



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Rwanda*

1. The Committee considered the fifth periodic report of Rwanda¹ at its 12th and 13th meetings,² held on 17 and 18 February 2025, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 30th meeting, held on 28 February 2025.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission by the State Party of its fifth periodic report and the supplementary information provided in the replies to the list of issues.³ The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue that it held with the State Party's high-level delegation and the additional information provided.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the legislative, institutional and policy measures taken to increase the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in the State Party, including the first (2017–2024) and second (2025–2029) National Strategy for Transformation focusing on economic and social development. The Committee also welcomes the State Party's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in 2015, and its ratification of the following conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO): the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155); and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Domestic application of the Covenant

4. The Committee notes that the status of the Covenant in the domestic legal order changed following the 2015 amendments to the State Party's Constitution, which established the supremacy of the Constitution and organic laws over international treaty law. While acknowledging the State Party's efforts to align its constitutional, legal and regulatory framework with the Covenant, the Committee is nevertheless concerned that the provisions of the Covenant are rarely invoked in or applied by the domestic courts (art. 2 (1)).

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-seventh session (10–28 February 2025).

¹ [E/C.12/RWA/5](#).

² See [E/C.12/2025/SR.12](#) and [E/C.12/2025/SR.13](#).

³ [E/C.12/RWA/RQ/5](#).



5. The Committee recalls the State Party's obligation to ensure that its domestic law, in particular its organic laws, is consistent with the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee recommends that the State Party continue to take the legislative measures necessary to fully incorporate the Covenant into domestic law so as to ensure the applicability of all Covenant rights in domestic courts. It should ensure that legal and judicial training take full account of the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights and promote the use of the Covenant as a source of law. The Committee draws the State Party's attention to its general comment No. 9 (1998) on the domestic application of the Covenant.

National human rights institution

6. While noting the replies provided by the State Party delegation, the Committee nevertheless expresses concern in relation to the challenges to the independence of the National Commission for Human Rights, including the selection of its members through a committee appointed by the President and the requirement for its members to obtain clearance from the office of the Prime Minister prior to travel for official engagement outside of Rwanda (art. 2 (1)).

7. The Committee recommends that the State Party continue to take appropriate measures to bring the National Commission for Human Rights into full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). In particular, the Committee recommends that the State Party strengthen the Commission's independence and its effective functioning, including by revising the process for the selection of its members and abolishing the requirement for its members to obtain clearance from the executive branch to undertake activities abroad. In that regard, the Committee recalls its general comment No. 10 (1998) on the role of national human rights institutions in the protection of economic, social and cultural rights.

Human rights defenders

8. While noting the information provided by the State Party with regard to the enactment of Law No. 058/2024 of 20 June 2024 governing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Committee expresses concern about the insufficient protection of human rights defenders, including those working to defend economic, social and cultural rights, from harassment, intimidation and reprisals, as well as cases of arrests, detention and trials. The Committee notes with concern the cumbersome registration requirements for NGOs, including the requirement for a recommendation letter issued by the local authorities of the district where the organization intends to implement its activities.

9. The Committee recommends that the State Party take all measures necessary to ensure an enabling environment for human rights defenders working on economic, social and cultural rights, so that they can freely carry out their activities without undue control, interference or restrictions. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State Party review the registration requirements for NGOs. It recommends that the State Party be guided by the Committee's statement on human rights defenders and economic, social and cultural rights.⁴

Business and economic, social and cultural rights

10. While acknowledging the efforts to incorporate legislative provisions to protect economic, social and cultural rights in the context of business operations, such as Law No. 45/2018 on the environment, Law No. 58/2018 on mining and quarry operations and Law No. 27/2021 on governing land, the Committee remains concerned that:

(a) The State Party does not have a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for human rights due diligence;

⁴ [E/C.12/2016/2](#).

(b) The State Party's legislation does not adequately define the legal responsibility of companies with regard to violations of economic, social and cultural rights;

(c) The State Party has not yet finalized its efforts to develop a national action plan for business and human rights (art. 2 (1)).

11. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Enact a comprehensive national legal framework that requires business entities to conduct human rights due diligence throughout their operations and supply chain;**

(b) **Establish a clear regulatory framework for businesses enterprises operating within its jurisdiction to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights;**

(c) **Accelerate its efforts to develop a national action plan for business and human rights, in consultation with civil society, and considering the Guidance on National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises;**

(d) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2017) on State obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the context of business activities.**

Illicit exploitation of and trade in minerals

12. The Committee acknowledges the efforts to combat illegal mining practices in the State Party. It expresses concern, however, about the reports of the illicit trade in minerals, including the smuggling of gold, tin, tantalum, tungsten and coltan into the State Party, which then enter global supply chains through exports from the State Party. The Committee notes that such illicit practices have a negative impact on resources that are essential for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in third countries and that they undermine the rights of peoples in other countries to freely dispose, for their own ends, of their natural wealth and resources (art. 1 (1) and (2)).

13. Recalling the State Party's extraterritorial obligations under the Covenant, including those explained in paragraphs 32 and 33 of the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2017), the Committee urges the State Party to adopt all measures necessary:

(a) **To strengthen the enforcement of its laws against the illicit exploitation of natural wealth and resources, including by imposing stringent sanctions on individuals and entities engaged in unlawful mining operations;**

(b) **To enhance oversight of mineral imports and exports, especially with a view to addressing the smuggling of minerals into the State Party, and ensure strict penalties for those involved in the illicit trade in natural wealth and resources;**

(c) **To impose the regular and mandatory disclosure of revenues received from trade in natural wealth and resources to a wide audience in a publicly accessible, comprehensive and comprehensible manner;**

(d) **To establish mechanisms for the recovery of assets and revenues derived from illicit mineral exploitation and trade, ensuring that affected peoples, including those in third countries, can regain control over the resources necessary for the realization of their economic, social and cultural rights.**

Extraterritorial obligations in the context of armed conflict

14. The Committee expresses concern about the State Party's role in violations of economic, social and cultural rights in the context of the armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including, as documented by the United Nations, through its military operations and its support to non-State armed groups (arts. 1, 2, 11 and 23).

15. Recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004, in which the Court stated that "the protection offered by human rights conventions does

not cease in case of armed conflict”,⁵ and noting the State Party’s extraterritorial obligations under the Covenant, including in situations of armed conflict, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Cease any action that may further perpetuate armed conflict and exacerbate the ongoing violations of economic, social and cultural rights;

(b) Facilitate rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations delivering aid to affected populations in conflict-affected areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

(c) Cease any form of support to or involvement with non-State armed groups that, according to reports of the United Nations, are involved in forced recruitment, the destruction of houses, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure and services, the use of hospitals and schools for military purposes, the obstruction of humanitarian aid, the recruitment and use of children in hostilities, forced labour practices and the illicit exploitation of natural resources that may amount to pillage;

(d) Ensure that all violations, including in cases of violations where the conduct of non-State armed groups may be attributable to the State Party, are promptly, effectively and impartially investigated and that those responsible are appropriately prosecuted and, if found guilty, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence;

(e) Participate in bilateral and multilateral efforts aimed at restoring the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in consultation with the local population, including by, inter alia, ensuring that victims of economic, social and cultural rights violations in the context of armed conflict obtain full reparation in cases in which the State Party may have been involved directly or in which the conduct of non-State armed groups may be attributable to the State Party.

Maximum available resources

16. The Committee notes the State Party’s efforts to allocate resources to meet its Covenant obligations, despite the challenging economic conditions that it has faced in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Nevertheless, it remains concerned about the high income and wealth inequalities in the State Party, the overall low levels of social spending on areas related to the Covenant rights and that the State Party’s fiscal policies are characterized by a flat corporate tax rate, a limited tax base and a regressive taxation rate attributable to its significant reliance on value-added and consumption-based taxes (art. 2 (1)).

17. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) Continue to take measures to further increase budgetary allocations for social spending on social security, employment and food programmes, agriculture, water and sanitation, healthcare, education and climate change adaptation and mitigation;

(b) Revise its taxation and fiscal policies to increase the mobilization of national resources to improve their redistributive effect and expand fiscal space for realizing the Covenant rights by, inter alia, increasing the corporate income tax, expanding the tax base and improving tax collection.

Corruption

18. While acknowledging the progress made by the State Party in combating corruption, the Committee is concerned about the reports of bribery and other incidents of corruption, including cases involving public officials and enterprises (art. 2 (1)).

⁵ *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

19. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Continue to take measures to raise awareness among the general public and State officials on the need to combat corruption, including bribery;**

(b) **Promptly, independently and impartially investigate and prosecute all cases of corruption, and, if a person is convicted, apply penalties commensurate with the seriousness of the offence;**

(c) **Continue to strengthen the State institutions tasked with tackling corruption, including the judiciary, the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Office of the Auditor General, ensuring their independence and effectiveness.**

Non-discrimination

20. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State Party in relation to the legislative and policy measures that it has taken to combat discrimination. The Committee remains concerned, however, that, despite the State Party's efforts, structural inequalities and discrimination continue to hinder the equal enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights, especially by persons living in deprived urban and rural areas, the Batwa, persons with disabilities, women and girls, children and young people and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (art. 2 (2)).

21. **The Committee recommends that the State Party take the measures necessary to address structural inequalities, including by allocating adequate financial, human and technical resources for the implementation of laws, policies, strategies, plans and programmes, and establish full and effective protection against direct, indirect and multiple forms of discrimination in access to all economic, social and cultural rights, including access to employment, education, healthcare, social protection and land. The Committee refers the State Party to its general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights.**

Batwa

22. The Committee acknowledges the information provided regarding the measures taken to improve access to economic, social and cultural rights for the Batwa, who are referred to as a "historically marginalized group" under the State Party's policies. The Committee remains concerned, however, that:

(a) According to the information received by the Committee, the Batwa remain disproportionately affected by poverty, higher rates of infant mortality, shorter life expectancies, elevated incidences of disease and malnutrition, lower school attendance, higher dropout rates and poorer educational outcomes;

(b) Despite the provisions in Law No. 27/2021 on governing land and the National Land Policy 2019, which ensure equal access to land for all citizens, the Batwa face barriers that hinder them from effectively benefiting from land titling and registration processes, which prevents them from securing legal ownership or access to land, including for farming and housing;

(c) The Batwa have been subjected to historical and ongoing dispossession, displacement and involuntary relocation, often without receiving adequate compensation for the expropriation of their ancestral lands and commonly carried out, without prior consultation, to make way for agriculture or conservation, leading to the loss of their livelihoods and hindering their enjoyment of their traditional way of life (arts. 1 (2) and 2).

23. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Take effective measures to address the disparities affecting the Batwa in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, including by implementing targeted interventions to tackle the administrative, financial, material and other barriers that they face with regard to access to land, livelihoods, education, healthcare, employment, social protection, food, housing and water and sanitation;**

(b) **Establish an effective mechanism, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 26 (2022) on land and economic, social and cultural rights, to facilitate the Batwa's access to land titling and land registration processes, ensuring that they can, in practice, possess, use, develop and control their lands, territories and resources securely and effectively;**

(c) **Ensure that decisions likely to affect the Batwa are preceded by systematic and transparent consultations aimed at obtaining their free, prior and informed consent, particularly regarding lands and territories that they have traditionally possessed, occupied or used, and establish adequate remedies and compensation schemes to address their historical and ongoing dispossession, displacement and involuntary relocation from customary lands and territories.**

Equal rights of men and women

24. The Committee commends the efforts that the State Party has made towards achieving gender parity in political representation through the implementation of temporary special measures, as well as its gender-responsive budgeting programme. It remains, nevertheless, concerned that women's overall representation in senior positions in the public and private sectors remains unsatisfactory and that women still face barriers in claiming their land rights. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the large gender disparity in labour market participation and the persistent gender pay gap, including due to the horizontal and vertical occupational segregation of women into lower-paying jobs and their participation in traditionally female-dominated professions, in particular in rural areas, or in occupations and lower-level positions without promotion opportunities (art. 3).

25. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Continue to promote the increased representation of women at all levels of public administration, including local public administration, and their appointment to management roles in the private sector, including through the development of incentives for private companies;**

(b) **Continue to take measures to empower women to claim their land rights, including by addressing the economic, customary and social barriers faced by women and increasing women's awareness of their land rights**

(c) **Take effective measures to close the persistent gender pay gap, addressing the structural causes that relegate women to lower-paid jobs and create obstacles to their enjoyment of employment opportunities on an equal footing with men;**

(d) **Take effective measures to increase women's participation in the labour market and undertake awareness-raising campaigns to combat gender stereotypes in the family and society;**

(e) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 16 (2005) on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights;**

(f) **Take into consideration, in that connection, the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.⁶**

Right to work

26. While noting the measures taken under the State Party's national employment policy, the Committee remains concerned about the very high unemployment and underemployment rates, especially among women, young people and persons with disabilities. The Committee also notes with concern the challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the exercise of their right to work due to discrimination by employers based on their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity (arts. 3 and 6).

⁶ See [CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/10](#).

27. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to support women, young people and persons with disabilities to have access to decent employment, including by regularly collecting disaggregated data on their situation and taking targeted affirmative action measures, such as quotas or tax rebates for employers;**

(b) **Strengthen the enforcement of laws to deter employers from discriminatory employment practices and take targeted measures to address the discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in access to the labour market;**

(c) **Continue to strengthen the national technical and vocational education and training system to align skills and qualifications with the labour market, focusing on the requirements of the persons most affected by unemployment so that they can earn their living through work that they freely choose or accept;**

(d) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 18 (2005) on the right to work.**

Informal economy

28. The Committee notes with concern the very large proportion of the population working in the informal sector of the economy, without formal work contracts, and who therefore do not enjoy, in practice, labour rights protections, trade union rights or access to social security (arts. 7, 8 and 9).

29. **The Committee recommends that the State Party progressively strengthen the enforcement of labour legislation to ensure that workers in the informal economy are covered by legal protections and can exercise their labour rights and trade union rights and have access to social security. It also recommends that the State Party take all measures necessary to gradually formalize the situation of workers in the informal economy, referring it in that regard to the Committee's general comments No. 18 (2005) on the right to work, No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security and No. 23 (2016) on the right to just and favourable conditions of work, and to the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), of ILO.**

Minimum wage

30. The Committee notes that Law No. 66/2018 regulating labour provides for the establishment of a minimum wage. It expresses concern, however, that the State Party has not yet implemented that provision by setting a minimum wage (art. 7).

31. **Recalling its previous recommendation,⁷ the Committee recommends that the State Party, in collaboration with social partners, accelerate its efforts to establish a minimum wage that applies to all workers in all sectors and to ensure that it is periodically reviewed and indexed to the cost of living in order to provide all workers and their families with a decent standard of living.**

Right to just and favourable conditions of work

32. While acknowledging the State Party's legislative and policy efforts to improve working conditions and occupational health and safety in both the formal and informal sectors, the Committee is nevertheless concerned that many workers do not have access to legal protections under Law No. 66/2018 due to a lack of formal contracts, leaving them without safeguards related to remuneration, unfair dismissal, rest and working hours. The Committee is also concerned about reports that workers in such high-risk sectors as construction, manufacturing and mining face frequent occupational accidents due to unsafe conditions, resulting in injuries and fatalities, and that many workers in agriculture, mining and manufacturing are exposed to hazardous substances that reportedly cause respiratory illnesses, skin diseases and long-term occupational health risks. Furthermore, the Committee

⁷ [E/C.12/RWA/CO/2-4](#), para. 15.

notes with concern that workers in hospitality and domestic work often endure poor conditions of work, including excessive working hours, low wages and limited employment security (art. 7).

33. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Take all measures necessary to ensure that labour legislation is effectively enforced in all sectors of the economy, including the informal sector;**

(b) **Strengthen its efforts to reduce occupational diseases, injuries and fatalities, with a focus on sectors in which workplace accidents and occupational diseases are more likely to occur, including by raising awareness among employers and workers about workplace safety and ensuring that enhanced protection measures are put in place in the workplace;**

(c) **Carry out regular safety and health risk assessments and strengthen labour inspection mechanisms, vesting them with sufficient material, technical and human resources to effectively and systematically monitor conditions of work in all sectors of the formal and informal economy;**

(d) **Provide accessible remedial mechanisms that enable workers to file complaints of labour rights violations safely and without intimidation and take effective action against employers and enterprises found to be in breach of labour rights, providing dissuasive sanctions;**

(e) **Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of ILO;**

(f) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 23 (2016).**

Trade union rights

34. While recognizing the State Party's efforts to bring its legislation on trade unions into line with international norms and standards, including the legal prohibition of anti-union discrimination, the Committee notes that:

(a) The requirements to become a trade union representative under the State Party's legislative and administrative framework may impose excessive and unwarranted restrictions;

(b) The time frame provided for in the State Party's legislative and administrative framework for the authorities to complete an application for the registration of a trade union may be excessively long;

(c) The compulsory arbitration and mediation process, which is foreseen under the law as a prerequisite for exercising the rights to strike and to collective bargaining, may impose excessive restrictions on the enjoyment of those rights (art. 8).

35. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Continue to take measures to ensure respect for the trade union rights of all workers, in conformity with article 8 of the Covenant and with the provisions of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), of ILO;**

(b) **Revise its legislative and administrative framework to remove undue restrictions on the right to form and join trade unions;**

(c) **Take measures to improve the existing procedures for exercising the rights to strike and to collective bargaining so as to remove undue restrictions and promote free and voluntary conciliation, ensuring that compulsory arbitration and mediation are avoided.**

Right to social security

36. The Committee acknowledges the progress made in expanding social security coverage under the Community-based Health Insurance (Mutuelle de Santé) and the Long-term Saving Scheme (Ejoheza) but remains concerned that the State Party's social security system covers only a limited range of social risks. The Committee is also concerned that the contributory schemes exclude many workers in the informal sector, and their families, from adequate protection against such social risks as disability and old age and from occupational health and safety. Furthermore, the Committee notes with concern that such non-contributory benefits as cash assistance are too limited to ensure an adequate standard of living for recipients and their families and that the eligibility criteria for such cash assistance programmes may exclude persons with disabilities by failing to account for the additional cost of disability-related requirements (art. 9).

37. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to develop both contributory and non-contributory social security schemes to ensure an adequate, inclusive and accessible social security system that provides universal coverage, sufficient benefits and comprehensive protection against social risks and contingencies, including for the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to guarantee everyone a decent standard of living;**

(b) **Continue to take measures to expand the social security system's coverage and uptake to include all workers in the informal sector, especially those engaged in agriculture, construction, transport, manufacturing, trade, street-vending, hospitality, domestic work and unpaid care work, through, for instance, a combination of contributory and non-contributory schemes;**

(c) **Expand the coverage of cash transfer programmes to ensure equitable and sufficient social security for all, including low-income families, children, single mothers, older persons, persons with disabilities and Batwa;**

(d) **Ensure that the eligibility criteria and the level of social security benefits take into account the additional costs related to disability so as to guarantee an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities, including through the provision of adequate social allowances. In that regard, the Committee refers the State Party to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;⁸**

(e) **Continue its efforts to establish a social protection floor that incorporates basic universal social security guarantees. In that regard, the Committee refers to its general comment No. 19 (2007) and its 2015 statement on social protection floors as an essential element of the right to social security and of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁹**

Parental leave

38. While welcoming the information provided by the State Party on the extension of fully paid maternity leave to 14 weeks for working mothers in all sectors, the Committee is concerned by the challenges to the enforcement of the legislation, especially in the informal sector, which prevents many women from using their right to maternity leave. It is also concerned about the short length of paternity leave (arts. 3 and 10).

39. **The Committee recommends that the State Party take measures to ensure statutory entitlement to all family care-related leave, including extended paternity leave. It further recommends that the State Party take all measures necessary to effectively enforce its legislation to ensure that working parents can fully exercise their respective rights, regardless of the sector.**

⁸ See [CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1](#).

⁹ [E/C.12/2015/1](#).

Economic exploitation of children

40. While recognizing the State Party's efforts to combat child labour and economic exploitation through measures taken under labour law, criminal law and ministerial instructions, the Committee remains concerned about the continued prevalence of the worst forms of child labour, including the involvement of children in hazardous work (art. 10).

41. **The Committee recommends that the State Party accelerate its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including the involvement of children in commercial sexual exploitation, mining, construction and agriculture. In particular, it recommends that the State Party continue to take measures to ensure the effective enforcement of its laws on child labour in both the formal and informal sectors, including by strengthening labour inspection mechanisms with a focus on child labour and imposing effective administrative and criminal sanctions on perpetrators. The Committee also refers the State Party to the observation of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in relation to the implementation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).**

Poverty

42. The Committee commends the State Party for the rapid economic growth achieved in recent years and its efforts to reduce poverty, including through the adoption of the National Social Protection Policy 2020 and the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation 2022. The Committee is nevertheless concerned that national economic growth is not sufficiently inclusive and that, as a result, many people continue to live in poverty and extreme poverty, especially disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and families, in particular those living in deprived urban and rural areas (art. 11).

43. **The Committee recommends that the State Party strengthen its efforts to combat poverty and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources for the monitoring and implementation of its anti-poverty measures across all regions, taking into account the additional effects of inter-annual inflation and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee recommends that the State Party take due account of existing regional disparities and the needs of the population, especially the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In that regard, the Committee refers to its statement on poverty and the Covenant.¹⁰**

Right to food

44. While noting the measures taken by the State Party to improve food security and increase agricultural productivity and resilience, the Committee is concerned that nearly one fifth of the population is reportedly affected by food insecurity, particularly in rural and remote areas. It is especially concerned that, despite the State Party's efforts, malnutrition and child stunting remain prevalent (art. 11).

45. **The Committee recommends that the State Party adopt a comprehensive national strategy for the protection and promotion of the right to adequate food so as to effectively combat food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition in an effective and comprehensive manner, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, by setting clear, time-bound targets and ensuring the allocation of sufficient resources for its monitoring and implementation across all regions, with a view to eliminating disparities. The Committee refers the State Party to its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.**

¹⁰ [E/C.12/2001/10](#).

Right to adequate housing

46. While noting the State Party's affordable housing programme for low- and middle-income communities, the Committee is nevertheless concerned about:

(a) The insufficient access to adequate and affordable housing, which is exacerbated by the high cost of land and construction materials, and the limited subsidies and financing options;

(b) The high costs of electricity, which prevent low-income families, especially those living in deprived urban and rural areas, from having access to electricity;

(c) The insufficient legal protections against forced evictions and arbitrary land expropriations, including in the context of urban development and infrastructure projects, especially affecting informal settlements and designated redevelopment areas;

(d) The challenges faced by disadvantaged and marginalized groups and those living in informal settlements with regard to security of land tenure (art. 11).

47. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to provide adequate and affordable housing, including in deprived urban and rural areas, by accelerating its actions and allocating resources to develop social housing and providing subsidies to help disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups to have access to adequate housing;**

(b) **Take the measures necessary to facilitate access to electricity for disadvantaged and marginalized groups and work towards ensuring a minimum supply of energy for all, irrespective of households' income level;**

(c) **Adopt legislation on forced evictions that is in line with international standards and guidelines, including the Committee's general comment No. 7 (1997) on forced evictions, and ensure that evictions, when unavoidable, are carried out in accordance with due process of law, are preceded by consultation with the persons concerned and the consideration of alternatives, are subject to appeal and result in adequate compensation or the provision of adequate alternative housing;**

(d) **Pursue efforts to ensure the legal recognition and protection of land tenure and take the measures necessary to guarantee land tenure rights without discrimination so as to ensure access to land and adequate housing for all.**

Rights to water and sanitation

48. The Committee notes with concern that, despite the State Party's efforts, many rural communities still face difficulties in access to safe, affordable water for domestic use and rely on unprotected water sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. It further notes with concern that many households, especially in informal settlements and deprived urban and rural areas, lack access to improved sanitation facilities (art. 11).

49. **The Committee recommends that the State Party strengthen its efforts to improve access to safe, affordable water for domestic use and to provide access to improved sanitation services for all, including in informal settlements, deprived urban and rural areas, schools and health centres, guided by the Committee's general comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water.**

Adaptation to climate change

50. The Committee acknowledges the measures taken to adapt to climate change, such as the increasing use of drought resistant crops in prone areas to sustain agricultural production. It notes, however, that the existing adaptation measures are not sufficient to address the increasing negative impact of climate change on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the State Party, including as a result of the loss of livelihoods, displacements and food insecurity after periods of heavy rain and due to floods, landslides, prolonged droughts and soil degradation (art. 11).

51. **The Committee recommends that the State Party strengthen its national climate change adaptation efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change on economic, social and cultural rights, with enhanced disaster management measures and adequate human, technical and financial resources. It further recommends that the State Party continue to take measures to strengthen the resilience of its economy and society to environmental shocks and long-term climate change impacts. The Committee refers the State Party to its statement on climate change and the Covenant.**¹¹

Right to physical and mental health

52. While acknowledging the State Party's efforts to improve access to healthcare and related services, the Committee notes with concern that:

- (a) Rural and low-income communities still face barriers in access to quality medical services due to infrastructure gaps and shortages of skilled health professionals;
- (b) Access to adequate mental health care remains limited, including as a result of social stigma and a shortage of qualified mental health professionals;
- (c) There is a high incidence and an increase in the number of deaths from non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases;
- (d) Diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and waterborne infections remain public health concerns, particularly in areas with limited access to healthcare services and public infrastructure (art. 12).

53. **The Committee recommends that the State Party:**

- (a) **Allocate sufficient resources to the health sector and strengthen the accessibility, availability and quality of healthcare provision in all regions and for all communities, in particular by improving the infrastructure of the primary healthcare system, and ensure that hospitals have enough medical staff, adequate infrastructure and medical equipment and a regular supply of medicines;**
- (b) **Increase the accessibility, availability and quality of professional mental health services, including non-residential and community-based services, and of skilled personnel and combat the social stigmatization of persons with mental health conditions, including by conducting activities to raise awareness among the public;**
- (c) **Take effective measures to address the risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases, improve efforts for the early detection of such diseases and provide effective and timely treatment;**
- (d) **Take measures to prevent the spread of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS and to provide adequate and timely treatment and specialized healthcare and services to those affected.**

Right to sexual and reproductive health

54. The Committee notes the information on the draft law that proposes that individuals aged 15 years and above can independently seek sexual and reproductive health information and services. The Committee is concerned, however, that:

- (a) Although maternal and child mortality rates have declined, challenges remain with regard to access to skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetric care and neonatal health services, particularly in deprived urban and rural areas;
- (b) Access to sexual and reproductive health information and services remains limited in rural areas, including as a result of infrastructure gaps and healthcare provider shortages;

¹¹ [E/C.12/2018/1](#).

(c) The high rates of teenage pregnancy, often linked to inadequate access to comprehensive sexuality education and the taboos surrounding the issue of sexuality and the related sociocultural inhibitions, affect young girls' health and rights (art. 12).

55. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Continue to take measures aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality rates and ensuring that births are assisted by skilled attendants and that all women have access to basic obstetric and neonatal care;**

(b) **Improve the accessibility, availability and quality of sexual and reproductive health services, including access to affordable, safe and effective contraception and to emergency contraceptives, including for adolescents, particularly in deprived urban and rural areas;**

(c) **Continue its efforts to enable adolescents to independently seek sexual and reproductive health information and services and take other necessary measures to improve access to contraception and to comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education for girls and boys in primary and secondary schools;**

(d) **Be guided by the Committee's general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health and take into account the abortion care guideline (2022) of the World Health Organization.**

Right to education

56. The Committee notes the State Party's efforts in the education sector, including the resources allocated. Nevertheless, it remains concerned about the limited access to and poor quality of education due to, inter alia, an insufficient numbers of teachers, a lack of quality learning materials, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of access to drinking water, sanitation, electricity and nutrition in schools, particularly in deprived urban and rural areas. The Committee also notes that, despite improvements, disparities in access to education and rates of school dropout remain significant at both the primary and secondary levels, as many children belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups leave school without completing their education (arts. 2 (2), 13 and 14).

57. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to enhance access to and the quality of education, including by increasing the number of qualified teachers, improving educational materials and enhancing educational infrastructure, particularly with respect to water, sanitation and electricity;**

(b) **Continue to take measures to remove socioeconomic barriers and address financial disparities that hinder access to education, including by strengthening efforts to provide free meals to children from disadvantaged households across the State Party;**

(c) **Intensify its efforts to improve access to education and address the root causes of the high dropout rates in primary and secondary schools, in particular by adopting targeted measures aimed at improving access to education among Batwa children, girls, children with disabilities, children of families living in poverty and children living in rural areas.**

Right to take part in cultural life

58. The Committee notes with concern that, despite the State Party's efforts, access to cultural and sports activities and facilities remain limited for marginalized and disadvantaged groups (arts. 2 and 15).

59. The Committee recommends that the State Party intensify its efforts to promote access to cultural and sports activities and facilities by women and girls, persons with disabilities, children and young people, including those living in remote and rural areas.

Cultural diversity

60. The Committee notes the information that Swahili has been accepted as an official language, in addition to Kinyarwanda, English and French. While acknowledging the information provided by the State Party in relation to its *Ndi Umunyarwanda* programme and the historical context, the Committee notes the limited information on specific measures taken to promote the identity, history, traditions and culture of diverse groups living in its territory, including the Batwa and migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers (arts. 2 and 15).

61. **The Committee recalls its previous recommendation¹² that the State Party take into account the diversity of its population and effectively implement measures aimed at ensuring that diverse groups living in its territory can preserve, develop, express and share their identity, history, traditions and culture, while continuing to promote tolerance and understanding among groups living in its territory.**

Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications

62. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of the digital divide in the State Party, which disproportionately affects marginalized and disadvantaged groups, who often lack access to affordable digital devices, affordable and reliable Internet connectivity and the necessary skills to effectively use digital technologies, including information and communications technology (ICT) (art. 15).

63. **The Committee recommends that the State Party take effective measures to ensure that everyone, including persons living in poverty, persons living in rural and remote areas and persons with disabilities, can enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, including ICT. The Committee recommends, in particular, that the State Party enhance its efforts to ensure affordable and reliable Internet access for all and implement measures to strengthen digital literacy by integrating digital skills training into education curricula from the primary level onward. The Committee refers the State Party to its general comment No. 25 (2020) on science and economic, social and cultural rights.**

D. Other recommendations

64. **The Committee encourages the State Party to accede to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

65. **The Committee recommends that the State Party consider acceding to the core human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, namely the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.**

66. **The Committee also recommends that the State Party take fully into account its obligations under the Covenant and ensure the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined therein in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level, including in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, with international assistance and cooperation when needed. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would be significantly facilitated by the State Party establishing independent mechanisms to monitor progress and treating beneficiaries of public programmes as rights holders who can claim entitlements. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State Party support the global commitment of the decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Implementing the Goals on the basis of the principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination would ensure that no one is left behind. In this regard, the Committee draws the State Party's attention to its statement on the pledge to leave no one behind.¹³**

¹² E/C.12/RWA/CO/2-4, para. 28.

¹³ E/C.12/2019/1.

67. The Committee further recommends that the State Party systematically collect data and develop indicators in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights, disaggregated on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination, including sex, age, disability, ethnic origin and region, and include such data in its next periodic report. The Committee refers the State Party to, inter alia, the conceptual and methodological framework on human rights indicators developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.¹⁴

68. The Committee requests that the State party disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, including at the national, provincial and district levels, in particular among parliamentarians, public officials and judicial authorities, and that it inform the Committee in its next periodic report about the steps taken to implement them. The Committee emphasizes the crucial role that Parliament plays in implementing the present concluding observations and encourages the State Party to ensure its involvement in future reporting and follow-up procedures. The Committee encourages the State Party to continue engaging with the National Commission for Human Rights, NGOs and other members of civil society in the follow-up to the present concluding observations and in the process of consultation at the national level prior to the submission of its next periodic report.

69. In accordance with the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations adopted by the Committee, the State Party is requested to provide, within 24 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations (31 March 2027), information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 (a) (maximum available resources), 33 (c) (right to just and favourable conditions of work) and 37 (c) (right to social security) above.

70. The Committee requests the State Party to submit its sixth periodic report in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant by 31 March 2030, unless otherwise notified as a result of a change in the review cycle. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words. In addition, it invites the State Party to update its common core document, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties.¹⁵

¹⁴ See [HRI/MC/2008/3](#).

¹⁵ [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I.