical cancer**

296. Breast cancer is the number one cancer affecting women, accounting for 34.1% of cases in 2021, with 3,606 new cases that same year. Its prevalence is constantly increasing: 16.7 cases per 100,000 women in 1994, 28.5 in 2004, 50.8 in 2020, and a projected 73 cases per 100,000 women in 2030.

297. Cervical cancer is in fifth place, with an incidence of 3.1 cases per 100,000 women, and is steadily decreasing.

2.2.4 National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2021–2030

298. As part of the strengthening of national efforts to respond in a coordinated manner to major sexual and reproductive health challenges, a national plan for 2021–2030 has been developed around five strategic axes:

- Strengthening the empowerment of target groups in their choices and decisions;
- Investment in comprehensive and quality services;
- Creation of a favourable legal, political, family, social and cultural environment;
- Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and research;
- Ensuring effective and inclusive governance.

3.4 Authorization of abortion (Article 14(2)(c))

299. Tunisia is one of the first Arab and Maghreb countries to have recognized and legalized the right to abortion. This right was introduced by Act No. 24 of 1965, dated 1 July 1965, and was initially reserved for married women with at least five children, subject to the consent of the spouse.

300. Since 1973, this right has been extended to all women, regardless of their marital status or the number of children, including married, unmarried women and minors, subject to the authorization of the legal guardian, in accordance with Act No. 53 of 1973 of 19 November 1973, amending article 214 of the Penal Code.

301. Under article 214 of the Act, abortion is permitted in the following two cases:

- During the first three months of pregnancy, by a legally authorised doctor, in a hospital, health establishment or an approved clinic;
- Beyond three months, if the continuation of the pregnancy is likely to compromise the physical or mental health of the mother, or if the fetus has a serious pathology. In this case, the operation must be carried out in an approved establishment, upon presentation of a medical report.

302. It should be noted that the number of abortions performed in public health facilities reached 20,000 in 2023, all of which were covered free of charge, not including procedures performed in private facilities.

303. Since 2002, public hospitals have also offered medical abortion services, free of charge, to women who request them.

304. Medical abortion is also performed for single women, especially adolescent girls, to free them from unwanted pregnancy outside marriage. The number of elective abortions among single women over the age of 18 increased from 2,658 in 2019 to 2,274 in 2022. For minors under 18 years of age, parental authorization is required.

4.4 Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) – Section 14(1)(d)

305. The HIV prevalence rate in Tunisian society remains low. In 2023, it was 0.13% among women. The number of new infections among women was 94 out of a total of 430 cases, while the

number of deaths related to the disease stood at 28. The number of women living with HIV is 631, all of whom are receiving appropriate antiretroviral treatment.

306. It should be recalled that Act No. 71 of 27 July 1992 on communicable diseases authorizes voluntary and anonymous testing for HIV and other communicable diseases. This provision encourages people concerned or suspected of being infected to go to health centres for care without disclosing their identity, as the doctor is not obliged to reveal the patient's identity in this context.
307. In addition to the National Programme for the Control of AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, established in 1987, the Ministry of Health has put in place a national HIV testing strategy, accompanied by an operational plan for 2022–2023. In this context, 19,000 screenings were carried out in 2022, including 17,000 targeting pregnant women, as part of official programmes aimed at preventing mother-to-child transmission.
308. In order to fight stigma and discrimination against key populations and people living with HIV, the Tunisian government has undertaken several structuring actions since 2019:
- Development of the HIV and Human Rights Strategy 2019–2023, aimed at addressing issues of stigma, discrimination and gender inequalities as part of the acceleration of the national response to HIV/AIDS;
 - Integration of a strategic axis dedicated to human rights and gender equality in the Strategic Plan 2021–2025;
 - Allocation of a significant part of the Global Fund grant (2022–2024) to a human rights organization for the implementation of activities to address barriers to access to prevention and care services related to human rights violations, stigma, discrimination, and gender inequalities;
 - Organisation, in 2022, by the Ministry of Health (via the National AIDS Control Programme), of dialogue circles between people living with HIV and health professionals in treatment centres, with an extension planned to other hospital services and health centres;
 - Revision of circulars on HIV and notifiable diseases to adapt them to human rights developments;
 - Recognition of the right of all Tunisians or foreign residents in Tunisia to benefit from free antiretroviral treatment, with the implementation, since July 2022, of a new therapeutic strategy based on high-quality and effective medicines, and the constitution of a strategic stock to deal with international supply delays.

5.4 Sex Education – Article 14(1)(g)

309. In addition to its role in promoting human rights and gender equality among adolescents and young people (cf. paragraph 98 of the report), the youth-friendly spaces, located in the 24 regional delegations of the National Office for the Family and Population, provide communication, health education, psychological and medical support for this age group, in the

areas of sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of risky behaviour. These services include the dissemination of reliable information, advice and referral to specialised structures.

5. Economic, social and cultural rights

1.5 Economic rights and social protection – Article 13

1.1.5 Equality and non-discrimination in employment and private initiative

310. The Tunisian State enshrines the principle of equal opportunities in access to employment, as stipulated in article 46 of the Constitution, guaranteeing every citizen the right to work, based on competence, equity, decent conditions and fair remuneration. This principle is also affirmed in the Civil Service Act (article 11) and the Labour Code (article 5 bis), which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 21 of Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women provides for a penalty of one to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 1,000 to 5,000 dinars, or both, for any person who commits an act of discrimination resulting in the refusal to hire the dismissal or punishment of the victim.
311. Pursuant to these provisions, direct recruitment of women accounted for 61% of hires in 2023, or 71% of all employment programs. The rate of loans granted by the Ministry of Employment to women entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises reached 60% in 2023. Women also accounted for 30% of the beneficiaries of the Tunisian Vocational Training Agency's training offers for the year 2022–2023, with an increasing orientation towards promising sectors such as information and communication technologies, electricity and electronics.
312. As part of the promotion of collective initiative with a social purpose, Decree No. 15 of 2022, dated March 20, 2022, on corporate citizens, allowed the creation of 100 corporate citizens by the end of October 2024, with a female participation rate of 46%.
313. With the aim of creating an environment conducive to and encouraging the creation, financing and support of corporate citizens, the ministerial councils held in 2024 approved a set of structuring measures. These include the development of simplified guides retracing the steps involved in the incorporation of these companies, the establishment of a unified digital platform and a single portal allowing the dematerialized completion of the related procedures, as well as the provision of incubators within the various structures concerned. Commercial enhancement programmes have also been set up to promote the products of these companies, accompanied by the granting of a distinctive label. In the same spirit, a draft law has been drafted to enshrine the principle of priority access for corporate citizens to the exploitation of state-owned agricultural land.
314. In addition, Law No. 30 of 2020, dated June 30, 2020, on the social and solidarity economy, contributes to the creation of new jobs. In this context, the "Youth" project (Support Programme for Tunisian Youth), supported by the European Union, has enabled the creation and support of 179 businesses in the social and solidarity economy sector between 2019 and 2023, the creation and strengthening of 1,341 jobs, the support of 1,235 young women and men, and the formation of 23 entrepreneurship clubs in this field. It should be noted that 69% of the beneficiaries are women.

315. With a view to strengthening the conditions for the exercise of trades and economic activities in the formal sector, the "Voices of 50 million African women" platform was launched in 2019. It is a digital platform facilitating the networking of African women entrepreneurs, the strengthening of their economic and business capacities, as well as access to various financial and non-financial services.
316. In September 2022, Tunisia hosted the "Women's Entrepreneurship Days in Tunisia and COMESA" forum, which provided an opportunity to exchange information on the evolution of women-led trade in Africa, to present COMESA's programmes dedicated to women entrepreneurs, and to share best practices in this field.
317. In 2019, the Arab Women's Center for Training and Research "Kawthar" set up a "one-stop shop for entrepreneurship and trade", facilitating women's access to business creation, import-export, technical training, financial education, women's collective entrepreneurship, environmental preservation and the fight against the effects of climate change. This programme has benefited 15,000 women and supported 19 agricultural groups by providing equipment, work tools, support and marketing assistance.
318. In the same spirit, the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, the main employers' organization, has created a "National Chamber of Women Entrepreneurs" dedicated to the specific problems of women entrepreneurs. The chamber has also founded an "Academy of Women Entrepreneurs", which provides training on topics such as financial management, marketing and labour law.
319. The Tunisian State guarantees transparency in the recruitment, promotion and dismissal of women, through rules codified in the Civil Service Law, the Labour Code, the framework collective agreement and sectoral collective agreements in the private sector. These agreements must include, in accordance with article 42 of the Labour Code, provisions relating to the conditions of employment and dismissal. Article 31, paragraph 3, of the same Code requires the employer to post in the workplace a notice mentioning the existence of the sectoral collective agreement and to give a copy of it to employees who request it.

2.1.5 Pay Equity

320. Tunisia has ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value. In December 2020, it also joined the "International Alliance for Pay Equity", after meeting the criteria relating to equal pay between women and men. Article 19 of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 provides for a fine of 2,000 dinars against any person who has committed an act of violence or economic discrimination based on sex, in particular in cases of "wage discrimination for work of equal value".
321. In the same context, and in order to promote the conclusion of gender-sensitive collective agreements, particularly in terms of pay, the Tunisian General Labour Union, the country's main trade union centre, has established the presence of at least two women in each of its decision-making bodies.

322. The principle of fiscal equality between women and men is enshrined in article 15 of the Constitution, which stipulates that "the payment of taxes and public charges is a duty of every person, in accordance with the principles of justice and equity. Any tax fraud constitutes a crime against the State and society".

323. The right of employed women to receive the same allowances as men is also recognized, in particular with regard to family allowances (paid for children) and the single wage allowance. This right is specified in the civil service by Prime Minister's Circular No. 42 of 25 October 1996,¹² and enshrined in the private sector by Law No. 30 of 1960, dated 14 September 1960, on the organization of social security schemes.

3.1.5 Work-life balance

324. In order to guarantee equal opportunities in employment and to allow a reconciliation between professional requirements and private life, several measures have been introduced: the flexible working hours regime¹³, teleworking¹⁴, and a specific part-time work regime with two-thirds of the salary received for the benefit of mothers¹⁵. In the private sector, the part-time work regime is provided for in article 94-2 et seq. of the Labour Code.

¹² This publication explains and clarifies the provisions of the Decree of 22 November 1918 relating to family allowances in the civil service, amended on numerous occasions, most recently by Decree No. 1906 of 1966. It also explains and clarifies the provisions of the Decree of 24 February 1944 instituting the single salary allowance in the civil service.

¹³ Article 7 of Decree No. 1710 of 2012 of 14 September 2012 on the distribution of working hours and days of employees of the State, local authorities and public administrative establishments.

¹⁴ Presidential Decree No. 310 of 2022 of 5 April 2022, regulating remote work for employees of the State, local authorities and public institutions, bodies and enterprises.

¹⁵ Law No. 58 of 2006 of 28 July 2006 establishing a special system of part-time work with two-thirds remuneration for mothers, as well as Order No. 3230 of 2006 of 12 December 2006 regulating the procedures and formulas for the implementation of the special system of part-time work with two-thirds remuneration for mothers.

325. The joint responsibility of both parents in the education and development of the child, as well as that of the State in this social mission, is enshrined in article 52 of the Constitution, which stipulates that "the rights of the child are guaranteed. His parents and the State must ensure his dignity, health, care, education and teaching. The State shall also provide all forms of protection to all children without discrimination, in accordance with the best interests of the child. The State takes care of abandoned children or children with no known parentage."
326. With regard to parental responsibility, it should be recalled that since 1993 a new division of roles within the family has been introduced, based on the principle of cooperation and equality between spouses in the sharing of responsibilities (cf. paragraph 256 of the report). The State's responsibility for abandoned or unparented children is reflected in the social, educational, health and residential services provided by a number of programmes and institutions, including:
- The "Child Foster Care Program," which benefited 124 girls in 2024;
 - The "Integrated Youth and Children's Centres", which welcomed 2,160 children in 2024, including 924 girls (42.77%);
 - The "Complexes de l'enfance" benefited 6,652 children, 49.8 per cent of whom were girls.

4.1.5 Freedom of choice of occupation

327. The Tunisian legislative framework guarantees women the freedom to choose their profession. This principle is manifested in particular by the criminalization, in Organic Law No. 61 of 2016 on the prevention and fight against trafficking in persons, of forced labour or servitude. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women also considers the prohibition or imposition of work as a form of economic violence.
328. Article 283 of the Labour Code stipulates that "the employer is not obliged to accept the worker proposed by the employment office, and the worker is not obliged to accept the job offered by the employment office". For protection purposes, articles 77 and 78 of the same Code prohibit the employment of women in mines, underground quarries, and in establishments or construction sites where operations for the recovery, processing or deposit of ancient metals are carried out.

5.1.5 Protection of women in the workplace

329. National legislation ensures the protection of women against exploitation by the employer, in particular through Law No. 37 of 2021, dated 16 July 2021, on the organization of domestic work. The Act aims to guarantee the right to decent work without discrimination, with respect for human dignity, in accordance with the Constitution and ratified international conventions. It provides in particular: a minimum wage, the regulation of working time, occupational safety and health measures, leave (including maternity leave), and affiliation to social security.
330. A model domestic work contract has been drawn up, specifying the identity of the employer and the employee, their respective obligations, the duration of the contract, the hours, the place of work, the tasks, the salary and its method of calculation, as well as the rest regime. The law

prohibits child labour in the home, any mediation in this regard, the confiscation of identity documents and the obligation of residence of the employee during rest periods.

331. In the same spirit, Law No. 51 of 2019, dated 11 June 2019, established a specific category of "transport of agricultural workers", supplemented by Government Decree No. 724 of 2020, dated 31 August 2020, setting the conditions for the exercise of this activity and the terms of access to this service. These texts aim to improve the transport conditions of agricultural workers, especially women, and to reduce the risk of accidents related to their activity.
332. Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated 22 October 2024, on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, introduces new provisions, including:
- Article 36 stipulates that "the agricultural worker shall benefit from agricultural transport if her identity is registered in the register of agricultural workers and confirmed by a special card issued by the competent regional delegation for agricultural development, in coordination with the regional committee for the social protection of agricultural workers";
 - Article 37 provides that "the Social Protection Fund for Agricultural Workers shall cover part of the transport costs according to the needs determined by the governors".
333. Law No. 48 of the year 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the Finance Law for the year 2025, provides for tax exemptions on vehicles intended for the transport of agricultural workers (Article 16).¹⁶
334. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 classifies the economic exploitation of women as a form of economic violence. It also prohibits and punishes sexual harassment in the workplace. Article 226 ter (new) of the Penal Code, introduced by this law, provides for a sentence of two years' imprisonment and a fine of five thousand dinars for the perpetrator of sexual harassment. The penalty is increased in several cases, including when the perpetrator exercises authority over the victim or abuses his or her professional position.
335. Several legislative and administrative measures have been adopted to prevent the exploitation or abuse of women in pornographic advertising and content. Decree No. 54 of 2022, dated September 13, 2022, in particular its article 26, provides for a sentence of six years' imprisonment and a fine of fifty thousand dinars against any person producing, disseminating, making available, sending, obtaining or possessing pornographic content representing a child or

¹⁶ Exemption from the single toll tax on road transport, the toll tax, the toll tax on passenger cars, the toll tax on motor cars running on heavy fuel oil and the toll tax on vehicles using liquefied petroleum gas.

a person appearing to be a child in acts or situations of a sexual nature. The same penalties apply to anyone using information systems to disseminate images or videos of physical or sexual assaults.

336. The exploitation of women in pornographic scenes is also considered an offence of trafficking in persons, in accordance with Organic Law No. 61 of 2016, dated 3 August 2016, which prohibits the production, possession or dissemination of pornographic content by any means (item 7 of Article 2).

6.1.5 Work in the informal sector

337. Given the high rate of women working in the informal sector (37 per cent out of a total of 52 per cent), Tunisia is working to improve the conditions for women to carry out their jobs and economic activities in this sector. Decree No. 33 of 2020, dated June 10, 2020, on the auto-entrepreneur regime, encourages workers in the informal sector to integrate the formal economy through a specific regime offering them tax and social benefits. In March 2024, the operational plan for the implementation of this scheme was validated at a ministerial meeting.
338. The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, through the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment, provides more than 100 points of contact in initiative spaces and employment offices in all regions of the country, in order to support people wishing to obtain the auto-entrepreneur card.
339. In November 2024, the electronic service platform "Plateforme de l'auto-entrepreneur" was launched, accompanied by explanatory videos presenting the regime and the registration procedures.
340. With regard to the protection and social security of women working in the informal sector, women shellfish pickers, seasonal and itinerant workers from rural areas, as well as women employed in the agricultural sector, have been included in the scope of the social security system¹⁷.

¹⁷ This is in line with Government Order No. 379 of 2019 of 22 April 2019 amending and supplementing Order No. 916 of 2002 of 22 April 2002 on the modalities of implementation of Law No. 32 of 2002 of 12 March 2002 on the social security scheme for certain categories of workers in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

7.1.5 Social security coverage

341. The "Ahmini" (Protect Me) program was launched to facilitate the enrolment of women agricultural workers in the social security system, especially those who do not benefit from it. This program is part of the National Plan for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls, adopted in 2017. The "Ahmini" program is based on a mobile application that allows rural women to pay their contributions without having to travel to the social security offices.
342. An integrated programme has been put in place, including nationwide awareness-raising campaigns by labour inspectors among workers and artisans in the informal sector, both men and women, to encourage them to join the formal economy and join one of the social security schemes.
343. In the same spirit, Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated October 22, 2024, on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, is a major step forward. It establishes a specific social security scheme for this category, covering:
- Health insurance benefits, including occupational accidents and diseases;
 - Old-age, disability and survivors' pensions.

This scheme applies to:

- Self-employed agricultural workers who mainly carry out an agricultural activity on their own account, whose contributions are paid by the State during the first three years of activity;
 - Salaried agricultural workers, whether they are employed regularly or intermittently by one or more employers, for a period equal to or greater than fifteen days per month, whether they are hired on a permanent, seasonal or occasional basis. The State also pays its contributions during the first three years of activity.
344. In addition, Law No. 48 of 2024, dated 9 December 2024, relating to the Finance Law for the year 2025, established a special fund entitled "Insurance Fund against loss of employment for economic reasons", intended to finance an insurance scheme against collective loss of employment for causes not attributable to the contracting parties, and to set up a social support system for workers made redundant for economic reasons (Article 18).

8.1.5 Combating girls' labour

345. National legislation sets the minimum legal age for child labour in all activities at 16 years (article 53 of the Labour Code). However, it authorizes, under certain conditions, the work of children under this age in family establishments under the authority of the father, mother or guardian, in agricultural work and in light non-industrial and non-agricultural activities, for a maximum period of two hours per day (Articles 54 and 55). The minimum age is raised to 18 years for work that may endanger the health, safety or morals of children (Article 58). Under no circumstances may children be employed as domestic servants.

346. Tunisia prohibits all forms of exploitation of children, especially girls. Article 2 of Organic Law No. 61 of 2016 qualifies as "practices assimilated to slavery" the economic or sexual exploitation of children in the context of their employment. Article 23 of the same text, under the heading "Aggravating circumstances", provides for a sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment and a fine of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand dinars in the event of trafficking in children or the use of children in this context.
347. In the same context, the Ministry of Social Affairs, in partnership with the International Labour Organization and as part of the "PROTECTE" program, has implemented the "Together Against Child Labor" program, included in the National Plan to Combat Child Labour (2017–2022).
348. It should be noted that cases of economic exploitation or begging involving children are considered to be less frequent factors of vulnerability than others. In 2020, child protection representatives received 441 reports on this subject, 34.3% of which concerned girls. In 2021, 392 reports were recorded, of which 35.8% concerned girls¹⁸.

9.1.5 Unpaid domestic work

349. In 2023, Tunisia started work on issues related to unpaid domestic work, as part of the project "Improving Gender Equality in the Political and Economic Spheres" implemented in the following countries: Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. The first step is a diagnosis of unpaid work in Tunisia, the results of which will be used to develop a strategy to strengthen women's participation in the workforce, with action plans covering the period 2025–2027.

10.1.5 Maternity protection

350. Law No. 44 of the year 2024, dated August 12, 2024, on the organization of maternity and paternity leave in the public service, the public sector and the private sector, introduced for the first time a 15-day prenatal leave. It also extended maternity leave from two to three months with full salary maintenance for civil servants and public sector employees, and an allowance for female employees in the private sector. A postnatal leave of up to four months with half pay (or severance in the private sector) has been introduced. Paternity leave has been extended from two to seven days.

¹⁸ Annual report on the protection of children at risk and children in conflict with the law 2020-2021, based on the activities of child protection delegates.

351. Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated 22 October 2024, on the social protection scheme for women agricultural workers, also provides for the right of agricultural workers to maternity leave and allowances in accordance with the legislation in force (Article 25).

2.5 Right to food security (Article 15)

352. Tunisia has adopted several measures to guarantee women's right to food security and adequate nutrition, including through:

❖ Economic empowerment of women working in the agricultural sector

353. Given the high number of women active in the agricultural sector — more than 300,000 in 2023 — Tunisia has implemented several measures to strengthen their economic empowerment.

354. The most recent of these measures is Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated October 22, 2024, on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, which aims in particular at the economic integration of this category through the following mechanisms:

- Training, support and supervision provided by the National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment, with a monthly allowance granted to the beneficiary or promoter of an agricultural micro-enterprise during the period of training, support or internship;
- Priority access to vocational training and employment programmes, as well as agricultural programmes within the framework of regional development, in accordance with the legislation in force;
- Financing the creation of agricultural micro-enterprises in the form of "family farms" or individual initiatives, through the Social Protection Fund for Agricultural Workers. This funding is intended for women who own or legally manage agricultural land, or who are self-employed;
- Access to incentives and benefits related to agricultural investments for projects carried out within the framework of the economic integration of agricultural workers;
- Mandate given to the Tunisian Post Office for the implementation of an electronic payment and collection system dedicated to agricultural workers.

355. It should be noted that Article 16 of Law No. 48 of the year 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the Finance Law for 2025, amended Article 38 of the Personal Income Tax and Corporate Tax Code, exempting agricultural workers who are beneficiaries of the interventions of the Social Protection Fund for Agricultural Workers from the tax on income generated during a period of ten years from 1 January of the year in which they joined the Fund.

356. In 2023, the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly launched a new pilot programme for the economic empowerment of women agricultural workers, initially implemented in the districts of Kairouan and Sidi Bouzid.

357. This program has led to the creation of 73 agricultural projects, with a budget of 1 million dinars. From 2024, the experiment has been extended to the district of Kasserine, in particular to the Hassi El Frid delegation, with an increase in the budget to 2.5 million dinars.
358. In the same context, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries has supported 371 women's projects in the field of livestock. This support is provided by the "Rural Women Support Officers" present in the 24 regional delegations for agricultural development, as well as by the other structures of the Ministry (General Directorate of Financing and Investment, Agricultural Investment Promotion Agency, professional structures).
359. The Ministry has also supported the creation of 222 women's agricultural development groups with 6,335 members, and 24 agricultural service cooperatives with 1,254 members. Since 2020, the Ministry of Family has created and strengthened 34 women's groups in 13 districts, with a budget of 1.756 million dinars for the benefit of 1,033 members. These groups aim to promote the spirit of initiative, develop women's skills and promote the products of origin.
360. In terms of training and awareness-raising, the Ministry of Agriculture organized 165 information days on credit mechanisms, with the participation of 2,779 beneficiaries. Training in hydroponic agriculture, adapted to water saving, is also provided by the Extension and Training Agency.
361. The Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fisheries, in partnership with agricultural training centers and regional unions, organizes on-site technical sessions for women farmers in various fields: poultry breeding, beekeeping, cultivation and distillation of medicinal and aromatic plants, cheese making. Visits are also organised to discover successful experiences and strengthen the organisation within the structures of the social and solidarity economy. A "Guide for Women Farmers" has been developed to consolidate programmes and services for women farmers.
362. In terms of the marketing of agricultural products, the Ministry of Agriculture has set up, as part of the project for the development of irrigated perimeters, a point of sale at the headquarters of the Ministry and several points of sale in the premises of the regional delegations for agricultural development in the districts of Ben Arous, Jendouba, Le Kef, Bizerte, etc. Sousse, Mahdia, Sfax, Sidi Bouzid and Kairouan.
363. The ministry also facilitated the marketing of women's groups' products through a joint program with the Chamber of Commercial Supermarkets, covering 12 groups in the districts of Kebili, Sidi Bouzid, Mahdia and Sousse.
364. At the same time, 1,944 women farmers who are members of agricultural development groups, agricultural service cooperatives and other structures participated in local, regional and national fairs and exhibitions, including the annual National Exhibition organized on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women (15 October).
365. The Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fisheries also ensures the participation of women farmers, groups and agricultural enterprises in the international agriculture, agricultural machinery and fishing fairs "SIAMAP", by offering them exhibition spaces and inviting them to participate in various events, markets and exhibitions.
366. It should be noted that, following the adoption of Law No. 30 of 2020, dated June 30, 2020, on the social and solidarity economy, agricultural service cooperatives and development groups in

the agriculture and fisheries sectors can now obtain the "Social and Solidarity Economy Company" label. This makes it possible to strengthen the services offered to their members, especially women.

❖ **Facilitating women's access to drinking water, particularly in rural areas**

367. In accordance with article 48 of the Constitution, which obliges the State to ensure equitable access to drinking water and to preserve water resources for future generations, several measures have been taken to facilitate women's access to safe drinking water, especially in rural areas. These measures include:

- The construction of supply routes to bring drinking water closer to rural areas that are not served or supplied by unsustainable resources (treatment plants, reservoirs, pumping stations and cast iron pipe networks);
- The installation of regularly supplied domestic tanks in dispersed rural areas;
- Raising awareness among rural women of the need to participate in management structures (hydraulic groups and groups of irrigated perimeters);
- The establishment of a training and supervision program for groups in the water sector, on the operation and maintenance of the hydraulic systems made available to them.

368. The main challenge in this area lies in the low representation of women in drinking water groups: women represent only 1% of board members or group presidents, and only 4% of technical managers. This under-representation is also observed in the groups of irrigated areas, where women represent only 1% of the members of the boards of directors or presidents, and 5% of technical managers.

❖ **Continued efforts to combat malnutrition**

369. Tunisia is among the countries with low levels of hunger, ranking 29th out of 127 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2024.

370. Significant progress has been made in the fight against malnutrition, especially among women and children, through measures adopted in the economic, social, educational and health fields, as well as through the establishment of the National Institute of Nutrition and Food Technologies in 1969. This teaching hospital is responsible for monitoring the nutritional status of the population, preventing, diagnosing and treating diet-related diseases, and conducting studies on nutrition, dietary pathologies, the relationship between diet and health, and water quality.

371. Despite these advances, several challenges persist, constituting a double burden: micronutrient deficiency on the one hand, and overweight and obesity on the other. Statistical data reveals:

372. For women:

- 30% of pregnant women suffer from anaemia, exposing infants to micronutrient deficiencies;

- 3 out of 4 women are overweight, and 30% suffer from obesity;
- 30% have hypertension, compared to 28% of men;
- 41% have hyperlipidemia, compared to 43% in men.

373. In children:

- 12% suffer from obesity;
- Only 17.8% benefit from exclusive breastfeeding;
- 36% of children aged 0 to 3 years have an inadequate diet;
- 34% are breastfed within one hour of birth;
- Only 18% of women continue to breastfeed exclusively for up to six months.

374. To address these challenges, Tunisia has adopted a National Multisectoral Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2018–2025, based on intersectoral collaboration and structured around five axes:

- Intra- and inter-sectoral governance.
- Reduction of modifiable risk factors (unbalanced diet, sedentary lifestyle);
- Screening and management of non-communicable diseases;
- Development of a communication plan;
- Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system.

375. The 2023–2025 participatory operational plan of this strategy has been launched, with sector-specific actions, aimed at achieving positive indicators for the prevention and reduction of noncommunicable diseases by 2025.

376. With regard to children, the National Strategy for the Healthy Nutrition of Children Aged 0 to 18 years was adopted in 2024. It aims to improve nutritional indicators for this age group and promote healthy eating behaviours among families, parents and children.

3.5 Right to adequate housing (Article 16)

377. The right to adequate housing is recognized as an essential condition for a dignified life, in accordance with article 22 of the Constitution.

378. In accordance with this commitment, the Tunisian State has put in place several programmes and mechanisms to guarantee this right, particularly for women. These programs include:

- The Special Social Housing Program;
- The Housing Promotion Fund for the benefit of employees;

- The First Housing Program.

379. Under the Special Social Housing Program, the total number of beneficiaries of housing and social plots in 2022 amounted to 7,468, of which 2,415 were women, or 32% of the total, distributed as follows:

- 2,093 women were provided with housing under the component of the removal of rudimentary housing and its replacement with new, renovated or expanded housing, i.e. 31 per cent of the 6,655 housing units allocated;
- 322 women have benefited from housing or social housing under the component of the construction and provision of housing and social lots, i.e. 40% of the 813 units allocated.

380. The low rate of women beneficiaries in the context of the replacement of rudimentary housing can be explained by the condition of prior occupation of rudimentary housing, as men are statistically more likely to have a property.

381. As part of the Housing Promotion Fund for the benefit of employees, 177 women benefited from housing or a plot in 2022, compared to 253 men, or 43% of the housing allocated by the fund.

382. Under the First Housing Program, 43 women benefited from housing in 2022 out of a total of 107 loans granted, or 40%. The available lists show that this type of housing is usually allocated to both spouses or under the community of property regime, which makes it possible to estimate that about 50 per cent of women beneficiaries in this programme are women.

4.5 Right to a positive cultural environment (Article 17)

383. Article 49 of the Constitution guarantees the right to culture and freedom of creation. It provides for the State to encourage cultural creation, to support national culture in its rootedness, diversity and renewal, and to promote the values of tolerance, rejection of violence and openness to other cultures. It protects cultural heritage and guarantees its access to future generations.

384. Pursuant to these provisions, the Tunisian State guarantees women the right to live in a positive cultural environment and to participate at all levels in the formulation of cultural policies, as evidenced by the following data:

385. In 2023, the number of cultural clubs stood at 1,234, covering various fields such as theatre, music, dance and visual arts. These clubs had 16,847 members, 54% of whom were women. In urban areas, women prefer arts clubs, while in rural areas they are more likely to go to craft clubs (see annex 15 to the report).

386. Specialized women's clubs have been established within cultural institutions in partnership with civil society. Their number rose to 15 in 2023, in addition to 57 clubs dedicated to local and material heritage (crafts and traditional trades). The rate of support for women's artistic works was increased to 42.43% in 2023, compared to 40% in 2022.

387. The programming of women's artistic creations represented between 35% and 45% of the works and cultural activities programmed in 2023, spread over all the districts. The number of award-winning women's works rose to 8 in 2023, compared to 4 in 2022. CREDIF awards the "Zubaida Bachir" Prize for women's writing, in accordance with Decree No. 585 of the year 2020, dated August 25, 2020, relating to the creation and organization of this national prize, awarded every March 8 on the occasion of International Women's Day. The prize has six categories: literary creation in Arabic and French, scientific research in Arabic and French, research on Tunisian women and gender approach.

388. Since 2020, a woman has been at the head of the Ministry of Culture. Despite the changes in the holders, this position remained held by a woman. In addition, 6 women run public institutions of a non-administrative nature out of the 13 under the Ministry of Culture. Women also run 99 houses of culture out of a total of 225 across the country.

5.5 Right to a healthy and sustainable environment (Article 18)

389. The right to a healthy environment is enshrined in the Tunisian Constitution, article 47 of which states that "the State guarantees the right to a healthy and balanced environment, as well as the contribution to the preservation of the climate. It must provide the necessary means for the elimination of environmental pollution."

390. The specificities related to women's environmental rights have been taken into account through several measures. Tunisian women actively participate in the planning, management and preservation of the environment. This is reflected in particular in the adoption, on 12 August 2022, by the Peer Council for Gender Equality, of the "National Plan for Women and Climate Change", the main objective of which is to strengthen women's resilience to the effects of climate change. The implementation process for this plan was officially launched on January 23, 2023.

391. In the same context, the gender approach has been integrated into the action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for Ecological Transition, with the creation of a national focal point responsible for ensuring the integration of this approach in all biodiversity-related projects.

392. In terms of improving the living environment and combating pollution, the Ministry of the Environment has defined several objectives for the period 2024–2026, including:

- Strengthening the role of women in reducing household waste at source;
- Encouraging women's entrepreneurship and developing women's leadership capacities in activities related to recycling and recovery of household waste;
- Improving the knowledge and technical skills of women and girls in the field of domestic organic waste recovery.

393. In the area of research and investment in renewable energy sources and appropriate technologies, the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly' share of its own funding for women's projects has been increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the total cost of the project. through the "Raïdat" (Pioneers) financing line, for projects in the fields of renewable

and alternative energy, sustainable agriculture, modern technologies, green, circular and blue economy.

394. In this context, six projects have been financed and put into production in the districts of Kasserine, Gafsa, Jendouba, Sousse, Kairouan and Sfax. Among them:

- A project to develop agricultural land and connect deep wells to the electricity grid by solar energy (132,000 dinars);
- A project in Gafsa on tree planting and alternative energy irrigation;
- A solar installation project in Kairouan;
- A dry car wash project in Jendouba.

395. In 2024, the prize for the best female scientific research project was awarded for work on the valorization of potato peels to produce cyclodextrin and absorbent materials for the effective treatment of polluted water.

396. In the field of energy transition, the female employment rate reached 36%, exceeding the global average of 32%.

397. With regard to the management of hazardous waste, Tunisia applies strict standards set out in Act No. 41 of 1996 of 10 June 1996 on waste and waste management, as amended by Act No. 14 of 30 January 2001. Title V of this law is devoted to "provisions specific to hazardous waste". Decree No. 2339 of 10 October 2000 of 10 October 2000 establishes the list of hazardous wastes, divided into 20 groups, including radioactive waste, waste from medical or veterinary establishments, and waste from oil refining.

6.5 Right to sustainable development, including the right to property, access to land and credit (Article 19)

398. Article 13 of the Constitution imposes an obligation on the State to "ensure that conditions are created for the development of the capacities of young people and that they are provided with all the necessary means to enable them to contribute actively to the overall development of the country". Similarly, Article 18 enjoins the State to "make available all legal and material means enabling unemployed persons to launch development projects".

399. In accordance with women's right to sustainable development, the Tunisian State is committed to involving them in the development process and enabling them to benefit from it, as evidenced by a number of concrete measures.

400. Thus, the "Tunisia 2035" policy document, developed in July 2022 and constituting a reference framework for future development plans, includes several strategic axes, including the one entitled "Human capital, pillar of sustainable development". Its third section is devoted to "the elevation of women to the rank of partner with equal opportunities, a sine qua non condition for sustainable and equitable development".

401. Based on this document, the 2023-2025 development plan was developed, integrating several strategic options for women, including strengthening their economic and social empowerment, supporting their participation in public life, improving their capacity to adapt to climate change, as well as ensuring equal opportunities in education and training. It should be noted that women accounted for 33 per cent of those who contributed to the development of this plan.

402. These strategic orientations are in line with the measures provided for in the 2016-2020 five-year development plan in favour of the women's sector, which focus mainly on achieving equal opportunities between the sexes, combating discrimination against women, and strengthening their economic, social and political empowerment, including for women with disabilities¹⁹. This plan was designed according to a participatory approach involving all stakeholders, economic actors and civil society components²⁰.

403. In addition, efforts have been made to improve women's access to productive resources (right to property, access to land and credit), through a set of the **most significant measures**:

- **Concerning access to land**

404. Actions have been taken to enable women and girls to benefit from the rental of State agricultural lots. Thus, the proportion of these lots allocated to young girls between 2018 and 2024 is close to 45% of the total lots rented in the various programs (unemployed, young farmers, technicians). In addition, the principle of equality in the use of State assets has been enshrined, as well as preferential provisions for the allocation of State agricultural land to women active in the agricultural sector (free rental), within the framework of the draft Code of State Property.

- **Concerning the strengthening of women's land ownership**

405. The adoption of Act No. 91 of 9 November 1998 on the regime of co-ownership between spouses is a significant step forward in that it contributes to women's access to land ownership, thus enabling them to obtain the necessary financing to carry out their projects, either through the sale of these properties, or through the sale of these properties. or by offering them as collateral to banks (paragraphs 229 and 230 of the report).

¹⁹ Five-Year Development Plan 2016-2020, Volume III, Sectoral Content, pp. 331 et seq.

²⁰ The adoption of this participatory approach was highlighted in the Prime Minister's Circular No. 19 of 2015, dated July 25, 2015, setting the general framework and methodology for the preparation of the 2016-2020 development plan.

- **Concerning access to credit**

406. For women who cannot access traditional financing mechanisms, specialized banking structures have been set up, including the Tunisian Solidarity Bank, which supports microprojects directly or through associations granting credit, without the requirement of a guarantee.
407. Since 1999, a new system of granting microcredits has been established, embodied in Organic Act No. 67 of 1999, dated 15 July 1999, on microcredits granted by associations.
408. In this context, and following the adoption of Law No. 30 of 2020, dated June 30, 2020, on the social and solidarity economy, agricultural service cooperatives and development groups in the agriculture and fisheries sectors can now obtain the "social and solidarity economy enterprise" label. This makes it possible to strengthen the services offered to their members, especially women, in the area of microcredit.
409. Decree No. 117 of 5 November 2011 on the organization of the activity of microfinance institutions also allowed public limited companies to distribute microcredits for the first time.
410. In the same spirit, the Tunisian government has invested in a series of economic empowerment measures and programs targeting women and addressing their specific needs, including through the creation of financing lines for the implementation of projects, thus contributing to the reduction of women's poverty and their financial and economic inclusion. Key measures and programmes include:

- ✓ **Women's Economic Empowerment Programs and Measures**

411. The National Plan for the Promotion of the Women's Economic Initiative "Raïda" (2016–2020) targets unemployed women and girls, whether they are with little or medium education or university degrees. It is based on a line of financing for very small and small projects. This plan has led to the creation of 4,463 projects, including 3,932 very small projects and 531 small and medium-sized projects, for a total budget of around 40 million dinars.

- ✓ **The new National Programme for Women's Entrepreneurship and Gender-Responsive Investment "Raidat" (2022-2025)**

412. It's a more inclusive program. It particularly targets innovative sectors with high production and development potential. In 2022 and 2023, 3,679 financing agreements were issued in the 24 districts, for an amount exceeding 35 million dinars, generating more than 5,600 direct jobs. The sectoral breakdown of the projects financed is as follows: handicrafts (52.2%), services (29.7%), traditional crafts (9%), agriculture (7.6%) and trade (1.5%).

- ✓ **The Pilot Program for the Economic Empowerment of Women Agricultural Workers**

413. The program launched in 2023 in the districts of Kairouan and Sidi Bouzid, has led to the creation of 73 agricultural projects for a budget of 1 million dinars. From 2024, the program has been extended to the district of Kasserine (Hassi El Frid delegation), with a budget increased to 2.5 million dinars.

✓ **The Economic Empowerment of Families in Special Circumstances Program**

414. The program targets heads of households of both sexes, unemployed graduates or professionals, poor or low-income single-parent families, as well as those at risk of radicalization. In 2023, approximately 2,969 families were targeted, 80% of whom were women beneficiaries.

✓ **The economic empowerment programme for mothers of pupils at risk of dropping out of school**

415. The program was launched in 2017 and primarily targets girls in rural areas and densely populated neighborhoods. Since its launch, 1,098 mothers have benefited from a direct income, allowing 4,438 students to continue their education.

✓ **The national "Samida" (resilient) programme for the economic empowerment of women who are victims or at risk of violence**

416. The program aims to strengthen their employability. In 2023, it mobilized 1 million dinars and enabled 93 women survivors to benefit from an income in various districts.

✓ **The Poor or Low-Income Economic Empowerment Program**

417. The program for the economic empowerment of poor or low-income people, beneficiaries of the social security program and people with disabilities, was instituted by Decree No. 715 of the year 2022, dated September 20, 2022. It gives priority to women, people with disabilities, unemployed higher education and vocational training graduates. In 2023, 29,700 families benefited from the monthly allowance, including 28,400 women heads of single-parent households (58% widowed, 38% divorced, 4% single). In addition, 282 people received an income, 23 per cent of whom were women.

✓ **New measures included in the 2025 Finance Law to support the financial and economic inclusion of vulnerable and low-income groups and encourage them to launch projects.**

418. Law No. 48 of the year 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the finance law for 2025, provides in its article 21 for the creation of a financing line of 20 million dinars from the resources of the National Employment Fund, intended for vulnerable and limited income people. It allows the granting of interest-free loans, of a maximum amount of 10,000 dinars per project, in all economic sectors, for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2025, repayable over six years, with a year of grace.

6. Right to peace (Article 10)

6.1 Women's participation in peace, conflict prevention and management (Article 10(1)), and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation (Article 10(2)(e))

❖ At the national level

419. In June 2018, the Council of Ministers adopted the National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The plan was launched in July of the same year.

420. The plan aims to empower women and girls, strengthen their participation in building sustainable peace and stability, eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination, and protecting society from conflict, extremism and terrorism. It was broken down into sectoral plans, then into a general implementation plan. An international conference was organized in October 2019 to mobilize support for its implementation and financing. A second version of the plan is being developed, taking into account national priorities and lessons learned from the first draft, including human and financial resources and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
421. The National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism and Terrorism (2023–2027) includes a focus on "empowering women in their roles and responsibilities to actively contribute to local and national prevention and reintegration efforts". It highlights the important role of women in countering violent extremism, as agents of positive change within the family, society and public spheres, particularly in rural and border areas.
422. It should be recalled that following the December 2010 revolution, Tunisia experienced a period of political instability. Women have played a key role in mediating and engaging in dialogue among political actors, contributing to the building of a pluralistic democracy. This role was recognized by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 to the president of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, a member of the Quartet sponsor of the national dialogue.

❖ **Internationally**

423. Tunisian women actively participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions and plans, including:
- In military command roles: In 2022, a woman was appointed as a "Specialist Planning Officer" in the Department of Peace Operations of the United Nations Secretariat. In 2024, a woman was appointed commander of a helicopter unit in the Central African Republic, and another as an arms and ammunition expert in the justice support cell of the peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
 - As military observers and staff officers: female participation in these functions is 22.7%.
 - As officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers: since 2019, 50 women have been deployed in military air units, divided between 21 in the Republic of Mali and 29 in the Central African Republic.

6.2 Reduction of military spending in favour of social spending (Article 10(3))

424. Since its independence, Tunisia has adopted a policy that favours the social sectors over military spending. Spending on education, health and social protection remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2021, accounting for about half of total public spending, despite a slight decrease between 2019 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 crisis.
425. In 2021:

- Appropriations allocated to education have taken first place, accounting for 26% of public spending, or 8% of GDP;
- Appropriations for poverty alleviation and social protection accounted for 17% of public spending, or 6% of GDP;
- Appropriations devoted to health represented 5% of public expenditure, or 2% of GDP.

7. Protection of women in situations of armed conflict (Article 11)

7.1 Protection measures for asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons, and ensuring prosecution of perpetrators (Article 11(1) – (3))

426. Following the revolution of 17 December 2010 – 14 January 2011, and particularly since 2011, Tunisia has welcomed thousands of Libyans fleeing the deteriorating security situation, notably in the Choucha camp in Ben Guerdane (Tataouine district). In the same year, thousands of Syrian refugees also fled the war in their country.

427. In recent years, Tunisia has seen a large influx of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, arriving regularly or irregularly.

428. In addition to the provisions mentioned in paragraph 202 et seq. of the report concerning the protection of refugees, the Tunisian State protects asylum-seekers and refugees from all forms of violence, including rape and sexual exploitation, in accordance with the national laws applicable to Tunisian women, including:

- Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 on the Elimination of Violence against Women;
- Organic Law No. 61 of 2016 on the Prevention and Fight against Trafficking in Persons;
- Organic Law No. 50 of 2018 on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Organic Law No. 10 of 2019, dated January 30, 2019, on the creation of the social security program, including migrants legally residing in Tunisia.

429. In order to highlight the violence suffered by migrant women and girls and to guarantee their fundamental right to humane treatment, regardless of their legal status, the National Observatory for the Fight against Violence against Women has carried out several studies on the forms of violence reported by migrant women.

430. Several meetings and workshops were organized around this theme, including:

- In 2021, the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) launched the initiative "7 days of action against violence against women and people in vulnerable situations", under the slogan "The right is a right". This initiative included training sessions on the reception and orientation of migrant women victims of violence, their rights, gender-based violence, reproductive health and digital security, for the security forces in the districts of southern Tunisia. It also included a human library with four testimonies from migrant women, as well as activities for journalists in Medenine on the media treatment of violence against migrant

women. A "Press-Room" application has been designed to provide useful information on issues related to women and migration.

- In 2020 and 2021, the Ministry of Interior organized six study days on the culture of human rights in the districts of Tunis, Mahdia, Djerba, Kairouan, Hammamet and Tozeur, as well as a training of trainers session for teams specialized in crimes of violence, including sexual violence, and the rights of refugees and foreigners. An awareness-raising capsule on the early detection of cases of recruitment of women and children in violent extremism and organized crime was broadcast on the ministry's official website in November 2020.
- In 2022, the Municipality of Tunis, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Family, organized a conference on combating violence against migrant women.
- In 2022, the Ministry of Family organized a workshop on the joint care of migrant children.
- On 7 June 2023, the National Migration Observatory, in partnership with IOM, organized a workshop on the protection of the rights of migrant children, as part of the action plan of the working group in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, established in 2021 and coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- The National Migration Observatory also organized several workshops on the same theme: presentation of the Global Compact for Migration (February 2022), international standards on migration (October 2022), legal framework for migration in Tunisia (December 2022), monitoring the implementation of the Global Compact in light of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Vision 2063 (May 2023).

431. . In 2022, an information system dedicated to children in vulnerable situations or in conflict with the law was launched, with a specific window for migrant children. The system is a source of statistical data on child protection, children at risk and children in conflict with the law. An annual report and a statistical bulletin on the activities of the regional child protection offices are published at the end of each year.

432. In 2022, trafficking cases involving foreigners accounted for 50% of the cases recorded by the National Authority, i.e. 383 cases, compared to 595 in 2021, 366 in 2020 and 631 in 2019. The foreign victims are mainly irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, 75% of whom are Ivorian nationals, mostly women exploited in domestic work.

433. For the provisions relating to the prosecution of perpetrators and the care of foreign victims, see paragraph 193 et seq. of the report.

2.7 Measures to ensure that no child, especially girls, takes a direct part in hostilities and that no child is recruited (Article 11(4))

434. Tunisia ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict by Act No. 42 of 7 May 2002. It has presented its initial and periodic reports to the relevant UN committee.

The legislation in force, including article 18 of the Child Protection Code, guarantees children all the rights provided for in international humanitarian law, as enshrined in ratified international treaties, and prohibits their participation in wars and armed conflicts. Article 19 of the same Code prohibits the exploitation of children in all forms of organized crime, including indoctrination to hatred and violence. Article 10 of Organic Law No. 26 of 2015, on combating terrorism and money-laundering, provides for the application of the maximum penalty when the terrorist offence is committed with the participation of a child.

- 435. Organic Law No. 61 of 2016, on the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons, criminalizes the recruitment of persons, including children. Article 2 defines the recruitment or indoctrination of persons in vulnerable situations as a treaty, defined as any situation in which a person feels compelled to submit to exploitation, in particular because of his or her status as a child.
- 436. In 2017, Tunisia signed the Act of Accession to the Group of States Supporting the "Paris Principles and Commitments for the Protection of Children from Unlawful Use and Recruitment by Armed Forces or Groups" at the "Protecting Children from War" ministerial conference, organized by the Government of France and UNICEF in Paris on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of these principles.
- 437. Concrete measures to prevent the recruitment of children include setting the minimum legal age for recruitment at 20 years. Recruitment from the age of 18 is authorized only in exceptional cases, at the request of the person concerned, with parental authorization and the approval of the Minister of National Defence.
- 438. Other measures have been taken to prohibit the sale of weapons, including small arms, to countries known to recruit or use children in combat. The Department of National Defence is involved, within the framework of the border control system, in the fight against smuggling, including the fight against weapons that could be used in military operations in neighbouring countries where children could be recruited.

8. Rights specific to certain categories of women

1.8 Widows (Articles 20 and 21)

- 439. The Personal Status Code provides a framework for the rights of women, regardless of their family or social situation, at all stages of their lives, guaranteeing their rights in the event of marriage, divorce or the death of a spouse.
- 440. Among the legal measures to prevent the social stigmatization of widows is the granting of a lifetime pension called the "surviving spouse's pension", paid to the widow of a public or private sector employee. He or she also receives family allowances under the same conditions as the deceased, as well as the "death benefit" and the "temporary orphan's pension".²¹

²¹ Law No. 12 of 1985 of 5 March 1985 on the Civil and Military Retirement and Survivors' Pension Scheme in the Public Sector, Law No. 33 of 1960 of 14 December 1960 on Amendments to the Invalidity, Old Age and Survivors' Pension Scheme and the Non-Agricultural Old Age and Survivors' Allowance Scheme, and Order No. 499 of 1974 of

441. Organic Law No. 22 of 11 March 2024, amending Law No. 27 of 1993 on the national identity card, also contributes to the fight against the stigmatization of widows (see paragraph 235 of the report).
442. With regard to parental authority over minor children, article 154 of the Personal Status Code stipulates that "the guardian of a minor is his or her father or mother in the event of the father's death".
443. The right of the widow to remarry the person of her choice is guaranteed by Tunisian law. Impediments to marriage are defined in article 14 of the Personal Status Code and do not include the prohibition of a widow from remarrying. However, the article provides for a temporary ban linked to the 'iddah period, intended to avoid confusion of filiations. Article 35 sets this period at four months and ten days for a widow, or until delivery if she is pregnant at the time of death, with a maximum pregnancy period of one year from the date of death.
444. The widow's right to inherit from her husband is guaranteed by law, depending on the family situation: she inherits a quarter in the absence of children, and an eighth in the presence of a child.
445. The widow's right to remain in the matrimonial home after the husband's death is not explicitly enshrined in Tunisian law. However, in practice, she usually remains there with the agreement and support of her heir children.

2.8 Older women (Article 22)

446. Article 53 of the Constitution states that the State "guarantees assistance to the elderly without support". In accordance with this principle, Act No. 114 of 31 October 1994 of 31 October 1994 on the protection of the elderly contains a number of provisions concerning:
- The fundamental principles of the protection of the elderly;
 - Care measures within the family or in specialized institutions;
 - Specific protection measures for the elderly in need.

27 April 1974 on the Scheme of Invalidity, Old Age and Survivors' Pensions in the Non-Agricultural Sector, as amended and supplemented by Order No. 2148 of 2007 of 21 August 2007.

2.2.8 Programmes and measures adopted for the care of older persons, including older women

✓ Ongoing Financial Assistance Program

447. Poor elderly people receive a fixed monthly allowance of 200 dinars under the social security program. In 2020, the number of beneficiaries was 152,963, of whom 90,228 were women, or 58%. Beneficiaries of this allowance automatically receive a free health care card valid in all public health establishments.

✓ Foster Care Program for Seniors

448. This program is based on the care of elderly people without family support by foster families. The number of elderly people cared for increased from 148 in 2022 to 366 in the first quarter of 2024, an increase of 147.29%. Since 2023, the monthly allowance paid to the host family has increased from 200 to 350 dinars, an increase of 75%.

✓ Mobile Health and Social Services Teams for Elderly People at Home Program

449. This program is delivered by multidisciplinary teams of medical, allied health professionals, social workers and life support workers. These teams regularly visit the homes of the elderly to provide them with social and health services, as well as material assistance (medicines, mattresses, foodstuffs), for the benefit of 4,000 beneficiaries.

✓ Specialized Residential Care Program

450. This program concerns elderly people without family or financial support, housed in specialized institutions that provide them with all the basic needs. There are currently 15 such establishments.

✓ Senior Day Club Program

451. These clubs are social spaces where seniors can meet and benefit from services, recreational and social activities. Their number has increased from 3 in 2003 to 21 in 2015.

✓ National Seniors Health Program

452. Set up by the Ministry of Health, this program aims to guarantee care adapted to the specificities of the elderly, in particular through the integration of geriatrics in medical faculties, the creation of geriatric units in the internal medicine departments of hospitals, and the organization of daily medical consultations in hospitals.

✓ New measures enshrined in the 2025 Finance Act

453. Article 30 of Law No. 48 of the year 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the Finance Law for 2025, provides for the exemption from duties and taxes on the import of equipment, materials and products not manufactured locally, necessary for the activity of public institutions working in the field of care for the elderly.

2.2.8 National Multisectoral Strategy for Older Adults (2022–2030)

454. Adopted on 29 September 2022 under the slogan "Active old age and dignified life", this strategy provides for several measures in favour of older people, especially older women, aimed at promoting their economic participation, strengthening their empowerment, enhancing their skills in local management and volunteering, and improving their image and place in society.
455. It also includes measures to prevent and protect against all forms of violence. To this end, the Ministry of Family, Women, Children and the Elderly has set up a toll-free number (1833) on June 15, 2023, on the occasion of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This line allows you to report cases of violence and threats, and to refer victims to available services.
456. It should be noted that Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women considers "advancing age" as a situation of vulnerability that aggravates the penalties imposed on perpetrators of violence.

3.8 Women with disabilities (Article 23)

457. Article 54 of the Constitution stipulates that the State "shall protect persons with disabilities from discrimination and shall take all measures to ensure their full integration into society".
458. The legislative framework is mainly based on Framework Law No. 83 of 15 August 2005 on the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, as amended by Law No. 41 of 2016 of 16 May 2016. This law aims to "guarantee equal opportunities between people with disabilities and others, to promote their inclusion and to protect them against all forms of discrimination".
459. Pursuant to these provisions, women with disabilities were empowered to create projects under Decree No. 715 of 2022, dated 20 September 2022, on the programme for the economic empowerment of poor or low-income persons, beneficiaries of the social security programme, and persons with disabilities (see paragraph 417 of the report).
460. In 2023, a special effort was made to train and integrate women and girls with disabilities into social protection institutions and special education centers. Thus, 240 women with disabilities were trained out of a total of 479 beneficiaries, i.e. a rate of 50%.
461. In the same spirit, Article 22 of Law No. 48 of the year 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the Finance Law for 2025, provides for the creation of a financing line of 5 million dinars from the resources of the National Employment Fund, intended for people with disabilities. It allows the granting of interest-free loans, of a maximum amount of 10,000 dinars per project, in all economic sectors, for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2025, repayable over eight years, with two years of grace.

3.8 Women with disabilities (Article 23)

462. With regard to facilitating the participation of women with disabilities in the decision-making process, Decree No. 10 of 8 March 2023 of 8 March 2023 on the organization of local council elections and the composition of regional and district councils provides in article 27 that "an additional seat shall be reserved in each local council for a representative with a disability with

the right to vote. The choice of the disabled member is made by drawing lots from among the disabled candidates". Given that the total number of local councils in Tunisia is 279, the number of members with disabilities sitting on these councils is 279 out of a total of 2,434 members.

463. In the same context, the "Inclusive Toolkit" project was launched in 2023 to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in public life and raise awareness of the electoral process. This project includes trainings on the use of the Inclusive Toolkit, which contains simplified educational tools and materials on the electoral process, distributed in special education centres, with activities on citizenship and adapted election simulations.

464. With regard to protection against violence, Organic Law No. 58 of 11 August 2017 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women considers mental and physical disabilities as factors of vulnerability that aggravate the penalties imposed on perpetrators of violence. Article 8 of Organic Law No. 50 of 2018, dated 23 October 2018, on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, provides for a doubling of penalties for discriminatory acts or comments against a vulnerable person on the basis of his or her disability.

465. In addition, Article 30 of Law No. 48 of 2024, dated December 9, 2024, relating to the Finance Law for 2025, provides for the exemption from duties and taxes on the import of equipment, materials and products not manufactured locally, necessary for the activity of public institutions working in the field of care for people with disabilities.

4.8 Women in difficult circumstances (Article 24)

466. With regard to the protection of poor women and heads of households, including widows, divorcees and single women (single mothers or sisters taking care of their siblings), it should be remembered:

- The programme for the economic empowerment of families in special situations (see paragraph 414);
- The programme for the economic empowerment of poor or low-income people, beneficiaries of the social security programme and persons with disabilities (cf. paragraph 417);
- The new measures to support the financial and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups, provided for by Law No. 48 of 2024 on the Finance Law for 2025 (see paragraph 418).

467. Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated October 22, 2024, on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, is an important step forward for poor or low-income women farmers. It provides:

- Monthly financial transfers under the social security program;
- One-time financial assistance;
- Access to care, hospitalization in public structures, integration assistance and rehabilitation services.

468. With regard to pregnant, breastfeeding or imprisoned women, article 64 of the Labour Code (paragraph b, item 3) stipulates that "any enterprise employing at least fifty women shall set up a special room for breastfeeding".

469. Decree No. 240 of 16 March 2023 approving the Code of Conduct for the Internal Security Forces under the Ministry of the Interior provides for care adapted to the specific needs of certain categories of women (pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum, accompanied by a child or infant).
470. Act No. 52 of 14 May 2001 on the prison system provides that pregnant or breastfeeding mothers in prison are to be accommodated in a dedicated space offering medical, psychological and social care to the mother and child (new article 7 bis). It also guarantees prenatal and postnatal care, and provides for children born in prison to be born in an external hospital. It is forbidden to mention in the civil registers that the birth took place in prison (Article 8).
471. The support programme for detained and released women (2016–2020) was set up by an agreement between the Ministry of Family Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. It aims to prevent recidivism, support and reintegrate women economically and socially, by providing them with an income after their release.
472. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, has established rehabilitation centres for single mothers, who face family threats and risks in the event of pregnancy outside marriage. These centres include the "Amal Centre for the Reintegration of Single Mothers" and the "Tunisian Association Sabil for the Supervision of Mothers and Children". These facilities provide a fixed-term stay for the mother and her child, provide them with medical and social services, and work for their social and economic reintegration, while allowing them to keep their child.

Conclusion

473. As explained earlier, the Tunisian State has made strides in the area of women's rights at all levels. The celebration of "National Women's Day" on 13 August each year — the date of the promulgation of the Personal Status Code in 1956 — is a symbolic occasion to highlight the place of women in society and to take stock of achievements and to consider their prospects for development. However, these achievements have been achieved in a context marked by several challenges related to the health, environmental and geostrategic situation.
474. The health challenge has mainly manifested itself in the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected Tunisia like all countries in the world. To deal with the repercussions of this crisis, particularly on women, several measures have been taken, the most important of which concern protection against violence, which has increased during the lockdown period. To this end, the continuity of the functioning of the Public Prosecutor's Office has been ensured, allowing women and girls who are victims of violence to file complaints directly and to benefit from urgent protection measures. A temporary reception centre was opened, as well as the basic health centres and regional services of the National Office for Family and Population, which provided health education and psychological support, including for migrants.
475. On the socio-economic level, exceptional allowances have been granted during the periods of temporary suspension of activity due to the lockdown, for the benefit of certain categories of self-employed workers, employees of companies, employees of the tourism and handicrafts

sector, as well as beneficiaries of social pensions of less than 180 dinars. The State also took charge of the employer's contribution to the legal social security scheme for salaries paid to employees of tourism and craft businesses between 1 October 2020 and 30 June 2021, and then between 30 June 2021 and 31 March 2022.

476. E-government services have been strengthened, in particular through the "Evax" vaccination platform, the development of free mobile services and SMS, as well as the regularity of the supply of sensitive and consumer products to the market, such as basic foodstuffs and health products.
477. The environmental challenge lies mainly in the effects of climate change, which particularly affect women in rural areas, especially those working in the agricultural sector. To strengthen their resilience and mitigate impacts, the State has put in place a "National Plan for Women and Climate Change", a national strategy for ecological transition, and has invested in renewable energy sources and appropriate technologies, while encouraging research in this field, especially women's research.
478. The geostrategic challenge is linked to the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war, including rising prices of basic foodstuffs, raw materials and energy, leading to budgetary pressure. Nevertheless, this has not prevented the State from continuing to allocate the necessary resources to strengthen women's rights, as recently evidenced by Decree No. 4 of 2024, dated October 22, 2024, on the social protection scheme for agricultural workers, as well as the measures provided for in the 2025 Finance Law.
479. The Tunisian State continues its commitment to the promotion and protection of women's rights, with the same desire that marked its beginnings, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.