

of HR in administration and population at large) and CSO/NGOs (addressing vulnerable groups).

4. EU financial engagement: The EU-Mauritius MIP for 2021-2027 (EUR 8 million) has Governance as one of its priority areas, for which EUR 1 million have been set aside. Additionally approximately EUR 0.3 million has been contracted in support to the Ministry of Gender and Family Welfare's work for the promotion of gender equality. Calls for proposals under the CSO and HR budget lines in 2023 saw a total of five contracts worth EUR 2.1 million committed to various human rights democracy related issues (incl. transparency, prisoners' rights, CSO development, and sexual reproduction and children's rights). Successful projects on LGBTI rights (EUR 0.2 million) and in support of the Children's Ombudsperson (EUR 0.2 million) were completed in 2023

5. Multilateral context: Mauritius is a key ally on the multilateral stage to support an international rules-based order with the United Nations at its core. Mauritius is a like-minded country on issues relating to global challenges, including pandemics, climate change, environment and biodiversity protection, poverty and inequality. The EU and Mauritius regularly exchange on regional and international matters of common interest.

Republic of Mozambique

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: The overall human rights and democracy situation in Mozambique remained challenging in 2023. A focus of great concern continued to be the security and humanitarian crisis in the Cabo Delgado province and neighbouring provinces of Niassa and Nampula, where acts of terror and extreme violence resulted in over 4,500 deaths and, approximately, one million of internally displaced people since 2017. Notwithstanding an improvement in the security situation in Cabo Delgado province during 2023, the armed groups continued to be accused of severe human rights crimes and abuses, including the recruitment of children, kidnappings, beheadings, and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls. Mozambican and international journalists continued to report restrictions to their work, in particular in Cabo Delgado. Activists and human rights defenders continued working in a very complex environment with actions of intimidation, kidnapping and assassinations yet to be investigated. Some potentially restrictive laws (on media, broadcasting and on Non-Profit Organisations) were submitted to the Parliament for approval and then removed after efforts of the civil society and international community. The sixth municipal elections held on 11 October 2023 were conducted amid allegations of widespread irregularities and civil unrest. The Disarmament and Demobilisation phase of the 2019 Maputo Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was completed, with the last military base of the ex-combatants closed in June 2023 and the approval of a decree extending a pension to eligible women and men demobilised as part of implementation of the Peace Agreement in March 2023 that started being implemented in November.

2. EU action - key focus areas: The EU continued to focus on key areas such as peace building and good governance. There was also a particular focus on fighting gender-based violence. The EU continued to implement its integrated approach (encompassing humanitarian aid, development cooperation, peace building and security) to support the Mozambican

authorities' efforts to address the security and humanitarian challenges in Cabo Delgado, with a strong commitment to the respect for human rights and the rule of law. Under the security component of the integrated approach, the EU military training mission to Mozambique (EUTM) trained 10 out of the 11 Quick Reaction Forces of the Mozambican army (FADM), as per its mandate. The much-needed non-lethal equipment was also distributed. In addition to military and tactical training, a substantive part of the EUTM training programme continued to focus on human rights and international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, particularly women and children affected by armed conflict. This was conducted in cooperation with the ICRC and relevant UN organisations and was seen as contributing to an improvement of the image of FADM forces from the local population of Cabo Delgado province. As complementary measures in the spirit of 'African solutions to African problems', the EU continued to support the deployment of both the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) and the Rwanda Defence Force deployment, equally with strong human rights and rule of law requirements.

3. EU bilateral political engagement: The EU engaged with the Government of Mozambique in two Political Dialogues (15 June and 11 December). The agenda included international human rights and international humanitarian law as overarching principles of the EU integrated approach as well as the overall efforts towards permanent peace and rule of law across the country. The implementation of the 2019 EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) and the 6th municipal elections of October were also discussed during the December Dialogue. Commissioner K. Simson, who visited Mozambique on 21-23 November 2023, took part in the first EU-Mozambique Investment Forum and met among others President Nyusi, Prime Minister Maleiane, Foreign Minister Macamo and Energy Minister Zacarias.

4. EU financial engagement: The EU supported a number of projects with a view to strengthening civic and political space: The project 'Support to the consolidation of democracy' implemented by I-IDEA followed up on the implementation of the 2019 EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) recommendations, in particular with the finalisation of a proposal for legislative reform that would address several of the recommendations. The programme also contributed to the local observation by supporting the establishment of 'Mais Integridade', a consortium of civil society organizations involved in the process of monitoring the electoral process. The consortium focuses on four pillars: Electoral Observation; Civic and Electoral Education; Monitoring and Reducing Electoral Conflicts; Advocacy. 'Mais Integridade' engaged in local Election observation in 2023, especially in municipalities considered as electorally competitive.

The EU 'Programme to Support Non-State Actors– PAANE II' continued engaging public authorities and civil society in a constructive dialogue to enhance effective civic participation in the elaboration and monitoring of public policies, as well as strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations to play a role in contributing to democratic life. This programme contributes to improving quality standards in public service delivery, citizen access to information, and the use of participatory mechanisms and of evidence-based advocacy in national and local policy-making.

The EU supported the protection of people in conflict-affected areas, contributing with over EUR 25 million of humanitarian assistance to people of Cabo Delgado in 2023. The EU's portfolio of peacebuilding projects in the Northern provinces amounts to over EUR 10 million, amongst them a new project with UNODC (EUR 2 million) aimed to strengthen criminal justice

responses to terrorism, including capacities for collecting, preserving and sharing of evidence in line with human rights standards. A specific action 'Resilience in the North' (EUR 35 million) to support the development strategies of the Government of Mozambique in an integrated manner was also adopted.

The EU continued to support the peace process between the Government and the main opposition party RENAMO. The EU continued supporting the process politically and operationally, with the mobilisation of additional funding (NDICI, EUR 0.5 million on top of the EUR 4 million already provided) to accompany the end of activities and closure of the UNOPS managed Basket Fund. Work continued also on the Reintegration and Reconciliation aspects.

5.Multilateral context: Since 1 January 2023, Mozambique is a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period of 2023-24 and held the presidency during March 2023. The next one will be in June 2024. Throughout 2023, the EU and its Member States continued to be supportive of the UN agencies, UNHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and WFP, in particular in connection with the security and humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado.

Rebublic of Namibia

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: As Namibia's democracy is developing and maturing, the country's good track record on human rights and democracy continued in 2023. The re-election of the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2022 as the Vice-President of the SWAPO, makes her the presumptive and first female candidate to lead the ruling party in the November 2024 Presidential elections. Namibia is a remarkable example of press freedom, ranked at the top position for Africa, and 22nd out of 180 countries globally in the World Press Freedom Index (WPFI). In terms of social and economic rights, rampant unemployment, poverty and social inequality continue to be key challenges for the country. According to the OECD criteria, Namibia is one of the wealthiest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and an upper-middle income economy, though at the same time it classified as the second most unequal country globally (after South Africa) with a Gini Index of 58 forecasts for 2023. Over 15% of households are categorised as poor or severely poor. Moreover, women and girls in the country are still vulnerable and fall victim to violence and discrimination. Namibia's high inequality rate takes a toll on the Namibian children. According to a UNICEF study, on average, 51.3 percent of the children aged 0-17 years are living in multidimensional poverty, compared to 37.4 percent for adults (18+ years) and the national average of 43.3 percent. The government is currently preparing a series of new family and child protection laws, instrumental in improving the protection of children and in enhancing their rights and security. According to the recommendations issued during Namibia's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2021, despite overall progress, several areas require targeted action, including sexual and gender-based violence, gender equality, access to education, unemployment, children's rights, indigenous people's rights, discrimination of LGBTI persons, prison conditions, human trafficking, access to education, adequate housing, and access to safe drinking water. The next UPR for Namibia is scheduled for 2026. The topic of corruption continues to be a prominent concern in public opinion. The judicial investigations into the Fishrot corruption scandal have triggered a drop of Namibia by seven positions (from 52nd to 59th out of 180 countries) in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index between 2018 and 2023.