



GENDER PROFILE OF THE CAR



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACFPE	Central African Vocational Training and Employment Agency
IGA	Income generating activities
PRA	Peace and Reconciliation Agreements
ARSEC	Autonomous regulatory agency for the electricity sector in the Central African Republic
ARV	Antiretrovirals
LWB	Lawyers Without Borders
AfDB	African Development Bank
CCA	Common Country Analysis
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
COP	Conference of the Parties
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CENTRAPALM	Central African Palm Oil Company
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CETAC	Central African Tobacco Company
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
CNLS	National HIV-AIDS Committee
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
CPW	Centre for the Promotion of Women
SCC	Special Criminal Court
TRF	Transitional Results Framework
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation and Reintegration
HR	Human rights
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
GE	Gender equality
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
ENERCA	Central African Energy Company
NFSA	National Food Security Assessments
PTE	Professional Technical Education
CAAF	Central African Armed Forces
FOSA	Healthcare Training:
ISF	Internal Security Forces
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HeRAMS	Health Resources Availability Mapping System
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ICASEES	Central African Institute of Statistics and Economic and Social Studies
GDI	Gender Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
MAXQDA	Mixed and Qualitative Data Analysis software
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MPWFPC	The Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Family and the Protection of the Child
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
PRADD	Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
FP	Family planning
NWFP	Non-Wood Forest Products
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
CAR	Central African Republic
CARRPP	Central African Republic Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan
CARRPP	Central African Republic Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
RELEFCA	Central African Women's Leadership Network
RESEN	State Report of the National System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNH	Maternal and Newborn Health
SODECA	Central African Water Distribution Company
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
GAR	Gross Admission Rate
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
UMIRR	Mixed Unit of Rapid Intervention and Repression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SV	Sexual violence
GBSV	Gender-Based Sexual Violence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than a decade, the Central African Republic has been committed to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Despite its situation of permanent civil war and fragile security, remarkable progress has been made in taking gender into account in the political, economic and sociocultural life of the country. However, several challenges remain. The country has ratified several international conventions on equality and the empowerment of women, in particular, that relating to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). In formal terms, equality is established by the 2016 constitution which recognises equal rights and duties for all citizens. The law establishing parity between men and women in the CAR was promulgated on -24 November 2016. The legal framework is generally favourable, but certain harmful sociocultural practices such as early marriages, genital mutilation, sororate¹ and levirate² marriage have hindered this momentum promoted by the government of the Republic.

Gender situation in the CAR

Since 2012, the CAR has been plunged into a political and military crisis that has given rise to numerous human rights violations. This resulted in a two-year transition period in which for the first time a woman³ presided over the destinies of the country.

While the sociopolitical situation has seemed to improve gradually since the signing of the Khartoum peace agreement, the general context of the country and the post-electoral situation remains uncertain due to the occupation of most of the national territory by armed groups. This situation caused the deadliest intercommunal violence in the country's history, with the consequences, among other things, of massive population displacements both inside the country and beyond its borders, the exacerbation of sexual violence and trafficking in human beings. Women, young people, the elderly and those living with a disability are the population groups that have paid, and continue to pay, the heaviest price.

Economically, the evolution of GDP over the past decades has made this country one of the poorest in Africa. This seems paradoxical in view of the abundant riches of the Central African subsoil. The poverty rate increased from 70.5% in 2019 to 72.2% in 2020, due to the loss of purchasing power of the population, as per capita income fell by 1.3 % in 2020. The human development index, which was 0.353 in 2016, well below the regional average for sub-Saharan African countries which is 0.475, ranks the country 153rd out of 177 countries. The agricultural sector alone employs 70% of the Central African workforce and produces more than 75% of the country's food. The agriculture and livestock sectors employ 63% of poor households. More than 60% of heads of household are farmers. Rural women are responsible for 80% of production in food crops - more than 65% of total agricultural production.⁴

In the area of employment in the Central African Republic, 64.4% of women are in the workforce compared to 79.8% of men. In 2018, 64% of the working population was actually employed, 34.2% underemployed (unemployment) including 35.7% in urban areas. During this same period, unemployment affected women (42.1%) more than men (28.6%).

Regarding the participation of women in decision-making bodies, the percentage of female heads of ministerial departments is only 17.4%, female Prefects 12.5% (2 women out of 16 Prefects), 19% within the Internal Security Forces. These percentages are a long way from the minimum of 35% provided for by the Parity Act.

In the area of health, maternal mortality, which was estimated at 850 per 100,000 live births in 2010, worsened with the conflict, rising to 880 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018. This is the 2nd highest rate in the world

¹ Levirate means obligation for a man to marry the widow of his dead brother (*Petit Larousse 2009*).

² Sororate means the younger sister of the deceased wife replaces her with the husband (*Petit Larousse 2009*).

³ Madame Catherine Samba Panza, President of the Transition between 2013 and 2015.

⁴ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

(UNICEF, 2018). As a result of the conflict, access to health services has declined in insecure areas, increasing the risk of death from difficult deliveries. In 2013, there were 890 deaths per 100,000 live births, and in rural areas only 36% of pregnant women were assisted by trained personnel.

The contraceptive coverage rate was 17.8% in 2018. 29% of women with secondary education and above claim to use a modern family planning method compared to 14% for those with only primary level and barely 7% among women without schooling. With regard to family planning, data from the MICS6-RCA 2018-2019 report⁵ indicate that the rate of use is 14.4% (25.7% in urban areas and 8.7% in rural areas) for modern methods, compared to 3.5% (3.1% in urban areas and 3.6% in rural areas) for traditional methods.

Life expectancy at birth is 56 years for men and 57 years for women. The infant mortality rate is 69.7 per 1,000 live births, while for children under 5 it is 108.7 per 1,000. The maternal mortality rate is 400 per 100,000. The total fertility rate is 4.3 children per woman and only 21% of women use contraceptive methods.

The prevalence of HIV AIDS in the population aged 15 to 49 is estimated at 3.7%. It is 4.6% for women and 2.7% for men. In 2018, the prevalence of HIV infection was estimated at 4.2% among women aged 15 to 49 and 2.9% among men of the same age group. Among young people aged 15 to 24, the prevalence was 0.6% higher in young girls than in boys (1.68% versus 1.04%). In 2019, the prevalence of HIV infection among pregnant women was 5.0%.

In terms of education, between 2012 and 2018 there was a considerable improvement in the GER in primary education, from 87.81% in 2012 to 116% in 2018. Unfortunately, this improvement in the Gross Enrolment Rate has not translated into a reduction in the education gap between girls and boys. This gap, which was 24.1% in 2012, rose to 26% in 2018, indicating a relative stagnation over the period, despite the observed increase in the enrolment of girls in primary education. In secondary education, in addition to the low participation of girls compared to boys, there was a tendency to drop out of school over the period 2012-2016, where the GER fell from 17.39% in 2012 to 15.04% in 2016. This drop in the enrolment of adolescents in secondary school clearly shows the effects of war and insecurity on the education of this age group. The disparity in access to schooling between girls and boys is also observed in higher education, where the girls / boys parity index was 0.36 in 2012.

With regard to access to basic social services, the rate of access to drinking water is estimated at less than 30%, of which 31.8% are in urban areas and 27.6% in rural areas. In the city of Bangui, the rate is 36.5% and 27% in rural areas. The national coverage rate for the basic sanitation service remained below 30% in 2018. This situation has consequences on the time budget of women and girls whose social roles include the supply of water in households.

Access to electricity for Central African households remains a major challenge for the government. In fact, in 2019, only 7.5% of Central African households were connected to the power grid, including 22.4% of the urban population and 0.5% of the rural population.

In terms of access to telecommunications infrastructure, 20.6% of Central African women aged 15-49 had a mobile phone compared to 36.9% of men in 2019. Although encouraging, this performance is well below the rate of mobile phone ownership of women in the world, which is 80%. Only 10% of CAR citizens have a bank account with a mobile service provider, a much lower proportion than the average in sub-Saharan Africa, which is 25%.

In the national banking system, only 10% of accounts in CAR financial institutions belonged to Central African women over the age of 15 and 7% were savings accounts in 2017.

Gender-based violence figures show that, in recent years, the signatories of the Information Sharing Protocol

⁵ Ministry of the Economy, Planning and International Cooperation, Multiple indicator cluster survey 2018-2019: *MICS-6 2019, (Report of survey results)*, Bangui, January 2021.

(I.S.P.) of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Information Management System⁶ recorded a gradual increase in incidents involving GBV / SV in the CAR (8,321 incidents of GBV / SV in 2017, 10,055 cases in 2018 and 13,028 cases in 2019). However, with 9,216 cases, there was a decrease in incidents of GBV / SV in 2020 compared to 2019. These incidents of GBV / SV concern sexual violence, 20% (rape = 16% and sexual assault = 4%) in 2018; 23% (rape = 19% and sexual assault = 4%) in 2019 and 24% (rape = 20% and sexual assault = 4%) in 2020), early marriages (2% in 2018 and 2019 and 1% in 2020) and other types of violence (physical assault, psychological violence, denial of resources) (74% in 2018, 75% in 2019 and 2020). The victims are generally women and girls (92% in 2018, 94% in 2019 and 93% in 2020) or boys and men (8% in 2018, 6% in 2019 and 7% in 2020). While cases of sexual violence increased by 43% between 2017 and 2018, 49% between 2018 and 2019, there was nevertheless a decrease of 25.3% between 2019 and 2020.

These situations show us the extent of the occurrence of incidents of GBV which is clearly growing in the country from year to year. Despite the actions taken to combat them, the related indicators call for redoubled efforts: women themselves, up to 80% in some regions, legitimise violence against them by their spouses because of customs ⁷.

⁶ GBV Statistics Annual Report (January-December 2018-2019-2020). GBVIMS-RCA.

⁷ Out of 17 group discussions conducted with women and girls during the period 27-30 January 2021, there was consensus on the legitimacy of violence experienced in 14 groups, who felt that when a woman does something wrong, she should be punished by corporal punishment by her husband.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. Background and rationale

Despite the multiple political and military crises that have severely damaged the socioeconomic fabric of the CAR since 2012, thus weakening the State's capacity to play its role of protecting populations and their property, this country has nevertheless undertaken several initiatives to get back on the path to development.

Indeed, the CAR is struggling to emerge from a conflict that has caused the collapse of state power since 2013. These efforts, which are supported by the United Nations, were reinforced in February 2019 when the Government signed the Peace and Reconciliation Political Agreement with 14 armed groups in the capital Bangui, and with the recent organisation of presidential and legislative elections, thus creating a source of hope for a return to a climate of lasting peace in this besieged country.

To help the CAR to consolidate its development strategy, the United Nations System has undertaken the development of the Common Country Analysis (CCA). This is a joint assessment mandated by the United Nations development organisations and of which the search for relevance requires the participation of the public authorities, other national partners and the UNCT. The CCA, which is a useful tool for contributing to the identification and analysis of problems, comprises three elements: a repository of data and analyses, thematic studies and reports and an annual summary report of the CCA. An analysis of gender equality and women's empowerment in the CAR is thus one of the basic analytical documents required for the CCA.

However, with regard to Gender, it is clear that there is a lack of data disaggregated by sex in all sectors and thematic areas, even if some limited sectoral data is currently available. There does not appear to be any reliable and current data on women's economic empowerment.

However, limited data is available on sexual and gender-based violence, women's political participation, women's access to justice, women in agriculture, etc. The same is true for humanitarian data that is available from humanitarian assessments and a number of assessments carried out as part of COVID-19 impact studies. Multi-sectoral assessments, such as MICs, area profiles and preparations for the next census, are also available.

Yet gender equality and the empowerment of women are critical factors influencing all dimensions of political and socioeconomic development and progress towards achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the context of the CAR, a complex emergency with a chronic humanitarian crisis and pockets of ongoing conflict, a comprehensive gender profile and analysis is needed to ensure effective programming in the peace-humanitarian-development nexus.

This CAR Gender Profile report helps to provide disaggregated data in different sectors, to establish a baseline for the future measurement of statistics on women in all domains and to initiate a multidimensional analysis of the root causes and main obstacles to gender equality and women in the CAR.

I.2. Objectives and scope of the study

The objective of this study was to produce the gender profile of the CAR through an analysis of gender mainstreaming in the different sectors that contribute to the development of the country. The aim was to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation of women and girls, as well as men and boys, in Central African society, with a view to understanding gender inequalities and their causes, how they intersect with other inequalities, how they impact on human rights as well as other aspects of development and factors impacting the empowerment of women in the CAR.

This was made possible by carrying out a multidimensional, precise and complex analysis of the available data, to identify the root causes and main obstacles to gender equality in the CAR, including social, legislative, institutional, political norms. .

The results of this study should make it possible to identify tangible and relevant suggestions that will facilitate the inclusion of gender in current and planned interventions by key actors to address the problems previously identified and better contribute to the achievement of SDG 5 in the context of national development.

I.3. Approach and methodology adopted

This study was carried out using a two-fold approach. On the one hand, it was oriented towards meeting the information needs of the various actors involved and under the technical and administrative supervision of UNDP and UNWOMEN, in collaboration with the BCR (Office of the Resident Coordinator) and the UNCT (United Nations Country Team) at several levels: the PMT (country programme team), HCT (Humanitarian Country Team), GTGD⁸; the MPWFPC (Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Family and the Protection of the Child) and all other stakeholders. Such an approach, known in English as the "managers oriented evaluation approach", was based on an analysis of the following 4 factors: Context, Inputs, Outputs and Processes. On the other hand, this study, which was conducted in accordance with UNDP study standards, facilitated the participation of a representative sample of the Central African population.

Based on an adapted version of the approach to analysing power relations between men and women in Central African society as well as the norms and stereotypes that govern these relations, this study highlighted the strengths, the weaknesses with regard to the integration of gender in policies, programmes and projects in the CAR and the constraints encountered during the preparation of strategic documents relating to gender. The same applied to the challenges and opportunities that must be taken into account in order to inform and facilitate effective programmes, projects and strategies taking account of gender and covering the peace-humanitarian-development nexus in the CAR, all by relying on existing mechanisms corresponding to the four determining factors of the coverage of identified needs of the target population: demand, supply, quality and conducive environment.

This study was therefore based on the sharing of the experiences of the actors in the field, including the Central African population. The implementation of this study was based on the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods whose specificities were taken into account throughout the process, from the development of the conceptual framework to the collection and analysis of data, as well as dissemination of results.

The documentary review conducted during the first phase of this mandate and guided by the guidelines of the two approaches of this study, contributed to the identification of the questions which made it possible to provide better responses to the concerns of the sponsors. To provide a credible and rigorous answer to each of the evaluation questions, and for the sake of triangulation, several methods were used during the data collection, in particular:

- Individual interviews with 24 people including key resource persons, from United Nations System Agencies, National and International NGOs and Civil Society, all involved in gender-related issues in the CAR;
- Individual interviews with heads of community organisations, traditional and religious leaders, local elected officials, etc.;
- Focus groups with men, women, girls and boys belonging to the communities selected for the development of the study sample;
- Qualitative data analysis was conducted using MAXQDA software⁹ then the quantitative data was

⁸This is the Gender and Development Thematic Group, whose members include the following: UNWOMEN, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR. As a technical group of the UNCT, the GDTD played an important role in the methodology, specifically during the design, data collection, technical support, the technical review of peers, proofreading and validation of the results.

⁹ MAXQDA is software designed for computer-aided analysis of qualitative and mixed-method data, text and multimedia in academic, scientific and commercial institutions.

analysed using SPSS software¹⁰ and / or Excel.

This study also enabled the contribution of a sample of the Central African population consisting of 618 individuals from different age groups and different sociocultural classes of the country, including 300 men and 318 women. This sample was made up of heads of households (especially households headed by women), young people (boys and girls), migrant workers (internally displaced or not), etc. residing in the localities of Bangui, Bégoua and Bimbo or who arrived in these areas due to the electoral and post-election crisis of December 2020.

I.4. Limitations of the study

Data collection was limited by a number of factors that the evaluation team tried to address as much as possible during the mission (Table 3).

Table 3: Responsiveness of the mission to the challenges encountered

Challenges encountered	Mitigation strategies
1) Limited accessibility of certain areas targeted by the study (mainly due to problems of insecurity)	The team of Consultants selected and trained 10 professional investigators who were social workers, MPWFPC agents residing in the cities of Bangui, Bossangoa, Bangassou, to carry out data collection in Bangui, Bégoua and Bimbo. The team of Consultants expected to involve the GBV sub-cluster and the prefectural working groups for the collection of data in the hinterland, but was unable to do so due to the insecurity caused. by the electoral crisis in December 2020 and January 2021. To this end, the number of actors surveyed in Bangui, Bimbo and Bégoua was increased to take account of the ethnic sensitivities of the other Prefectures. Likewise, the team made an effort to identify and use, as far as possible, the existing secondary data concerning these areas and the consideration of Gender in the policies, programmes and projects.
2) Lack of availability of certain key informants in Bangui, Berbérati and Bouar.	The team of Consultants engaged in follow-up work by telephone with key informants who could not be contacted during the data collection mission, particularly with regard to the individual interviews.
3) Absence of a woman within the evaluation team	Women actively contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the mission through the recruitment of 5 out of 10 women to the team of investigators and through appropriate training provided by the team of consultants on the fundamentals of the study. In the end, the study was completed thanks to the active involvement of 12 main actors (7 men and 5 women).

II. NATIONAL CONTEXT

II.1. Geopolitical environment

Located in central Africa, the Central African Republic is bordered to the west by Cameroon, to the north by Chad, to the south by Congo – Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and to the east by South Sudan. The CAR is a country located just north of the equator. The capital Bangui is located in the south of the country. The geographical location of the country in the centre of Africa, makes it difficult to access the sea. From

¹⁰ SPSS is one of the most widely used programs for statistical analysis in the social sciences. It is used by survey companies, governments, marketing and research organisations to forecast future trends that would help plan organisational strategies and manufacturing processes.

Bangui its capital, the shortest routes to the ocean go through Cameroon (road) to the port of Douala (1,520 km) or the two Congos (transequatorial river route) to the ports of Pointe-Noire or from Matadi (1.700 km).

Also, as the capital Bangui is in the south of the country, some regions are very remote from it and even inaccessible due to a poor road network resulting from insufficient efforts to open up and the frequent insecurity. The rainy seasons usually worsen road traffic conditions, and the least served regions are forced to refuel in neighbouring countries closer than the capital Bangui. This phenomenon has led to a whole sociocultural mix from the four corners of the country, with sociopolitical consequences as experienced today in the various conflicts.

The Central African subsoil has significant mining potential: in fact, 470 mining indices have been listed there, including good quality alluvial diamonds, gold, uranium, iron ore, phosphate, nickel, cobalt, copper, coltan, tin and tungsten¹¹.

Although connected to the Atlantic Ocean by the Ubangi which is a tributary of the Congo River, the CAR does not have direct access to the sea. It is a landlocked country whose capital Bangui is 1450 km from the port of Douala, 1475.4 km from the deep-water port of Kribi¹².

The country covers an area of 623,000 km² with a low demographic density (8.1 inhabitants / km²), varying from 1 inhabitant / km² in some regions to 9,295 inhabitants per km² in Bangui, where 1/6 of the Central African population is concentrated. (AfDB, 2011). With an average demographic growth of 2.5% in 2003, the population of the country is estimated at 5,069,548 inhabitants (UNDP, 2018), of which 49.8% (2,524,635) are men and 50.2% (2 544,913) are women.

The landlocked nature of the country has always led to the search in the first place for minerals with a small footprint and a high market value for export. This economically reliable mining potential has remained untapped due to the combined effects of political risks and the inadequate infrastructure (poor condition of roads, insufficient electricity).

The CAR also has a forest rich in exploitable species and significant oil and hydroelectric resources, in addition to varied climatic conditions¹³ conducive to the exploitation of diversified crops (cotton, peanuts, oil palm, cocoa, coffee, tea, etc.) and to the livestock rearing, as well as a rich river system favourable to fishing.

The politico and military crisis that began in 2012 caused a migratory flow of around 922,000 people within the country (IOM, 2014). The occupational safety migration of the population which was 14% in 2003¹⁴, was exacerbated by the migration caused by the security crisis linked to the conflict. However in September 2019, this number had sharply decreased by around 37% to reach 581,000 people.¹⁵, a slight, albeit transitory, decline attributed to an improvement in the security situation. In December 2020, the number of internally displaced persons is estimated at 682,000 people and there are 635,000 Central African refugees in neighbouring countries.¹⁶

II.2. Political context

Administratively, the country is divided into 7 regions, 20 prefectures, 73 sub-prefectures and 179 municipalities¹⁷

¹¹ Natural Resources Governance Project (PGRN) for the forestry and mining sectors of the Central African Republic. Environmental and Social Management Framework (CGES).Final report, December 2018).

¹² The port of Kribi is located on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon while the river port of Douala is connected to the Atlantic ocean by the Wouri River over a distance of 50 km.

¹³ Sudano-Sahelian climatic zones in the North and equatorial in the South.

¹⁴ Figure provided by the results of the 2003 population census.

¹⁵ UNHCR report as of 30/09/2009

¹⁶ OCHA, Overview of population movements, December 2020

¹⁷ UNDP (2018), "National Report on Human Development-Central African Republic (NRDH 2018)".

and nearly 9,000 villages or neighbourhoods. This administrative organisation is marked both by strong centralisation and by a weak presence of the State outside Bangui in recent years.

Since the country's independence in 1960, military coups, mutinies and armed rebellions have followed one another. From December 2012 to March 2013, a coalition of rebel groups, the Seleka, quickly seized much of the country and overthrew the government of President François Bozizé. A series of clashes and violence ensued between various armed groups (Seleka, anti-Balaka and self-defence groups) which generated an unprecedented humanitarian and economic crisis.

At the initiative of the African Union and with the military support of France, a peacekeeping mission was deployed from December 2013 in the CAR. President Michel DJOTODIA from the Seleka and his government resigned shortly after (January 2014). Madame Catherine SAMBA-PANZA then became head of the transitional state until the election of President Faustin-Archange TOUADERA in February 2016. This democratic election was facilitated by the national reconciliation process launched in 2015.

With the support of the international community, the overall security situation has improved significantly. Thus, there has been a slight upturn in the country's ability to address social fractures, with positive effects on the various sectors. But poverty remains endemic with a very high proportion of the population without access to basic services. Among the affected populations, women remain the most affected group. In rural areas, 81% of women live in poverty, compared to 69% of men.

The insecurity that continues to affect the country is also explained by widespread regional conflicts involving South Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. Mercenaries take advantage of weak state structures and governance to cross borders and smuggle natural resources and weapons¹⁸.

The insecurity that has raged since 2012 and the obstacles posed by armed groups to the return of the rule of law and the redeployment of civil servants have weakened the presence of the State. "A study carried out in the final quarter of 2018 found that only 3,418 of the 6,500 affected officials were present at their posts" (OCHA, 2019). The gradual re-establishment of democratic institutions and the reduction in direct clashes between armed groups have enabled the CAR to embark on a recovery and peacebuilding strategy (RPCS). The humanitarian situation, however, remains dire. According to the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, in September 2019 "the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection has increased from 2.5 million to 2.9 million, two thirds of the population depend on humanitarian aid to survive, more than 70% of the population does not have access to drinking water, and 1.8 million Central Africans suffer from food insecurity".

The security situation remains worrying in certain areas of the country with the persistence of fighting between certain armed groups that are signatories to the Peace and Reconciliation Political Agreement¹⁹.

Following the serious incidents that continue to occur, as in the prefectures of Ouham-Pendé in May 2019 and Vakaga (Birao) in September 2019, armed groups still control a large part of the territory.

Recently, following the last presidential and legislative elections, there was a resumption of even greater levels of unrest, causing numerous displacements of populations in a large part of the territory. The vote of 27 December 2020, took place in a particularly difficult security context, following armed attacks and disturbances of public order orchestrated by rebels under the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), a coalition of armed groups formed to prevent the holding of elections.

The risk analysis summarised by the INFORM 2020 index shows that the CAR is the second most risky country

¹⁸ UNDP, Central African Republic Country Programme Document 2018-2021, September 2017.

¹⁹ The number of victims of direct fighting between armed groups signatories of the PRA rose from 1,454 in 2018 to 548 in 2019.

(8.6 out of 10), after Somalia (8.9) and just before South Sudan and Yemen. (8.1).

II.3. Sociodemographic data

The last general population and housing census (RGPH) dates from 2003 and estimated the Central African population at 3.9 million inhabitants. Pending the results of the new census, which was scheduled for the end of 2020, various projections based on the 2003 RGPH have been made. According to these projections currently used by ICASEES, the CAR had 5.144 million inhabitants in 2019 and should reach 5.817 million inhabitants in 2029. The Central African population is young and life expectancy at birth is estimated at 52 years in 2018 (IDM²⁰).

Despite huge natural potential and very rich agricultural land, the CAR remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 188th out of 188 countries in 2019²¹ and from the point of view of the Human Development Index (HDI of 0.397: 0.351 for women, compared to 0.438 for men), in group 5²² according to the gender development index (GDI of 0.801). The country was also ranked 50th out of 54 countries, of the Ibrahim Index of Governance in Africa (IIAG) in 2018 (with a score of 29, 5)²³ and, 184th out of 190 countries in the Doing Business 2020 ranking established by the World Bank (score of 35.6)²⁴. The various conflicts have undermined the country's policy in the fight against HIV. The rapes committed have contributed to the increase in new cases of infections. Nevertheless, it can be noted that the HIV prevalence rate among 15-49 year olds fell from 7.5% in 1998 to 3.6% in 2018, while the incidence rate (new infections) per 1000 people aged 15-49 uninfected fell from 14.3 in 1990 to 2 in 2018 (IDM). Just over a third of the population living with HIV (36% in 2018) have access to antiretroviral therapy²⁵.

The serious humanitarian and socioeconomic crises resulting from the various issues of the military-political conflicts that have persisted since the end of 2012 and the resulting insecurity have led to significant population movements inside the CAR (internally displaced persons) and outside the country (refugees), requiring significant emergency humanitarian assistance needs.

Table 4: Internally displaced persons and Central African refugees (31 January 2021)

Refugees	Number	% population of CAR	% of IDPs / refugees
CAMEROON	316,017	12%	49.3%
DRC	173,731		27.1%
CHAD	101,549		15.8%
SUDAN	27,013		4.2%
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	20,700		3.2%
SOUTH SUDAN	2,181		0.3%
Internally Displaced Persons	641,377		49.3%
On sites	225,082	14%	31%
Off sites (families)	500,111		69%

²⁰ Database of [World Development Indicators \(IDM / WDI\)](#) of the *World Bank*, consulted in 10/2019.

²¹ Human Development Report 2020: Central African Republic. UNDP 2020.

²² Countries are divided into five groups based on their absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI values. Group 1 includes countries where the level of gender equality in the HDI is high (absolute difference less than 2.5%), group 2 includes countries where the level of gender equality in the HDI ranges from medium to high (absolute difference between 2.5 and 5%), group 3 includes countries where the level of gender equality in the HDI is medium (absolute difference between 5 and 7.5 %), group 4 includes countries where the level of gender equality in the HDI ranges from medium to low (absolute deviation between 7.5 and 10%) and group 5 includes countries where the level of Gender equality in the HDI is low (absolute difference in gender parity greater than 10%).

²³ Ibrahim Mo Foundation, 2018.

²⁴ World Bank "Doing Business 2020" Key data from Sub-Saharan Africa

²⁵ The values of these three indicators for the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, excluding high-income countries were, in 2018, 3.9% (prevalence), 1.8 per 1000 (incidence), and 63.5 respectively. % (ARV).

Spontaneous returnees and repatriated people	3,778	0.1%
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Source: UNHCR – GOVERNMENT / data2.unhcr.org

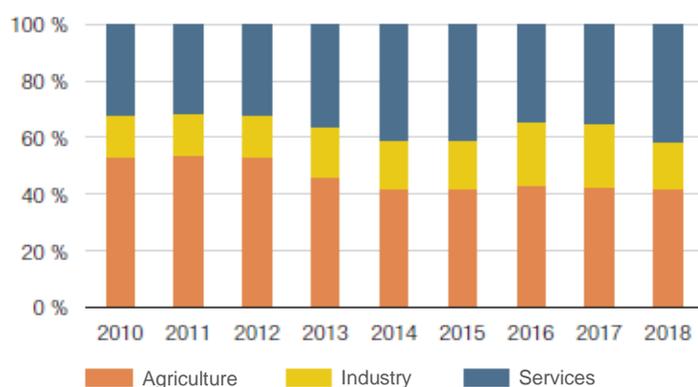
The prefectures that were hosting the most IDPs in July 2019²⁶ were Haute-Kotto (93,519 including 45,392 on sites in Bria), Bangui (85,431, all in host families), Ouaka (70,524 including 37,161 on sites in Bambari) and Basse-Kotto (53,003 including 31,292 at sites in Alindao).

The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), according to the latest figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), was estimated at 641,377²⁷ in January 2021, or more than 12% of the Central African population. A third of these people live on sites while the other two thirds are accommodated with host families (or, more generally, off sites). The number of refugees stood at 641,191 in January 2021 (Cf., Table 4), i.e. the equivalent of 12.6% of the population residing in CAR in 2019. Almost half of the refugees were hosted in Cameroon (316,017 or 49.3%), more than a quarter in the DRC (173,731 or 27.1%) and 15.8% in Chad (101,549). Other refugees are hosted in the Republic of the Congo, Sudan and South Sudan and also outside Africa. About 37% of the registered refugees are children aged between 5 and 17 years. From 1 January 2017 to 30 September 2019, fewer than 8,000 refugees benefited from facilitated repatriation, all in the Bangui region, but around 355,000 people have reportedly returned to their places of origin since the start of the conflicts.

II.4. Socioeconomic environment

The economy of the Central African Republic is dominated by the primary sector. Indeed, according to data from the World Bank²⁸, in 2016, the agricultural sector, which also includes breeding, fishing, forestry and hunting, contributed around 43.3% of real GDP but in 2017, the contribution of this sector fell to only 42.4% of real GDP. This decline continued, but more moderately, reaching 41.7% in 2018. The industrial sector, consisting mainly of manufactured products (including wood processing), saw its share of GDP fall from around 22.7% in 2016 to 22.5% in 2017 and 16.8% in 2018. The dynamic services sector, which represented around 35% of real GDP in 2016, continued its momentum in 2017, further contributing to growth and reaching 41% of real GDP in 2018. The decline in the share of GDP in agriculture and industry is explained by the rise in insecurity between 2016 and 2018, which disrupted production and investments in agriculture as well as in logging and mining (Cf. Graph 1).

Graph 1: Breakdown of added value by sector of activity between 2010 and 2018



²⁶ Updated on 31/07/2019 and *CMP July 2019 Detailed statistics of IDPs in CAR*.

²⁷ UNHCR – GOUVERNEMENT / data2.unhcr.org accessed February 16, 2021.

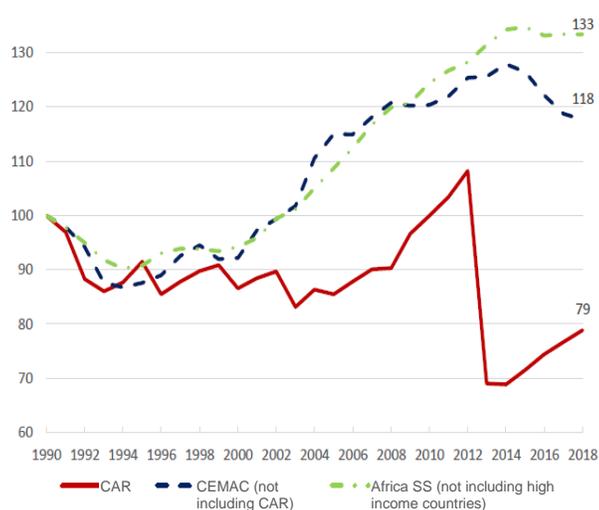
²⁸ World Bank (2019), "Central African Republic Economic Update: Strengthening Domestic Revenue Mobilisation to Sustain Growth in a Fragile State."

Source: World Bank 2019

This weakness of the Central African economy, together with the combined effects of the crisis context, has lowered the standard of living of the population.

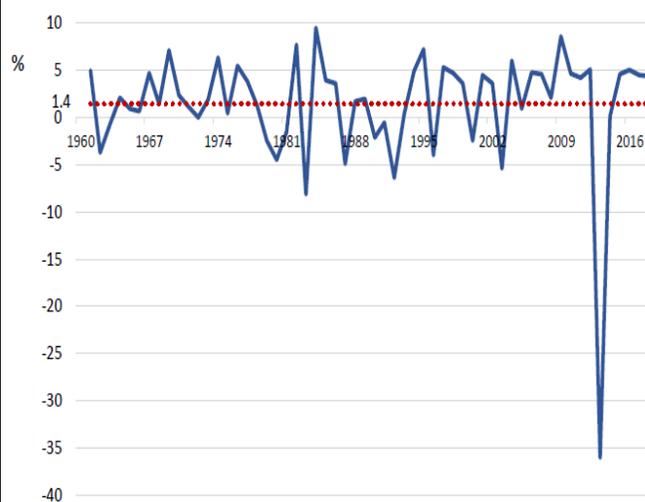
Indeed, in 2018, the standard of living of Central Africans was 21% lower than in 1990. Real GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) declined until 2003 (83% of the 1990 level), then rose to a high level in 2012 (108%), before experiencing a dramatic fall in 2013 with the seizure of power by the Séléka rebel groups. Over the same period, the standard of living of CEMAC residents and of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (apart from high-income countries) increased by 18% and 33% respectively (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Real GDP per capita at PPP in CAR, CEMAC and (base 100 in 1990)



Source: World Development Indicators Database (WDI); CAR 10/2019, 1960–2018

Graph 3: Annual growth rate of real GDP



Source: World Development Indicators Database (WDI); 10/2019

The biggest recession took place in 2013 when GDP contracted by more than a third (around 36%). The growth rate then recovered rapidly, peaking at 5% in 2016, then gradually slowed down to 4.6% in 2017 and 4.3% in 2018²⁹.

Slower growth in 2018 reflects a sharp drop in official diamond production following the departure of the last buying company, and a smaller than expected increase in timber production, due to the temporary shut-down of production in November and December, in response to a tax increase. Since 2015, the economic growth of the CAR has been higher than that of the other countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and that of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. However, the CAR has yet to match the pace of growth of structural peer countries such as Burkina Faso and Rwanda. The CAR's structural peers are countries that show similarities in key socioeconomic characteristics (commodity exports, landlocked country, number of inhabitants, real GDP per capita at the start of the analysis period) but a different evolution in the economic growth rate (median growth rate which does not exceed that of the CAR by more than 2% over an initial period but then increases much more rapidly). The structural peers of the CAR that have thus been identified are Burkina Faso,

²⁹International Monetary Fund Report No. 19/216, July 2019.

Mali, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda and Uganda.

Although the economic recovery is fragile, the economic outlook for the CAR would be favourable if a climate of lasting peace is restored. This is how the staff of the International Monetary Fund estimated that the CAR should experience GDP growth of 4.5% in 2019 and 5% for the period 2020-2024.³⁰ The economy of the CAR relies heavily on the agricultural sector, whose contribution to GDP averaged 46% during the period 2010-2018, representing about 86% of jobs, the majority of which are women. Over the same period, the average contribution to GDP of the industrial sector, which includes wood processing, was only 18%, with 7% of the working population employed, of which very few women.

II.5. Sociocultural factors and relations between men and women

The sociocultural context of the CAR is based on essentially patriarchal norms, habits and customs, which are generally unfavourable to women. According to Law N097.013 relating to the Family Code (Art 254), the man is the head of the family, he exercises this power in the common interest of the household and the children. It is he who chooses the residence of the family and is required to ensure the physical and moral security of the other members of the family. Central African society attributes the role of mother and housewife to women and the role of head of the family to men. These two positions are of great importance in the community education of young people (girls and boys) which forges power relations between men and women through decision-making, access to resources and control of such access.

The young girl is perceived by Central African society as an individual who is passing through her biological family for another family which will be that of her husband.³¹ Therefore, she must be prepared by her family and community education which focuses on local and ancestral knowledge of household management, to be up to the task in her home which is in reality her natural destination. This perception excludes her, to the benefit of her brothers, from sharing in the inheritance (land, cattle, etc.) in her family of origin on the pretext that the family property should not go to another family.

Unlike the girl, the boy is seen as the head of the family, who has the power to lead the other members of the family (women and children), as well as to ensure the continuity of the family line³².

This sexist discrimination, deeply rooted in Central African society and reflected in patriarchal institutions and sociocultural norms, confines girls and women to their role of performing unpaid household chores, having children and looking after them. It is one of the root causes of harmful practices against girls and women. By placing a high value on a girl's virginity and developing fears about female sexuality, it engenders widespread support for early and forced marriages of virgin girls, who are considered to be "pure" compared to other "unclean" girls who have lost their virginity. This is why many parents believe that early marriage protects their daughters from premarital sex and sexual harassment.³³

Faced with all these beliefs, young mothers feel socially reticent about deciding on the conditions and time of their daughters' marriage, and leave it to their husbands and other family and community members to take decisions on behalf of their daughters that will change the course of their lives, thus perpetuating gender inequalities (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2018). Sociocultural constraints also force parents to avoid their daughters becoming pregnant outside marriage, or becoming unmarried and "impure" old daughters, so as not to expose the rest of the family to harsh criticism from society. .

These social values, traditionally justified by religious beliefs, thus encourage marriage from puberty, fundamental

³⁰ IMF Report No 19/216.

³¹ Information obtained through focus groups and interviews with opinion leaders during January and February 2021.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

causes of early and / or forced marriages, which have unfortunate consequences on reproductive health.

Harmful practices such as widowhood rites, levirate, sororate and excision continue despite their prohibition or denunciation. Whatever his rank, it is the first boy who is the heir of the family, to the detriment of the girls who have nothing, either in their biological families, or in their in-laws' families. Widows, despite the favourable provisions of the Family Code, are stripped of their property, especially in the absence of legal marriage.

Linguistically, the CAR is a multilingual country with 72 languages used³⁴, including two official languages: French and Sango. Although not the mother tongue of most Central Africans, French is the reference language for administration and education³⁵. This is at the root of many problems of gender injustice and inequality for out-of-school populations which are generally women and girls. Sango, which became an official language in 1991, is the mother tongue of around 10% of the population and is used as a lingua franca by a large number of Central Africans.³⁶ Recent crises have been fuelled by social fragmentation within and between communities, as well as between ethnic, religious and economic groups. The ensuing degradation of social ties greatly fuelled the climate of insecurity in many communities.

In addition to the sociocultural constraints, the security context and the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic have made the Central African population in general, and women and girls in particular (especially the many internally displaced persons), very vulnerable to the instability which has plagued the country for decades. Women have been more severely affected by the crisis than men, and the number of female heads of household has increased. Lack of economic opportunities in rural areas has resulted in poverty rates reaching 81% for women, compared to 69% for men³⁷. The low level of gender equality indicators (0.648 in 2016 with a ranking of 149th out of 159 countries), reflects the extent of gender inequalities at national level, a context conducive to the rise of different types of violence against women and girls.

II.6. Poverty and relations between men and women

In the CAR, the development policies put in place after independence have not made it possible to correct the inequalities between the regions³⁸ and places of residence on the one hand and the sexes on the other. Females have always been the victims of many disparities that the state has worked to reduce. These disparities concern access to basic social services, credits, factors of production, city management, etc.³⁹ The 2016 poverty and development statistics (see Graph 4) illustrate this disparity, which shows that regardless of the region, women are more vulnerable than men. According to data from the World Bank (2018), it is estimated that more than 75% of the population lived below the poverty line in the country in 2017, which is well above the 31% targeted by the MDG No. 1.

The latest estimates from the International Monetary Fund⁴⁰ show that the incidence of poverty is expected to increase from 70.5% in 2019 to 72.2% in 2020, due to the loss of purchasing power of the population, as per capita income fell by 1.3% in 2020. Food insecurity, which had already reached a worrying level in 2019, has worsened further under the effect of the Corona Virus pandemics.

³⁴ SIL International, 2019. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 22nd edition.

³⁵ The use of French "Is limited to certain contexts: the academic and scientific environment, administration, official political activities and speeches and the media. In reality, even in these contexts, French is only used as a communication medium with a non-sängöphone interlocutor." (OIF, 2014; p.113-114).

³⁶ Almost 100% according to *Ethnologue*; 93% according to the 2012 survey led by Robert Beyom (OIF, 2014).

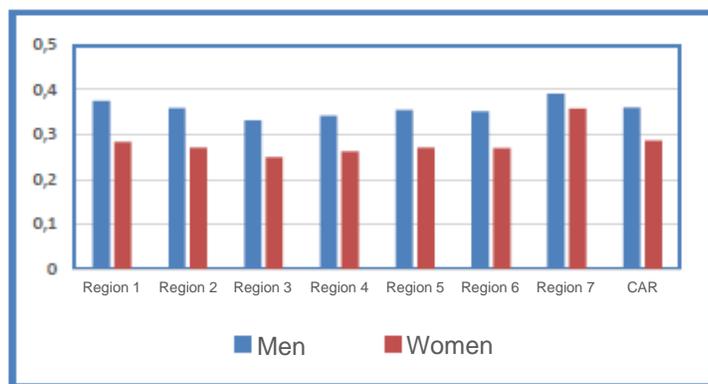
³⁷ CARRPP Final Report, 2017.

³⁸ According to the publication Administrative Atlas of OCHA (2013), the regions of the CAR are distributed as follows: region 1 = plateaux; region 2 = Equator; region 3 = Yadé; region 4 = Kagas; region 5 = Fertit; region 6 = Haut Oubangui; and region 7 = Bas Oubangui.

³⁹ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁴⁰ See the National Report "Socioeconomic impact of COVID" in the CAR currently being published (2021).

Graph 4: HDI indicator in 2016 by region and sex



Source: National voluntary monitoring report on the implementation of the SDGs (2019)

Despite the fact that the annual economic growth rate of real GDP per employed person was 2%⁴¹ in 2018, pay remained low. It is 5,240 CFA francs / day for a male middle manager compared to 4,638 FCA francs / day for a female middle manager. Although there is equal pay between men and women in other positions, it remains very low, i.e. 4,504 CFA francs / day for a worker and 1,000 CFA francs / day for a labourer, which highlights the low level of household income.

According to the SDG implementation monitoring report (2019) between 2016 and 2018, the analysis of the trend in the income of Central African households by interval reveals that a greater proportion of households have a very low income.

Also, the proportion of households with incomes between 200,000 F.CFA and 300,000 F.CFA remains very low. These trends show that there is indeed a problem of distribution and redistribution of wealth. Indeed, the analysis of the data collected reveals that the richest 10% have 46.2% of the wealth while the poorest 10% have only 1.2% of the wealth (2018).

This inequality in the average income of Central African households is evident both at national level and in each region or prefecture of the country, as well as between the sexes and between activity sectors. Also, the level of the Human Development Index in the CAR (Cf. Table 5) clearly shows not only this disparity by region and by sex, but also that poor households are the most socially vulnerable.

In addition, households whose head works in agriculture are among the poorest because these households, which have an average size of 8 to 10 people and which are headed by women in more than 21.8%⁴² of cases, account for more than 60% of the population.

In addition to the fact that unemployment is theoretically low (less than 2 active people out of 10), the Ministry of Labour measures the unemployment rate by estimating the underemployment rate. Thus, from 2015 to 2018, the rate of underemployment (unemployment) was 34.5% on average. It was slightly more pronounced in urban areas (36%) than in rural areas (30%) and affected women (42.1%) more than men (28.6%). This situation explains the position of the CAR at 188th out of 189 countries in 2020 for the HDI. The Gender-Specific Human Development

⁴¹ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁴² Results of the Central African survey for monitoring and evaluation of well-being (ECASEB 2008, ICASEE).

Index (GDI) ranks the CAR 153th out of 177 countries in 2016⁴³, thus confirming the close correlation between gender inequalities and poverty.

Table 5: HDI and IDG (Gender Development Index) indicator in the CAR in 2016

Region	Country	GDI
1. Plateaux (Ombella-M'Poko, Lobaye)	0.360	0.758
2 Equator (Nana-Mambere, Mambere-Kadei, Sangha-Mambere)	0.360	0.755
3 Yadé (Ouham, Ouham-Pende)	0.317	0.753
4 Kagas (Ouaka, Kemo, Nana-Gribizi)	0.331	0.767
5 Fertit (Bamingui-Bangoran, Vakaga, Haute-Kotto)	0.347	0.763
6 Haut-Oubangui (Basse-Kotto, Mboumou, Haut-Mboumou)	0.335	0.767
7 Bangui	0.391	0.916
Total	0.353	0.796

Source: National voluntary monitoring report on the implementation of the SDGs (2019)

⁴³ Central African Republic Zero Hunger National Strategic Review Report, FAO 2018.

III. GENDER AND LEGAL RIGHTS

III.1. Laws and legal documents for Gender

III.1.1. International legal instruments for the promotion of gender equality and equity ratified by the CAR

The Central African Republic has expressed its willingness to be part of the movement adopted by the United Nations System for the promotion of gender equality and equity between men and women with a view to reducing poverty, first by stating in its constitution, adopted by referendum on 13 December 13 2015, that it "reaffirms its adherence to all duly ratified international conventions, in particular those relating to the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women" (Preamble, paragraph 18), then by ratifying several international legal instruments in this area, in particular:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979;
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 18 June 18 1981;
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of November 1989;
- The Declaration and Programme of Action resulting from the International Conference on Population and Development of Cairo 1994;
- The Dakar Platform for Action on Women of 1994;
- The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on Women;
- Resolution 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (23 April 2019), 2493 (29 October 2019) on women, peace and security;
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (New York, 2000);
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003);
- Africa's Plan of Action to Accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms on Women (Addis Ababa, 2004);
- The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004);
- The Pact on Security, Stability and Development of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (2008);
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (New York, 2015).

The CAR also drew heavily on the results of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, as well as the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995 to build a policy for the reduction of inequalities and the establishment of equity. Also, several laws and regulations have been passed to implement this policy. Thanks to the adoption of a Gender policy in 2005 which was also reviewed and adopted in 2019, followed by the action plan in 2007. The CAR is committed to reducing inequalities to promote the equal access of men and women to development.

The Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for the Central African Republic (RCPCA 2017-2021) has focused its action on 3 main pillars, namely: (i) Support for peace, security and reconciliation; (ii) renewal of the social contract between the State and society; and (iii) economic recovery and the revival of productive sectors.

The UNDAF (2018-2021) has taken up the concerns of the 2030 agenda which is centred on the need to "realise human rights for all and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" . Also, the 2018-2021 UNDAF of the CAR adopted 6 recommendations, namely: (i) support for the alignment of national policies and laws with international human rights and humanitarian law standards, including the reporting systems provided for the SDGs and human rights; (ii) work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination through a data collection system through a disaggregated and gender-specific system that takes account of forms of violence and

apparent discrimination; (iii) work for the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination, particularly gender-based sexual violence; (iv) promote the participation of actors at all levels in public decision-making processes; (v) apply the due diligence that offers judicial and paralegal solutions including effective assistance for victims of crimes and offences relating to human rights, in accordance with United Nations principles on business and human rights in public private partnerships; and (vi) reduce gender inequalities by empowering women and girls.

The various Humanitarian Response Plans, which have been drawn up annually by humanitarian actors since the humanitarian crisis in CAR, have tried with great success to provide immediate responses to the sometimes primary needs of the population in distress. These different plans have always focused on the situation of the most vulnerable, particularly women, girls and children, by providing a contextual response to the difficulties in meeting the needs of the latter.

The Peace and Reconciliation Political Agreement, signed between the Government and the 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019, is the eighth peace agreement in the CAR since the onset of the crisis in 2013. It is the only one that provides for an implementation mechanism, including the Executive Monitoring Committee (EMC), the Technical Secretariat of the EMC, the National Implementation Committee (NIC), the Prefectural Implementation Committee (PIC) and the Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC), which provide for women to be present in all these bodies. Even if it is still of note that women remain in the minority in all these bodies.

In addition to laws and regulations concerning human rights in general, the CAR has adopted a panoply of national texts concerning the rights of women and in particular those which focus on their civil rights, their legal status and their health. One the most prominent is the law establishing parity between men and women, although the lack of an implementing decree and measures for monitoring its application hamper its effectiveness.

III.1.2. Civil rights and legal status of Central African women

Certain legal instruments of the CAR have taken up several international provisions in terms of civil rights and the legal status of Central African women. However, although the adoption of these provisions is not systematic, these legal instruments generally advocate equality between men and women. In fact, the Family Code, adopted in November 1997 and entering into force in November 1998, reinstates polygamy and dowry, which expose women to discrimination, although these two elements had already been prohibited by a presidential ordinance dating from 1966.

Likewise, certain discriminatory provisions of this Code have been amended and are awaiting adoption by the National Assembly. For example, article 254, which gives the husband exclusive power to manage the family, has been revised in the direction of joint management of this power by the two spouses.

In addition to the Constitution of the Central African Republic of 27 December 2004, which recognises that all male and female citizens are equal in rights and duties, the various laws, ordinances and decrees listed below confirm equality between men and women. in matters of employment, salary and criminal liability.

- Law No. 10.001 of 6 January 2010 on the Central African Penal Code;
- Law No. 10.002 of 6 January 2010 on the Central African Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Law No. 09.004 of 29 January 2009 on the Labour Code of the Central African Republic;
- Law No. 99.016 of 16 July 1999, on the General Statute of the Public Service;
- Law No. 91.016 of 27 December 1991 on the Central African Code of Civil Procedure.

Law No. 10.001 of 6 January 2010 on the Central African Penal Code took measures against the perpetrators of violence against women, particularly those motivated by traditions and which are committed against widows, such as the deprivation of meals, the confiscation of their goods by in-laws, etc.

The CAR is also signatory to the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Likewise, the CAR signed the two international covenants of 1996, one relating to civil and political rights, the other relating to economic and social rights, which enshrine the general standard of non-discrimination.

However, the effectiveness of this type of legal framework is limited by the contradictory provisions of customary law, which ensure that gender disparities remain conspicuous in the CAR.

In addition to the contradictions of certain provisions of national (e.g. Family Code) and international texts, the various crises and conflicts in the Central African Republic have largely led to the deterioration of the living and security conditions of women, which were already precarious in both urban and rural areas.

The conclusions of grassroots consultations and the New Deal report on the fragility of the CAR, carried out in September 2015, attest to the impoverishment and vulnerability of populations, in particular women, due to insecurity and continuous population displacements.

Gender indicators highlight the inequalities between men and women in the CAR. For example on the HDR scale (2019) the CAR is ranked 159th out of 162 countries, with a Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.680.

National responses to the conflict and post-conflict situation have resulted in the development and implementation of projects with the support of development partners.

III.1.3. Reproductive health laws.

Several resolutions have been adopted by the Central African government to bring the country's legislation into line with international conventions on women's reproductive health. Also, Law No. 09.004 of 29 January 2009, establishing the Labour Code of the Central African Republic, specifically protects, in its own chapter, the right of an active woman to procreate, which protects her from all the harassments observed in the workplace in pregnancy, especially in the event of absences related to the care of the baby.

Sexuality and fertility are governed by the Bangayassi Law No. 06/005 of 20 June 2006 relating to reproductive health. This law also recognises the right of any person suffering from a sexually transmitted infection (STI) and HIV / AIDS, to enjoy, without

Art 8: All individuals are equal in rights and dignity in matters of reproduction. This right is universal and fundamental. It is guaranteed to every human being, throughout his or her life, in any situation and in any place.

No individual can be deprived of this right which he or she enjoys without any discrimination based on age, sex, fortune, religion, ethnicity, marital status and without the slightest coercion or violence.

Art 9: Every individual or every couple has the right to decide freely and with discernment, on the size of his or her family while respecting the laws in force, public order and good morals.

discrimination, all their civil, political, economic and social rights and to benefit from special assistance, care, basic, treatment and a guarantee of confidentiality in their relations with social care and health personnel. It punishes, in accordance with the legislation in force, all acts that may infringe the rights of sexual and reproductive health, in particular: female genital mutilation and paedophilia, the voluntary transmission of HIV / AIDS, forced marriage and all forms of exploitation of forced prostitution of women and children. However, the deep roots of the population in the habits and customs of the country, based on social norms that recommend early natality and favour marriages before adulthood, especially in rural areas, prevents this Law from fully playing its role.

Certain inequalities are targeted by specific texts, such as violence against women and voluntary contamination by Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) which are respectively governed by Law No. 06.032 of 27 December 2006, on the Protection of the Woman against Violence in the Central African Republic, Law No. 06.030 of 12 September 2006, establishing the Rights and Obligations of People living with HIV / AIDS and Law No. 2.00.05 of 14 January 2020 organising legal aid in the Central African Republic which also extends to vulnerable people⁴⁴

⁴⁴ In the spirit of this law, the following are considered vulnerable persons: minors under the age of (eighteen (18) pg. 24

and establishes the conditions necessary for eligible persons to benefit from legal aid.

IV. GENDER, GOVERNANCE AND PEACEBUILDING

IV.1. Gender and access to justice

Access to justice for Central African citizens is guaranteed by the 2016 constitution, which grants them equality before the law. If we take the case of the Penal Code, there is no difference between men and women. In the case of the division of inheritance, the Family Code grants the same rights to the members of the line of the same family without any consideration of sex.

However in the current situation, it is difficult to ensure that the Laws are respected for all citizens because of the insecurity that has reigned in the country in recent years, the influence of politics on justice⁴⁵, the venality of judges, the insufficiency and inadequacy of the training of magistrates, the financial and documentary poverty of the courts, the excessive legal slowness of the rules and procedures, the remoteness of the judicial process from the population, the weight of habits and customs which also influence court decisions, etc.

The CAR does not yet have a quota for the representation of women at the highest level of the judicial system. However, the Parity Law, which provides for a quota of 35% of women based on their skills, in nominative and elective decision-making bodies, in both state and private organisations, also extends to the judicial system. But in practice, this law is not applied in the judicial system. Only 9.8% of magistrates, 35.5% of court clerks, 5% of lawyers, 33.3% of notaries are women (9 notaries including 3 women and 6 men), while only 44.4% of the Constitutional Court are women, which means that the quota of women in the judicial administration remains low (Cf. Table 6). According to LWB (2018), only three or four lawyers are of the Muslim faith, which represents only about 3% of the body of lawyers. The majority of these personnel are concentrated in Bangui and have to be moved to other regions in case of necessity, but the insecurity in other areas and their occupation by the armed groups greatly reduces the effectiveness of the judicial administration in the hinterland.

Although there is an Inspectorate General of Judicial Services (IGSJ) which is responsible for verifying the observance of laws, orders, regulations and instructions, the functioning of courts, judicial services and prisons throughout the Central African Republic, the country does not have separate judicial bodies to monitor the implementation of human rights and gender equality provisions. However, there is an association of women judges and magistrates which has just been created. Currently, it is limited to the management of social issues in the area of magistrates. However, in the long term, it also intends to take an interest in issues related to the decision-making of women judges and magistrates and to monitor the application of decisions related to provisions on gender equality and human rights.

We also have the Association of Women Lawyers of the Central African Republic (AFJC) which works for the promotion of the application of human rights and the fight against the impunity of perpetrators of human violence in the CAR, by facilitating access to justice for survivors of violence, many of whom are women, and by providing them with psychological and social counselling services. However, Law No. 2.00.05 of 14 January 2020 organising legal aid in the Central African Republic, which establishes the legal framework for this assistance, is an

years in criminal matters and under twenty-one (21) years in civil matters; victims of sexual assault; victims and orphaned children of AIDS; victims of acts of torture; mentally retarded persons; persons prosecuted and / or preventively detained whose resources are found to be insufficient by all means; foreigners in an irregular situation and deprived of all resources; refugees and returnees.

⁴⁵ Politics tends to interfere in court decisions. The level of independence is limited, magistrates and judges continue to be designated, appointed to positions of responsibility by the executive as the President of the Republic remains the President of the management bodies of the various public offices ... Judges, magistrates should be elected by their peers to positions of responsibility. The independence of the judiciary is emptied of its substance by the influence of politicians.

opportunity for victims of violence in the CAR to have legitimate, compulsory and free access to justice. Despite the existence of the Central African legal aid strategy 2017-2022, this law remains little-known to the populations⁴⁶.

Table 6: Representation of women in the justice sector in 2018

Body	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Magistrates	21	193	214	9.8
Clerks	108	196	304	35.5
Notaries	3	6	9	33.3
Lawyers	6	124	130	5
Managers				
Constitutional Court	4	5	9	44.4

Source: Department of Justice, ILAC (2017) and LWB (2018)

To do justice to victims and establish lasting peace, the Special Criminal Court (SCC) was created by organic law No. 15-003 of 3 June 2015. It represents an important opportunity to end the widespread impunity face by victims of cycles of violence in the Central African Republic since 2003. The SCC offers a chance to raise the profile of trials with victims and others most affected by crime, particularly women, and to enhance national ownership and the capacity to deliver justice for heinous crimes and to end human rights violations.

However, the representativeness of women in this Court is again very low, especially with regard to national executives (Cf. Table 7). The presence of women among the members of this Court is only 27% for magistrates, including 0% for national executives, 0% for clerks, 9.3% for national lawyers and 20% for judicial police officers (JPO), which is still very low.

Regarding the national magistrates, despite the action taken to promote the candidatures of women, only 1 female applied to the last call for candidatures⁴⁷. The selection criteria can be called into question, and in particular the requirement of 10 years of continuous professional career, which often proves impossible as few women in the judiciary have a continuous career because they are often seconded to positions related to the involvement of women in politics or development.

Table 7: Representation of women at the Special Criminal Court (SCC)

Body	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Prosecutors and Substitute Judges	1	5	6	16.6
	3	8	11	27
Clerks	0	10	10	0
National lawyers	3	29	32	9.3
JPO	4	16	20	20

⁴⁶ The implementation of the Central African Legal Aid Strategy 2017-2022 was based on the draft law facilitating access to justice and law through legal aid which was drawn up in 2012; but the political-military upheavals prevented its finalisation, so it was only in January 2020 that the law was enacted.

⁴⁷ Mid-term evaluation report of the Joint Support Project for the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in the Central African Republic.

Source: www.cps-rca.cf (2021)

Although the lack of political will is an obstacle to compliance with quotas for a significant presence of women in the judicial system of the CAR, it is also necessary to underline the lack of alignment between the competences currently vested in the Ministry of Justice, Keeper of the Seals, and those required to perform the daily tasks related to the functions devolved to the Ministry of Justice and the courts. For women in particular, the level of education and competence is not only an obstacle to them holding decision-making positions, but also to their entry into the judiciary⁴⁸, in sufficient numbers with respect to the 35% quota.

IV.2. Gender and participation in peacebuilding

The contribution of Central African women to the search for and consolidation of peace is essential for the creation of a peaceful society enjoying lasting peace, especially for a country marked by decades of civil war. Women are actors in education not only at grassroots level in families, but also in entire communities where they are involved through training, awareness-raising, mediation and advocacy. The commitment of Central African women to the stabilisation process of the CAR is motivated by the ratification by this country of resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" of the UN Security Council, which is the first resolution to recognise and desire to strengthen the role of women as agents of peace. It is also included in the objectives of the SDGs, in particular SDG 16. The contribution of women can be appreciated both from a strategic point of view in decision-making bodies, and at grassroots level in urban and rural community settings.

At strategic level, Central African women are fighting to further integrate the ongoing peace process, as well as political and civic life. This struggle resulted in their participation in the negotiations of the Khartoum peace and reconciliation agreement in 2019, where 8% of the signatories were women. The mobilisation of women resulted in the quota of 35% of women (4 women out of 11 members) being adhered to in the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission.⁴⁹ (CVJRR). The women also pleaded for their involvement in the implementation and monitoring mechanisms of the PRA, where they represent 23% of the members of the various bodies of these mechanisms.⁵⁰

Since then, there has been little progress, with women not being consulted as part of the ongoing peace negotiation process. The argument often advanced by the government to justify this is that there are not enough female intellectuals in the CAR, as the majority are not educated or trained. In addition, the lack of effective policies and strategies⁵¹ to strengthen their participation in public affairs, despite a favourable legal framework, is also at the root of their marginalisation. Consequently, they cannot be associated with the management of public life, especially in major negotiations such as the peace process. Central African women have come together in a network of women leaders from the Central African Republic with the aim of being effective actors in peacebuilding. On the other hand, it is of note that there is a greater motivation of women's associations for individual positioning at the expense of detriment of grassroots mobilisation to bring the voice of women to government.

However, although Central African women feel that they are not listened to by the government because they are excluded from all forums where peace agreements are discussed, local initiatives place them at the heart of peace building. Indeed, they play an essential role in advocacy, prevention, awareness-raising and mediation for peace, at local and community level. In certain localities of the country, they have taken action against the belligerents to

⁴⁸ If we take for example the entrance examination to the Magistracy division of ENAM, it would be difficult to have a quota of 35% of women among the students who answer the call for applications and even less among those who have obtained the average required for admission.

⁴⁹ The strategic objective of this commission is to achieve an overhaul of the collective memory of the CAR by establishing the Truth of the facts between "executioners and victims", to render a global and fair justice, to take account of the damage suffered by the victims and to repair them, and finally to reconcile all Central Africans.

⁵⁰ See minusca.unmissions.org.

⁵¹ Political alliances to end the crisis are unfavourable to women because the main actors are men.

force them to lay down their arms, thanks to their status as mothers, wives or sisters, through awareness-raising and mediation work. The contribution of women to the chances of success of research and peacebuilding has been recognised by the Bangui Forum⁵² which recommended strong involvement of women in peacebuilding mechanisms at local and national level.

IV.3. Gender, peace and security

Over the past ten years, the various armed conflicts that have affected the sociopolitical, economic and security situation in the CAR have made the various actors concerned with the stabilisation of the country aware of the different ways in which violent conflicts and peacebuilding affect Central African men and women as well as the growing understanding of roles, identities and relationships that influence how they are involved in these processes. Indeed, the political and military crisis that began in 2012 prevented the CAR from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the results of which are largely mixed. In terms of the formulation and implementation of certain sectoral development policies and the two MDG-based Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP 1 & 2), none of the eight (8) objectives was reached at the end of year 2015⁵³. Aware of the challenges of pacification and stabilisation, the CAR undertook, the day after the return to constitutional order, to put the sustainable development programme into operation by 2030. Four main reasons have argued in favour of integrating gender into the process of peacebuilding and strengthening the rule of law in the CAR⁵⁴: First, gender equality and women's rights are important goals in themselves, as they have recently been articulated in goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Peacebuilding and state building are opportunities to support and advance women's rights and gender equality, in particular with regard to the fluidity of post-conflict spaces and the opportunities they offer for renegotiating and restructuring power and gender relations. Stemming from the latter, SDG 16 on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies has particularly strong links with SDG 5.

To do this, a package of initiatives was launched by the new Central African government with the support of development partners and resulted in the Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan for the Central African Republic (RCPCA 2017-2021) which is the reference framework for the promotion of recovery and the peacebuilding, in order to increase the well-being and prosperity of the populations of the Central African Republic. This plan places particular emphasis on the promotion of gender equality in defence and security reform, access to justice, access to quality essential services, the sustainable exploitation of natural resources, inclusion of young people, etc. as well as support for women's participation in conflict prevention and social cohesion at community and national levels.

Several actions could be included in this plan and sectoral gender mainstreaming strategies, in particular:

- Support for the development of the women leaders' network;
- The enactment of Law No. 20,005 on the organisation of legal aid in the CAR;
- The establishment of the Central African Legal Aid Strategy;
- The launch of the process for the development of the ministerial plan for integrating gender into the reform of the police and the gendarmerie within the context of the security sector reform (SSR);
- Strengthening the capacities of the security and defence forces in the care of victims of GBV;
- The inclusion of women in the body of judicial police officers responsible for investigations within the SCC;
- The involvement of women in the peace process, in particular the signing of the Khartoum agreements, etc.

Since the outbreak of the political and military crisis in 2012, Central African women have made a major contribution to the reconciliation process and to the dissemination of the culture of peace. In the inter-Central

⁵² <https://jfakiblog.com/2016/05/23/le-forum-national-de-bangui-en-documents-enfin-ca-memories/>

⁵³ ⁵³ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁵⁴ CORAID (2016), "Manual on Gender, Peacebuilding and State building"

African talks in Khartoum in 2016, 8% of the signatories⁵⁵ of the peace accord were women, thus marking a first in the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 in the CAR. The women involved enabled the concerns of women to be taken into account in the Khartoum peace negotiations, in particular women soldiers, women accompanying ex-combatants and women's organisations. This inclusion of women in the resolution of the crisis is also seen inside the country through their mobilisation in the women leaders' network⁵⁶ to make their voices heard with the government and international partners.

Regarding the integration of Gender into the reform of the Police and the Gendarmerie, a preliminary inventory was carried out as a prelude to the development of the ministerial plan for integrating Gender into the Internal Security Forces. This study it possible to highlight the significant gap that seems to emerge between policies designed at the strategic level and their implementation on the ground. This is particularly evident in the stereotyping of women by the men and women of the Internal Security Forces themselves. It also made it possible to note the change in mentality which is beginning to appear at all levels with the reform of the ISFs. In 2020, 351 out of a total of 2,650 Gendarmes were women (i.e. 13.2%) and 597 women out of a total of 2,255 Police were women (i.e. 26.4%).

In conclusion, the long period of political and military crisis in the CAR led to a deterioration of all social indicators and a decline in most socioeconomic indicators, which made it impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. Despite the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections and the Khartoum accords in 2019, the country remained in a situation of insecurity, with three quarters of the territory occupied by armed groups, thus preventing the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory. The impact of this crisis on the indicators for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁵⁷ that have an impact on gender equality and women's empowerment makes their achievement unlikely.

IV.4. Gender and public investments

The CAR is in its third year of implementation of the Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA), which forms the basis of all economic and social policies. The RCPCA implements the development programmes and projects included in the framework of medium-term budgetary programming (2017-2021) and the rolling Triennial Investment Programme (PTI). While the evaluation of the TRF and the RPCS showed absolute consistency between its strategic objectives and the majority of the SDG targets⁵⁸, that of SDG 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls remains mixed with regard to the National Investment Budget through investment programmes in priority sectors.

Indeed, a gender analysis of sector investment plans, programmes and projects allow them to be classified into 3 categories. The first category concerns those from the priority sectors of health, education and agriculture (example: CAR education sector plan 2020-2022, investment package for the reduction of maternal, neonatal and maternal mortality and for the improvement of adolescent health 2020-2022, etc.) which are gender-sensitive at the planning level, including goals, targets and outcome indicators. Although these programmes and projects present data broken down by sex at planning level, it is of note, however, that this format disappears when it comes to the budget, the expenditure of which does not show the share that goes to women and men, girls and boys. The second category corresponds to plans, programmes and projects that are not very gender-sensitive which present few gender-sensitive objectives sensitive, data with little or no breakdown by sex and no trace of gender in the budgets and which are generally found in the investments. infrastructure (example: SODECA's three-year investment plan). Finally we have the third category which concerns investment plans, programmes and projects

⁵⁵ These are four women out of the 49 members of the Central African parties who were directly discussing in order to reach a peace agreement in the Central African Republic: three in the Government's negotiating team and one in the armed groups.

⁵⁶ This is the platform of women's organisations in the CAR which brings together the Organisation of Central African Women (OFCA), the Network for Women's Leadership in the Central African Republic (RELEFCA) and the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (REFAMP).

⁵⁷ These include SDGs 1-10 and 16.

⁵⁸ See SDG monitoring report

which are not at all gender-sensitive because they do not reference gender in the planning and budget and which are also found in infrastructure investments (example: ENERCA's 2016-2030 investment programme).

IV.5. Gender and Participation in public decision-making bodies

Despite the implementation of resolution 1325 which provided the CAR with a normative framework favourable to taking account of prevention and protection measures for women in order to put in place mechanisms for the protection of the rights of women and girls, the latter remain marginalised. For example, the current government has only 5 women ministers out of 39. In the regions, 12.5% of prefectures are headed by women (2 women out of 16), as are 11.3% of sub-prefectures (8 women out of 63), a quota still far from the minimum of 35% provided for by the Parity Act.

Table 8: Female representation in public decision-making bodies.

Responsibility	Women	Men	Total	% of women
Presidential Cabinet	84	262	346	24.2
Prime Minister	30	100	130	23
Ministers	5	34	39	12
High Council for Communication	8	23	31	25.8
High Authority for Good Governance	3	9	12	25
Economic and Social Council	2	5	9	22.2
National Assembly - Deputies	12	128	140	8.6
Prefects	4	12	16	25 (*)
Secretaries General of Prefectures	2	14	16	12.5 (***)
Sub-prefects	8	63	71	11.3 (****)
Secretaries of Sub-prefectures	12	59	71	16.9 (**)
Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission	4	7	11	36.4
National Election Authority	15	34	49	30.6

Source: System and Methods Directorate (2021) and Mapping of political parties (2018)⁵⁹

(*) Decree No. 20.046 and 20.119 appointing or confirming the Prefects.

(**) Decree No. 20.275 appointing or confirming the Secretaries of Sub-prefectures.

(***) Decree No. 20.047 appointing or confirming the Secretaries General of Prefectures (****) Decree No. 20.048 and 20.120 appointing or confirming Sub-prefects.

IV.5.1. Participation of women in political and nominative positions

The low participation of women in political and nominative positions in the CAR is explained by the method of appointment of elected officials at the level of political and administrative bodies. This is exacerbated by the level of education and engagement of women, the organisation of elections which often take place in a context of insecurity which is generally detrimental to women, etc. For example, for the 2020-2021 legislative elections, political parties were not always able to retain a quota of 35% in the candidate lists presented to the National

⁵⁹ Published by UN FEMMES as part of the Programme for the Promotion of Women's Leadership and Participation in Political and Public Life in the Central African Republic (CAR) 2017-2021 in 2018.

Election Authority. Indeed, there was resistance from the majority of political parties to facilitating and promote the nomination of women in accordance with the law on parity. In addition, the lists of candidates not in accordance with the law on parity which had been presented by the Constitutional Court were ratified. It should also be added that article 281 of the Electoral Code does not establish binding measures with regard to political parties and the Constitutional Court to ensure compliance with the 35% of female representations on the electoral lists.

IV.5.2. Representativeness of women in local authorities

Although they represent 50.2% of the population, Central African women are hardly visible on the political scene and in nominative positions. As a result, their presence in elective positions in parliament or local authorities remains very low (Cf. Table 9). Within the National Assembly, they represent only 8.57% (12 out of 140) of parliamentarians. This observation is also valid for local authorities where only 10% (20 out of 179) of mayoral positions in municipalities are held by women. However, it is of note that there are 15 women out of 49 members appointed to head the National Elections Authority (ANE), i.e. representativeness of 30.6% which is close to 35%.

Table 9: Female representation in the special delegations of the municipalities and in local government.

Responsibility	Women	Men	Total	% Women
President	6	66	72	8.3
1 st Vice-president	8	64	72	11.1
2 nd Vice-president	4	33	37	10.8
Members	44	181	225	19.5

Source: Decrees No. 20.284 and 20.322 amending and supplementing the provisions of Decree No. 20.040 appointing or confirming members of special delegations to municipalities and published in 2018

V. GENDER AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

V.1. Gender and employment

The problem of employment remains unquestionably a major challenge for the majority of developing countries, and questions of access to employment remain a central concern of the United Nations. Access to employment has also been included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 8 which aims to "Promote sustained, shared and sustainable economic growth, generating full and productive employment. and decent work for all". Marked by years of conflicts which destroyed its socioeconomic fabric, sharply reducing the factors of industrial production, 64.4% of women are in the labour force in the Central African Republic, compared to 79.8% of men⁶⁰. In 2018, 64% of the working population was actually employed⁶¹, 34.2% underemployed (unemployment⁶²) of which 35.7% were in urban areas. During this same period, unemployment affected women (42.1%) more than men (28.6%).

V.1.1. Gender and public sector employment

The Central African public sector continues to be dominated by men. Of the thirty-two ministerial departments in the CAR, in April 2020 women represented around 25.8% of the workforce in the public sector, i.e. 4,579

⁶⁰ Gender Inequality Index, 2020.

⁶¹ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁶² According to the Ministry of Labour, the unemployment rate is measured by the rate of underemployment. It is informed by the policy monitoring framework but is not broken down by sex, age and type of disability.

individuals.⁶³ They were most represented in social affairs (46% of the workforce), health (42% of the workforce), civil service (38% of the workforce) and finance and budget (31% of the workforce) (See Table 10).

Table 10: Representativeness of men and women in the civil service.

Ministries	Men	Women	Total	% of women
National Education - Higher Education-Scientific Research	5415	1512	6927	22
Health	1056	768	1824	42
Finances and budget	1060	477	1537	31
Interior-Public Security	1221	336	1557	22
Social Affairs and Reconciliation national	204	175	379	46
Justice and Human Rights	386	116	502	23
Public Service - Labour - Social Protection	201	121	322	38
Foreign Affairs - African Integration	312	102	414	25
Other	3330	972	4302	23
Total	13185	4579	17764	26

Source: System and Methods Department, Ministry of the Civil Service (2021)

The difference in salary in the civil service between men and women is on average 244.97 FCFA / h, which represents a difference of 40.6%⁶⁴. In the health sector, this difference is on average 28% (Cf. Table 11). This discrimination goes against the law governing the Labour Code, which calls for equal pay for women and men. Also, improving the participation of women is a major challenge to be taken up in the public sector with a view to improving the living conditions of the populations in the CAR.

Table 11: Breakdown of nursing staff salaries by gender in 2020

Post	Men	Women	Ave. sal. M	Ave. sal. F	M deviation	% M deviation
Medical Specialists	38	10	353,900	333,200	20,700	6%
General Practitioners	236	62	298,100	280,860	17,240	6%
Pharmacists	3	4	203,570	338,400	-134,830	-66%
Senior health technician	107	29	149,550	134,550	15,000	10%
State-certified Nurse	181	73	133,900	127,800	6,100	5%
State-certified Midwives	16	236	111,490	133,500	-22010	-20%
State-certified Midwifery Nurses	39	4	134,100	126,800	7,300	5%
Health Assistant	73	56	88,279	79,660	8,619	10%
Midwifery Assistants	13	115	78,135	82,300	-4,165	-5%
State-certified Health Assistants	55	6	134,815	120,750	14,065	10%
Hygiene Assistant	20	21	82625	77,840	4,785	6%
Caregivers	29	38	69165	67,400	1,765	3%
Other	109	15	140,285	110,200	30,085	21%
Total	891	697	179,510	129,230	50,280	28%

⁶³ Department of Systems and Methods of the Ministry of the Civil Service.

⁶⁴ According to the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019, the average salary in public administration is estimated at CFAF 567.16. It is higher for men (602.63 FCFA / h) than for women (357.66 FCFA / h).

Source: Authors and COVID-19 Impact (2021)

V.1.2. Gender and employment in the private sector

Central African women are active in all branches of economic activity. According to ILO estimates in 2019, active women in the CAR are found mainly in the agricultural sector (81.3%) and in the service sector (16%), while their presence is limited in the industrial sector (2.7%). Despite the fact that men are also the majority in the agricultural sector, their representativeness is lower than that of women (74%). On the other hand, they are more numerous than women in the tertiary sector (services, 18.3%) and in the industrial sector (7.7%). The unemployment rate for women (3.6%) is slightly lower than that for men (3.8%). 47.5% of active Central African women contribute to family work compared to only 28.2% of men. In terms of employment, only 16.5% of women are employed in the non-agricultural sector.

Table 12: Contribution of men and women by sector of activity to the labour force in CAR (2019)

Indicators	% Women	% Men
Employment in agriculture	81.3	74
Employment in industry	2.7	7.7
Employment in services	16	18.3
Underemployment	3.6	3.8
Contribution to family work	47.5	28.2

Source: BIT (2019), Gender data portal / World Bank

In the private sector, female employees represent 17.8% of staff recruited in 2019. They were more numerous in human health and social action (8%), artistic, sporting and recreational activities (1.8%), specialised, scientific and technical activities (1.3%).

Table 13: Representativeness of women among salaried staff recruited in 2018

Activity area	Women	Men	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3	3	6
Extractive activities	7	64	71
Manufacturing activity	1	7	8
Construction	6	8	14
Trade	3	39	42
Transportation and warehousing	4	8	12
Accommodation and catering	0	2	2
Information and communication	5	19	24
Financial and insurance activities	12	26	38
Real estate activities	6	8	14
Specialised, scientific and technical activities	18	29	47

Support service and office activity	40	492	532
Public administration activities	2	6	8
Education	0	4	4
Human health and social action activities	115	413	528
Artistic, sporting and recreational activities	26	35	61
Other service activities n.o.c.	8	15	23
Special household activities	0	1	1
Total	256	1179	1435

Source: ACPFE data, 2021

By professional category, women represented only 1.9% of executives recruited in 2019, 5.6% of supervisors and 10.4% of employees / workers.

Table 14: Representativeness of women by professional category (staff recruited in 2019)

Professional category	Women	Men	Total	% Women
Executives	27	123	150	1.9
Supervisors	80	208	288	5.6
Employees / Workers	149	848	997	10.4
Total	256	1179	1435	17.8%

Source: ACPFE data, 2021

Several obstacles hamper better participation of women in the labour market, in particular: sociocultural constraints, the low level of education and economic problems due to very low income levels. Note also the virtual absence of women in unions to better defend their rights. Women show very little interest in union actions. In fact, a woman leads only one out of 25 existing unions in the CAR.⁶⁵

V.1.3. Gender and informal sector employment

The informal sector in CAR accounts for about 99%⁶⁶ of the working population. Over 80%⁶⁷ of women work in the informal sector, in particular the rural economy and small businesses. Although Central African women have the same legal right to employment as men, their low level of education and skills prevents them having the same access as men to the labour market and to certain jobs. Indeed, the information collected from the ACPFE on job seekers recorded in 2019⁶⁸ show that females represent 17.8% while males represent 82.2%. This gap reflects an imbalance in terms of gender in salaried jobs; because the profiles sought are graduates, who have completed training in promising fields of which the most in demand are: social sciences (15.44%), logisticians (9.44%), accounting managers (8.78%), nurses (6.40%), statisticians / demographers (4.60%), graduates in civil engineering, graduates in agronomy / agriculture (3.94%), doctors (3.37%). For women, the informal sector is therefore a refuge where there is no barrier to access linked to the level of education.

Women employed in the informal sector are mainly involved in agriculture and livestock, especially in rural areas where they occupy an important place in the value chains of several agricultural products (cassava, maize, peanuts, sesame, banana plantain, etc.) from production to marketing, with a considerable socioeconomic impact, in view

⁶⁵ Interview with the Principal Labour Inspector in charge of Social Protection (2021).

⁶⁶ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Information obtained from the Main Labour Inspectorate, in charge of Social Protection (January 2021).

of the jobs and income generated. They are also involved in the transformation of agricultural products using traditional technologies based on endogenous knowledge and know-how transmitted from generation to generation. Women are also active in the retail distribution of manufactured products that they buy and resell in markets in towns and villages across the country and many other services (hairstyling, sewing, etc.) that they sell to the population. However, women have difficulty accessing sources of finance because of the lack of collateral capable of securing loans. In fact, there is no banking institution in the Central African Republic specialising in the financing of IGAs carried out by women. Women's work and entrepreneurship seem to be accepted by men, but are occasionally challenged by the reality of male demands and mentalities as well as the lack of confidence of women themselves in their abilities.

V.2. Gender, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and food security

The CAR has abundant natural resources and climatic conditions conducive to agriculture and animal husbandry. It has very varied soil units which are distributed between ferrallitic, ferruginous and vertisol soils. Overall, these soils have agronomic values ranging from good to poor. The potential is estimated at 15 million hectares, of which only 0.7 million are exploited annually⁶⁹ and a total area of grazing and rangelands estimated at 16 million hectares of which only 9 million are used by a livestock population of around 4 million head of cattle. There is also an abundance of water resources, thanks to major river system⁷⁰.

Agriculture employs 70% of the Central African workforce and accounts for more than 75% of the country's food production. The agriculture and livestock sectors employ 63% of poor households. More than 60% of heads of household are farmers. Rural women are responsible for 80% of production in food crops - more than 65% of total agricultural production.⁷¹

Agricultural production in the CAR is structured around very small farms (0.5 to 1.5 ha), with fewer than 3 agricultural workers, using very rudimentary means of work.⁷² Often crop fertilisation is non-existent. Cultural practices are very extensive with the use of slash and burn and very little use of fertiliser, which makes crop fertilisation non-existent and very low yields. However, in recent years, draft animal cultivation has been introduced into the various production basins by the State with the support of development partners. To this end, animal traction kits are gradually being made available to farmers.

These farms are essentially family-owned and strongly dominated by itinerant practices which do not allow the workforce to be better utilised. This situation is exacerbated by overgrazing during transhumance, the advanced degradation of rural roads and general insecurity in production areas, the isolation of farms from roads and insufficient supervision of producers, which makes it difficult to access markets. These problems explain the low level of income of Central African farmers and explain the 73.4% of the poverty level in rural areas.

This family farming is strongly influenced by the patriarchy of Central African society, where the man holds decision-making power, both within the household and in society. He is the head of the family, its guide and protector, it is he who has the decision-making power, while the woman divides her time between supporting her husband in his productive activities and the reproductive functions for which she is responsible (domestic work, housekeeping and management of children). These well-defined and strict roles are barely interchangeable, in particular because of the risk of gender-based violence and especially domestic violence that women face, but also because of the feeling of inferiority instilled in them from birth, making them feel unable to take part in traditionally male roles⁷³.

⁶⁹ See Henri Ouikon, 2003.

⁷⁰ National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017-2021, Technical Report, Central African Republic.

⁷¹ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁷² Henri Ouikon (2003)

⁷³ Action Against Hunger (2019).

A division of labour according to sex is observed in the family workforce. Cash crops (coffee, cotton, etc.) are mainly produced by men while women farmers mainly produce food crops (cassava, groundnuts, maize, millet and sorghum, etc.) on the plots of land allocated by the men. Regarding the distribution of tasks between men and women in field work, men primarily take care of the tasks of preparing for planting (clearing, stumping, ploughing and weeding). The work of sowing, harvesting and post-harvesting is specifically assigned to women.

The men dedicate the majority of their day to productive functions, particularly around agricultural production, hunting and fishing, the rest of their day being devoted to community activities and recreation. The women divide their days between working in the fields of food crops, or supporting men in cash crop plantations, and reproductive tasks, that is, domestic tasks such as cleaning, preparing meals and caring for children. .

Resources are controlled by men, including land and income from the sale of agricultural products. Men hold a monopoly over the decisions to be taken as part of the management of household resources. However, the fact that the needs of the family are considered from the point of view of the man, and that the woman has no control over land, income and allocation of profits, places her in a situation of dependency and extreme precariousness.

Livestock rearing is practised by more than 80% of the rural population, but it is the small-scale traditional breeding that predominates. Poultry farming is present on 67% of farms, and pig farming on 74%. Animals (large livestock, small ruminants, guinea pigs) generally belong to men, while poultry generally belong to women. However women are generally responsible for milk production and even dairy products. Despite this, women's work remains invisible, under the tutelage of men. Cattle farming has been strongly affected by the conflict: transhumance corridors remain controlled by armed groups, conflicts between herders⁷⁴ and farmers have increased, animal looting has increased or animals have had to be abandoned to flee the conflict, and veterinary services are no longer accessible⁷⁵. This situation has had an impact on the herders' families who have often lost everything, leading some to settle down to practise agriculture.

Fishing in the CAR is traditional and artisanal and performed by families who are traditionally fishermen. The men take care of the catch while the women manage the processing of fishing products by drying or smoking, and their sale in local markets, fresh or processed. However, although women manage the distribution and sale in local markets, this does not mean that they own the income from the sale. It is the man who controls this income and uses it for the needs of the household. The insecurity experienced by the country since 2012 has sharply reduced fishing activities, and aquaculture and net fishing have been abandoned in some areas. Some fish production units have been looted or had to be abandoned⁷⁶ which, at the same time, has affected the income level of all actors in the sector.

The tumultuous sociopolitical situation that the CAR has been facing for two decades and which was worsened in 2012 by a political and military crisis, has left more than half of the population food insecure. It was illustrated by inter-community tensions and widespread insecurity which disrupted access to basic needs and the loss of means of subsistence. This situation has contributed to deteriorating household living conditions, leaving one in two households food insecure.⁷⁷ The most recent NFSA (2019)⁷⁸ indicates that 6% of the population is severely food insecure compared to 11% in 2015.

Single parent households headed by women are particularly affected by food insecurity; they tend to have a higher level of poverty than those headed by men. Before the conflict, these households represented 21.8%⁷⁹ of Central

⁷⁴ The majority of herders are recruited from the Peulh community (Bororo), which is Muslim, while the majority of farmers are from other Christian or animist tribes. Conflicts between herders and farmers have a major impact on the security crisis and the constitution of armed groups.

⁷⁵ OCHA, 2016.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁷⁸ NFSA report 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

⁷⁹ AfDB, 2012. Gender Profile of the Central African Republic.

African households, but this proportion increased by 3.6% to 25.4%⁸⁰ during the conflict, as more men took up arms, died or had to flee to escape the horrors of war. The EFSA (2015)⁸¹ shows that the proportion of households headed by a woman in moderate and severe food insecurity is higher than that of households headed by a man (difference of nearly 10%). These households often have fewer means to protect themselves and to ensure their food needs than households with a man and they are often able to provide only one meal per day for their family, and rely more on crisis and emergency strategies to feed themselves.

V.3. Gender and mining production

The CAR has significant mining potential among which diamonds and gold are currently exploited and are almost exclusively extracted by artisanal means. In the CAR, the diamond and gold sector employs almost 10% of the working population and contributes only weakly to economic growth (3%)⁸². This is an attractive employment and subsistence income opportunity in rural areas where poor people live. Indeed, diamond and gold mining hardly requires capital or advanced technology. This mining also requires a large workforce including men, women and children who operate at all levels of the production cycle. It is estimated that the artisanal mining sector employs 80,000 to 100,000 miners; 600,000 people - 13% of the country's population - depend at least partially on the sector for their income⁸³. Despite the absence of statistics on the employment of women in this sector, and the Mining Code not distinguishing the sex of mining workers and other stakeholders in the sector, sources in the field⁸⁴ enable us to estimate that women occupy 20 to 30% of mining jobs in the CAR.

The involvement of women in gold and diamond mining sites varies by region and village. It would be higher in traditional diamond and gold mining regions such as Boda, Berbérati, Bouar, Bambari, N'zako, etc. In diamond and gold mining sites, women are involved in the entire production cycle, which includes: digging holes, fetching water, transporting⁸⁵, processing in the case of gold washing and production control.

Very often, women and girls are forced to perform poorly paid auxiliary work including manual transport, ore crushing, sorting and especially washing. After diamond mining in the diamond sites, the women use the rest of the material for gold mining. In some work sites, women are only used in the treatment of waste from abandoned mines or from the first processing and panning performed by the men. At other sites, they only work part of the day to improve their husbands' income. Overall, they are often paid by percentage linked to production. However, they are still suffer significant discrimination, although they do not always master the process of marketing minerals. When the mine is family-owned, the woman usually has only a very small lump sum from which she has to withdraw the portion intended for the family's food needs, the purchase of clothes and even healthcare coverage. This use of women in underpaid activities is linked to the cultural perception and traditional beliefs that men have about their work compared to that of women who are often reduced to a lower status. Compared to men, women have much more difficulty in getting involved in formalised artisanal mines.

Among the site managers who hold the property rights over worked artisanal mines⁸⁶, there are very few women⁸⁷. The majority have no assets, no land, and therefore no access to credit to buy tools. This situation, which is also experienced in agriculture, herding and fishing, is specific to the rural regions of the CAR where women,

⁸⁰ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

⁸¹ MISC6, 2021.

⁸² EFSA, 2015

⁸³ Ken Matthysen & Iain Clarkson, 2013.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Jean François Thalo, president of the NGO Action de Partenariat pour le Développement Communautaire (APDC) on 12/01/2021.

⁸⁵ This is the transport of diamondiferous material and water for washing (separation of the ore from the rest of the extracted material).

⁸⁶ The Mining Code uses the word "mine " to define the concept of a work site as follows "*any place, excavation or work site on or within which mining operations are taking place*". The site manager can manage one or more holes.

⁸⁷ As part of the Socio-demographic study of artisanal diamond miners in the pilot areas (Boulaye 1 and 2, Bossoui and Ngotto) of the PRADD in 2007, out of 310 site managers listed, there were only 16 women, i.e. 6%.

particularly, with a very low level of income, are very poor and derive very little benefit from micro-credit.

In several artisanal mining sites, women and girls carry out many other activities that revolve around mining production. The main activities in which they engage relate to small trade, particularly the sale of locally produced goods (for example, women engage in small trade in food, drink, wood, etc.).

Unfortunately many young women who find it difficult to support themselves enter the sex industry to supplement their income.

During the period related to the COVID 19 pandemic, the buying chain has been blocked following border closures not only in the CAR, but also across the world where the buyers are coming from. As the men no longer have any money to finance the production of gold and diamonds, it is the small trade of women that has continued to support the families of artisanal miners, often leading to a reversal of roles with regard to access to financial resources and family expenses.

V.4. Gender and access to land

In the CAR, there are several methods of acquiring land which are based on the Land Code guaranteed by formal law or customary law. The acquisition of land through customary means mostly found in rural areas, while acquisitions in accordance with the Land Code is found mostly in urban areas, although the customary method of acquisition is also practised there.

According to customary law, land is acquired by inheritance, from father to son, because of the deep roots of Central African society in patriarchy. It is the boy who inherits the land "The land must remain in the family", while the girls are confined to their role of reproducer: "Girls are made for marriage". The boy has the right to remain in the paternal concession even after his marriage and to perpetuate the ancestral line. The woman cultivates a portion of land allocated to her by her husband in the family concession, but does not own it. Likewise, the family home belongs to the husband and she cannot benefit from it in the event of divorce.

In rural areas, it is the village chiefs who own the land which they distribute to the male representatives of the families who make up the community. Women are generally excluded from this distribution which is based on orality and in the majority of cases, is not formalised.⁸⁸ in deeds. Once the land is obtained by a family, it will then be transferred by inheritance.

With the increase in the deaths of men in the conflict, widows and consequently households headed by women sometimes find themselves without access to agricultural land and without means of subsistence because their in-laws dispossessed them of their late husband's property, which is legally owed to them through the levirate or sororate channel⁸⁹. Even if legally certain social practices against widows are punished by law, it would be difficult to apply them in the cases of the levirate or the sororate, because they are socially embedded in habits and customs.

However, in some agricultural villages, there has been change in the mode of acquisition of land ownership, even if its implementation is limited. Not only is the transfer of land increasingly materialised in deeds, but women can access land ownership by donation or purchase.⁹⁰

The purchase of land seems to be the mode of acquisition that could free women from the weight of habits and customs, but their low level of income and their illiteracy constitute a real obstacle to the successful completion of the process by taking this route. Indeed, they may find it more difficult to obtain financial, legal, or technical

⁸⁸ Information obtained during group discussions with the men or women surveyed during the period from 26 to 29 January in the localities of Banagui, Bégoua and Bimbo.

⁸⁹ Information obtained from individual interviews with key resource persons during the period 12-22 January 2021.

⁹⁰ Group discussions showed that although land ownership by women is still very low in rural areas, they can also obtain land by donation from their father or husband. There are also a few better-off women farmers who owned their plantations after buying the land.

assistance to access land ownership.

In this sector, four modes of acquiring property have been identified. These include acquisition by discovery of mining land⁹¹, by inheritance following the death of the owner, by purchase and donation. The proportion of women holding land title in artisanal mining sites is very low because they are unable to benefit from its four modes of acquisition, on the one hand because of the weight of habits and customs linked to patriarchy, and on the other hand because of their low level of income. However, for women owners of mining sites, the mode of acquisition of title is generally inheritance from their father or their late husband.⁹²

In rural areas, there is an overlap between formal law and customary law. But it is the acquisition of land through legal channels that takes precedence, especially in Bangui. However, we see that as we move away from the centre towards the peripheries, customary law comes into play and applies in synergy with formal law. In this environment, the majority of women remain excluded from access to land ownership because they have very little financial and intellectual means to buy land.

In conclusion, while in urban areas many women still face financial, legal, or technical obstacles to owning land, others are hampered in their drive by traditional and religious obstacles (illiteracy, insufficient technical knowledge, oppressive relations between men and women, patriarchal views, social taboos and family responsibilities) in asserting their absolute rights, and this discrimination under customary law contributes to feminising poverty in rural areas.

As part of the land reform process that began in 2011, the Central African legislator would have the constant concern of the protection of women's rights in relation to pre-existing customary rights, in order to facilitate the acquisition of land titles which constitutes legal certainty for women. This concern is relevant for the revision of laws relating to landholding, but also for various sectoral laws and their implementing texts, in particular for the agricultural, forestry and mining sectors, for the protection of the environment and biodiversity. Therefore, the development of a framework law that guarantees the fundamental rights of all citizens and takes account of the problems faced by women and other indigenous communities is one of the important steps in the land reform process, and should serve as a benchmark for any other political or legal reform.

V.5. Gender and access to infrastructure

The political military crisis in the CAR has severely what little basic infrastructure that already existed but was poorly maintained. The entire road network, 80% of which was already impassable in the rainy season, has been abandoned. The dirt roads have been severely degraded, making it difficult to travel in the hinterland. Out of a total of 25,000 km, the 692 km of bitumen that existed before the crisis have been abandoned due to lack of maintenance. The 4000 km of national roads were not spared by the crisis and are currently in an advanced state of degradation. The Douala – Bangui corridor, which has not yet been completely asphalted, is constantly occupied by armed groups, making any possibility of maintenance impossible. This road network is unevenly distributed over the national territory, it is concentrated around Bangui and in the West, South-West and South-East regions. The prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran (North-West), Vakaga (North) and Haut Mbomou (East) are the most isolated in the country.

River transport is very poorly developed and takes place seasonally over a network of approximately 2,600 km, on the Ubangi, the Sangha, and to a lesser extent, the Lobaye. River transport is only feasible in the rainy season

⁹¹ The mode of appropriation by discovery remains the dominant historically established mode of access which is shared by the entire community of artisanal miners. The pioneers carried out empirical prospecting with the help of iron probes in places supposed to contain diamonds along water courses.

⁹² The Socio-demographic study of artisanal diamond miners in the pilot areas (Boulaye 1 and 2, Bossoui and Ngotto) of the PRADD in 2007, showed that women holding title to artisanal mining sites had all inherited from their fathers or late husbands.

(from July to November) because it is highly dependent on the water level.

All these travel difficulties linked to the impassability of the road network and the insecurity on the roads due to the actions of armed groups and bandits⁹³ cause major harm to the activities of women who are the main facilitators of agricultural value chains in rural areas. Insecurity, impassable roads, and violence therefore hamper the accessibility and availability of basic goods for rural women, who are forced to work more in the villages, by reducing economic activities and trips (processing, marketing, income-generating activities, etc.). In addition, women who live in urban areas of small shops for manufactured products and services find it difficult to find raw materials, which are increasingly scarce, which leads to a slowdown or a total shut-down of their activity.

In the field of energy, like the international situation where more than a quarter of the world's population has no access to electricity,⁹⁴ the situation in the CAR is clearly worrying. Indeed, the country does not yet have energy infrastructure to cover national needs, and the majority of the population currently uses traditional sources of energy, mainly firewood.

Out of a population of approximately 5,154,000 inhabitants in 2017, ENERCA, the only national electricity production company, has only 33,733 subscribers, thus indicating a low rate of coverage at national level, mainly concentrated in Bangui.⁹⁵

Energy production is essentially made up of firewood at 98%, electricity at 1% and charcoal at 1%. More than 96% of final energy consumption is met by firewood, charcoal and agricultural waste, 3% by imported petroleum and natural gas products and less than 1% by electricity.

The domestic sector (households) is the largest consumer of electricity with 53%, followed by the service sector (27%) and industry (20%)⁹⁶. Annual per capita electricity consumption is 28 kWh (Energy Information Report, 2016), more than twenty times lower than the African average (579 kWh) and the world average (2,777 kWh).

This context of weak electricity production is not conducive to the revival of large-scale economic activities such as the establishment of cement production plants and / or processing of agricultural products, which are essential for the reconstruction of the industrial fabric which is currently almost non-existent, for the improvement of the living conditions of the populations.

As a result, almost all Central African households use solid fuel for cooking (99.4%)⁹⁷. This situation increases the risks of acute respiratory disease, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer and possibly tuberculosis, low birth weight, cataracts and asthma.

In addition, the responsibility for collecting these solid fuels rests primarily with women (especially rural women) as part of their agricultural and domestic activities.

Due to the prevailing insecurity, the collection of firewood, which often means women have to travel to places relatively far from their places of residence, often exposes them to the risk of kidnapping, sexual violence or assault.

It is for this reason that UNDP, as part of its main development support mission, in July 2018 launched the programme to promote micro-hydroelectric power stations in rural areas. This programme, which is scheduled to end in June 2023, will help the Central African Government to improve the rate of access to electricity at national level through the promotion of micro-hydroelectric plants equipped with mini-distribution networks. The cities to

⁹³ Bandits on the main roads assaulting travellers on the roads, stripping them of all their possessions.

⁹⁴ Diagnostic report of the energy sector of the Central African Republic, UNDP - January 2017.

⁹⁵ None of the 16 provinces has a reliable secondary source of electricity generation.

⁹⁶ Central African Republic Energy Sector Diagnostic Report, UNDP - 2017.

⁹⁷ MICS4 Final Report - UNICEF, February 2012.

accommodate the four micro hydroelectric power stations are Mbaïki and Boda in the Lobaye prefecture, Gamboula in Mambéré Kadéï, and Bambari in Ouaka. The project is designed to ensure the provision of modern energy services to more than 1,000 modern households, or around 6,000 inhabitants of rural areas. Through this project, there will be more than 500 jobs created, at least 40% of which will be reserved for women. The lessons learned from the implementation of this project will be documented and shared, in order to mobilise other investors rolling out this initiative to other sites, thus allowing a scaling up of this pilot experiment of low carbon energy production.

This mechanism will gradually strengthen the capacities of the Directorate General of Energy, ARSEC, ACER and other ministerial departments involved in the promotion of the national rural electrification system, under a public private partnership, based on the exploitation of the numerous national hydrological potentialities.

This approach is in line with the three objectives of the "Sustainable Energy for All" initiative, namely:

- ensuring universal access to modern energy services;
- doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and
- doubling the share of renewable energies in the energy mix by 2030.

The validation of the National Rural Electrification Policy in October 2019 is an important step for the effective implementation of this approach, because access to electricity for Central African households remains a major challenge for the government. In fact, in 2019, only 7.5% of Central African households were connected to the power grid, including 22.4% of the urban population and 0.5% of the rural population.⁹⁸ This is exacerbated by the difficulties of availability of electrical energy characterised by untimely cuts, especially in the city of Bangui.

Electric batteries have become the main resource for lighting in the country: 70.4% of households use battery lamps, of which 59.7% in urban areas and 80.6% in rural areas⁹⁹. However, it is of note that some households use rechargeable solar batteries (3.4%) or of other energy sources (24.5%), while the others who represent the majority use non-rechargeable electric batteries (45.2%).

Although painful for the entire population, this virtual absence of electrical energy has a major impact on women not only in terms of the arduous nature of housework, but also in their economic activities, in particular agrifood processing (among others).

The development of ICTs has enabled Central African women to increase exchanges and develop commercial activities, thanks to the use of mobile telephony. Despite war and insecurity, cell phone ownership by women has increased dramatically in countries in recent years. In 2019, 20.6% of Central African women aged 15-49 had a mobile phone compared to 36.9% of men¹⁰⁰. Although encouraging, this performance is well below the rate of mobile phone ownership by women in the world, which is 80%.¹⁰¹ During the same period, only 1.2% of Central African women aged 15-49 used the internet compared to 5.2% for men. These values clearly show that mobile internet penetration is still very low in the CAR and, as in the rest of the world, Central African women use the internet less than men.

The expansion of micro-finance has facilitated the access of the poorest sectors to financial services, a guarantee of viable, sustainable and durable economic growth for low-income populations, especially women. However, the people of the CAR do not take sufficient advantage of this opportunity. Indeed between 2018 and 2019¹⁰², 6.1% of the Central African population had a bank account, including 17.4% of the urban population and 0.8% of the rural population. In 2017, only 10% of accounts in Central African financial institutions belonged to Central

⁹⁸ ICASEES, 2021.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 2021.

¹⁰¹ GMSA (2019), "Connect Women: 2019 report on inequalities between men and women in mobile telephony".

¹⁰² ICASEES, 2021

African women over the age of 15 and 7% were savings accounts. Only 10% of CAR citizens have a bank account with a mobile service provider, a much lower proportion than the average in sub-Saharan Africa, which is 25%¹⁰³. Several barriers prevent Central African women from accessing loans granted by the country's banks and micro-finance institutions, including high interest rates and the required guarantees. They do not have the assets required as collateral by financial institutions. The precariousness of Central African land rights reduces the ability of women to give land as collateral. Rationing credit through high interest rates proportionately dissuades more female entrepreneurs than male entrepreneurs from applying for loans. This situation reflects not only the state of poverty in which women find themselves but also the difficulties they experience in obtaining credit from a bank.

VI. GENDER AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

VI.1. Gender and education

In its poverty reduction policy, the Central African Government has made a lot of public efforts to revive the education system, promoting equitable access for all to quality education as one of the human rights, supported by many legal instruments, including the following:

- The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 2 and 26);
- The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (Articles 3, 24 and 50) and its Additional Text II of 1977 (Article 4.3 (a));
- The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Articles 3 and 22);
- The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 2, 13 and 14);
- The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 10);
- The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 2, 22, 28, 29, 30, 38 and 39);
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998 (Articles 2. 2b and 8.2.2);
- The 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 24);
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/290 on the right to education in emergencies of 2010;
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1998 on Monitoring Attacks on Schools, 2011.
- The Millennium Development Goals (2000) which were reinforced by the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, notably SDG4 (regarding quality education) and SDG5 (regarding gender equality).

Legislative and / or strategic texts in force have also served as benchmarks for the development of national education policy, in particular the Central African Constitution of 2016, in which articles 6 and 7 make education an inalienable right for any citizen.

The many political and military crises that have shaken the CAR since 2012 have been the cause of the destabilisation of its education system, already weakened by several years of instability, with consequences on the development of the education system and the dynamics of schooling, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. Over the period from 2013 to 2016, there was a decrease in education supply and demand in conflict-affected geographical areas that were disrupted and inequalities in access and quality worsened due to a reduction in the reception capacities of schools and the educational offer in general¹⁰⁴. This crisis resulted in the looting and occupation of educational infrastructure and the closure of more than 320 schools (10% nationwide). The crisis resulted in a notable absence of teachers being forced to give up their posts (49% of cases), displacement of populations (31%), destruction of premises (21%) and insecurity (26%).¹⁰⁵ According to available data, the Central African education system is, by reference to UNESCO criteria, one of the weakest in the world in terms of

¹⁰³ HNO, 2020

¹⁰⁴ Helena Murseli, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ ICASEES, 2021.

efficiency, equality and performance.¹⁰⁶ Between 2012 and 2018, there was a considerable improvement in the GER in primary education, from 87.81% in 2012 to 116% in 2018. However, this improvement was also reflected in the level of schooling for girls and boys, where the gap between them, which was 24.1% in 2012, rose to 26% in 2018, which shows progress in the enrolment of girls in primary education, reflecting the Government's desire to promote the enrolment of girls in school.

In secondary education, there was a decrease in the GER between 2012 and 2016. The GER fell from 17.39% in 2012 to 15.04% in 2016. This decrease in the presence of adolescents in secondary school clearly shows the effects of war and insecurity on the education of this age group. However, although the discrimination in access to school between Girls and Boys has been maintained, the girls / boys parity index which was 0.52 in 2012 rose to 0.64 in 2016 which shows how the conflict and insecurity have affected the presence of boys in secondary school during this period. This disparity in access to schooling between girls and boys is also observed in higher education, where the girls / boys parity index was 0.36 in 2012. These data show that a lot of work is still needed to significantly reduce the education gap between girls and boys in CAR.

The successive disturbances that have shaken the country have undermined efforts to revive the already fragile education system, characterised by stagnation of enrolments, challenges in the quality of learning and a lack of resources allocated to the education system. These sociopolitical crises have had negative consequences on the development of the Education and Training sector with many school infrastructures and health facilities destroyed, occupied by armed groups and / or looted.

In July 2014, more than 65% of schools were closed¹⁰⁷. The 2013 crisis in particular had a strong negative impact on the education system, which was recovering from the consequences of the crises between 1996 and 2003. The disturbances thus engendered, among other things, by insecurity, have spared no region or any sub-sector. As early as 2010, the MICS survey noted that 30% of children aged 6 to 11 years had never had access to school and that more than 600,000 young people aged 15 to 24 (i.e. 65% of the age group) were illiterate.

In 2013, only 33% of girls succeeded in completing their primary education, compared to 53% of boys.¹⁰⁸ It was estimated that 48% of young girls and 28% of young boys between 15 and 24 years old are illiterate in the Central African Republic.¹⁰⁹ But with the crises, several indicators recorded worrying underperformance.

Teachers have abandoned their posts due to lack of payment. This has been exacerbated by the decline in the recruitment and training of teachers. All this has had repercussions on the time spent in education by thousands of children whose schools have been closed, looted and / or destroyed.

The 2018-2019 period also marked the beginning of a post-conflict period, with an urgent need to strengthen and consolidate the achievements, with a view to their sustainability. The period is also marked by the adoption of new reference frameworks for education, namely: i) the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those relating to Education; and ii) the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The SDGs for 2030 are part of a dynamic of mobilisation of the entire international community "... in favour of a unique and renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and mobilising, which leaves no one behind" . More specifically, SDG4, with its ten targets, aims to "Ensure access for all to quality education, on an equal footing, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities." This ambition is "inspired by a humanist vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity, social justice, inclusion, protection, cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, as well as on shared responsibility and accountability".

In June 2016 in Ethiopia, "the African Union's Agenda 2063" was adopted with a view to an "integrated,

¹⁰⁶ Unesco, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Education Cluster, A leap into the unknown: State of Education in the CAR, February 2014.

¹⁰⁸ World Bank, The little data book on gender, 2013

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

prosperous and peaceful Africa, led by its own citizens, and representing a dynamic force on the international stage". It aims to promote the development of science, technology, research and innovation in order to have critical skills for building societies and African knowledge economies.

Agenda 2063 retained, among other conclusions and recommendations, to do everything possible to "An equitable, inclusive and quality education, which promotes social cohesion, resilience and peace in Africa [which should]:

- integrate conflict and risk analysis into education policies and sector planning processes;
- develop and implement educational programmes that are sensitive to conflict, gender, and risk;
- recognise the central role of teachers in achieving learning objectives and promoting social cohesion".

As a derivative of this Agenda, the "Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 - 2025" (SCEA) adopted the following for the achievement of twelve strategic objectives, among other guiding principles:

- mobilising qualified human capital;
- holistic, inclusive and equitable education;
- lifelong continuous learning;
- good governance, leadership and mutual accountability;
- intra-African mobility and academic integration.

The consideration of gender, which is guaranteed in these different frameworks and working guidelines for education and the opportunity for lifelong learning, allows girls who often drop out very early because of early childbearing or early marriages, to catch up through various vocational training courses.

The improvement of the security context of the country and of the intervention framework of the education system thanks to the incorporation of the various above-mentioned legal frameworks has allowed a significant overall evolution of the various enrolment rates over the past four years, even if girls still remain less educated than boys at all levels of education.

Despite the efforts made, access to primary school remains unequal for girls and boys, in part because of early marriages. In addition, more than half of women report not having attended school or completed primary level (58%), while a third of men report the same (33%). At tertiary level, 9% of women say they have more than secondary education, compared to 18% of men¹¹⁰.

¹¹⁰ HHI Gender Perception Study - UNDP / MINUSCA / HHI, October 2018.

Table 15: Basic Education 1 (Public + Private)

SCHOOL INSPECTION	DISTRICT	Number of schools	STUDENTS BY SEX			TEACHERS BY SEX		
			Girls	Boys	% Girls	Female teachers	Male Teachers	% Female teachers
School Inspections Bangui (IAB)	Bangui 1	66	34,227	34,573	50%	339	392	46%
	Bangui 2	48	17,203	16,857	51%	217	260	45%
	Bangui 3	59	23,523	24,356	49%	296	327	48%
	Bangui Applications	14	7,982	8,103	50%	109	83	57%
Total School Inspections Bangui (IAB)		187	82,935	83,889	50%	961	1,062	48%
School Inspections Centre (IAC)	Kemo	103	18,508	22,963	45%	49	439	10%
	Nana Gribizzi	85	15,679	23,107	40%	45	356	11%
Total School Inspections Centre (IAC)		188	34,187	46,070	43%	94	795	11%
School Inspections Centre East (IACE)	Bambari Application	35	5,694	6,009	49%	28	104	21%
	Haute Kotto	81	11,886	14,508	45%	11	204	5%
	Ouaka	194	24,523	34,954	41%	65	619	10%
Total School Inspections Centre East (IACE)		310	42,103	55,471	43%	104	927	10%
School Inspections Centre South (IACE)	Lobaye	212	36,410	46,252	44%	136	721	16%
	Ombella Mpoko	295	54,903	65,161	46%	291	930	24%
Total School Inspections Centre South (IACE)		507	91,313	111,413	45%	427	1,651	21%
School Inspections North (IAB)	Ouham	382	54,469	79,047	41%	65	1,309	5%
	Ouham Pénde	361	49,085	73,157	40%	96	1,123	8%
Total School Inspections North (IAB)		743	103,554	152,204	40%	161	2,432	6%
School Inspections North East (IAB)	Bamingui Bangoran	65	8,070	9,735	45%	9	164	5%
	Vakaga	50	5,439	7,451	42%	-	101	0%
Total School Inspections North East (IAB)		115	13,509	17,186	44%	9	265	3%
School Inspection West (IAO)	Mambéré Kadéï	266	41,582	53,098	44%	150	753	17%
	Nana Mambere	188	26,772	32,943	45%	170	445	28%
	Sangha Mbaéré	93	12,096	15,556	44%	39	260	13%
Total School Inspection West (IAO)		547	80,450	101,597	44%	359	1,458	20%
School Inspections South East (IAB)	Bass Kotto	211	16,433	30,940	35%	28	579	5%
	Haut Mbomou	31	3,615	3,953	48%	17	126	12%
	Mbomou	134	16,903	20,251	45%	52	386	12%
Total School Inspections South East (IAB)		376	36,951	55,144	40%	97	1,091	8%
OVERALL TOTAL		2,973	485,002	622,974	44%	2,212	9,681	19%

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2018 - 2019, MEPS.

We note, in order of magnitude, that the School Inspections which supervise the greatest number of students are that of the North (Ouham and Ouham - Péndé with 23% of the total number of pupils in the country), followed by the School Inspections of the Centre - South (Lobaye and Ombella - Mpoko with 18% of the workforce), the School Inspections of the West (Mambéré-Kadéi, Nana-Mambéré and Sangha-Mbaéré with 16% of pupils) and the School Inspection of Bangui with 15% of the workforce.

With regard to girls / boys parity, it is of note that the number of girls is lower than that of boys in all School Inspections, except in the Bangui School Inspections where there is relative parity (50 % girls).

Efforts must be made to improve pupil / classroom, pupil / teacher ratios and to promote local schools, which must guarantee secure access to school for girls.

Table 16: Evolution of the number of schools

Levels of education	Status	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Evolution 2017/18 and 2018-19
Preschool	Public	34	73	90	110	22%
	Private	89	168	196	212	8%
Total Preschool		123	241	286	322	13%
Basic Education 1	Public	1,876	2,287	2,451	2,639	8%
	Private	344	443	475	511	8%
Total Basic Education 1		2,220	2,730	2,926	3,150	8%
Basic Education 2 and Secondary General	Public	81	89	94	100	6%
	Private	67	102	109	118	8%
Total Basic Education 2 and Secondary General		148	191	203	218	7%
Technical and Professional Education	Public	6	7	7	9	29%
	Private	5	9	10	12	20%
Total Technical and Professional Education		11	16	17	21	24%
Literacy	Public		184	211	260	23%
	Private		154	137	91	-34%
Total Literacy			338	348	351	1%
Overall total		2,502	3,516	3,780	4,062	7%

The number of schools continuously increased over the period 2015-2019. However, school infrastructure needs remain very significant. In general, efforts must be made to improve the conditions of receiving and learning of pupils through improvement in the ratios of pupils per classroom, pupils per teacher, and to promote local schools which will provide girls with safe access to school.

Table 17: University institutions and students

STATUS	No. establishments	Girls	Boys	TOTAL	% Girls
Public	10	3,766	7,765	11,531	48%

% Public	36%	69%	81%	77%	
Private	18	1,702	1,830	3,532	48%
% Private	64%	31%	19%	23%	
Overall total	28	5,468	9,595	15,063	36%

The number of girls who access higher education is still very low compared to boys.

In addition, girls attend private schools more than public ones. In higher education, the interviews noted that some parents prefer to send their daughters to study in private education or abroad, in reaction to the prevalence of sexual harassment at the University of Bangui.¹¹¹

Table 18: Preschool coverage rate

Gender	Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	3%	6%	8%	8%
Girls	3%	7%	8%	9%
All CAR	3%	7%	8%	8%

Early childhood care remains very weak: only 8% of children aged 3 to 5 years are enrolled in preschool, thus highlighting enormous needs for better preparation of the majority of young Central African children for access to Basic Education1.

Table 19: Gross and Net Admission Rate / Gross and Net Enrolment Rate in Basic 1

Gender	Gross and Net Admission Rate				Gross and Net Enrolment rate				
	Years				Gender	Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019		2016	2017	2018	2019
GAR Boys	119%	155%	145%	146%	GER Boys	108%	124%	129%	136%
GAR Girls	99%	131%	124%	122%	GER Girls	84%	96%	103%	108%
GAR CAR	109%	143%	135%	134%	GER CAR	96%	110%	116%	122%
NAR Boys	58%	84%	63%	65%	NER Boys	79%	94%	100%	112%
NAR Girls	51%	67%	54%	54%	NER Girls	65%	74%	85%	90%
NAR CAR	55%	76%	60%	61%	NER CAR	72%	84%	95%	100%

¹¹¹During group discussions conducted in Bangui, Bimbo and Bégoua as part of the study, 35 individuals (13 women and 22 men) out of about 300 interviewed highlighted the reasons why they preferred to send their daughters to study in private universities or universities abroad for fear that they will suffer sexual harassment from teachers at Bangui University.

The gross admission rate in the first year of Basic 1 (134% in 2018), is apparently good. However, compared to the Net Admission Rate which stands at 61%, this indicator could reveal many cases of late admissions in relation to the legal admission age of 6 years.

These late admissions to the first year are limiting factors in the pursuit of schooling for many children who will be excluded because of the age limit, especially for girls who will also be exposed to the risks of sexual harassment, marriage and early pregnancies.

Efforts should be made to reduce the extent of late admissions in order to allow the majority of children, particularly girls, to be able to continue their education as long as possible. These efforts concern, among other things, actions to raise parents' awareness of the registration of children from the legal age of 6, but also for the establishment of birth certificates or supplementary judgements making it possible to complete the children's school records and better monitor their academic progress.

The Basic 1 enrolment rate increased significantly to reach 122% and 100% respectively for GER and NER in 2019. Sustained efforts will still have to be deployed, in particular with regard to the disparities between Girls and Boys and regional disparities, to enable the CAR to achieve universal primary education very soon.

Table 20: Basic 1 Completion Rate

Gender	Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	54%	58%	59%	63%
Girls	40%	40%	42%	47%
All CAR	48%	49%	50%	55%

Table 21: Gross Admission rate in the first year of Basic 2

Gender	Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	21%	27%	36%	40%
Girls	14%	16%	22%	19%
All CAR	18%	22%	29%	29%

Table 22: Gross Enrolment Rate and Completion Rate at Basic 2 and FTE short cycle

Gender	Gross Enrolment Rate				Basic Completion Rate			
	Years				Year			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	22%	21%	31%	30%	11%	14%	18%	16%
Girls	15%	12%	18%	18%	7%	8%	10%	8%
All CAR	18%	17%	24%	24%	9%	11%	14%	12%

Table 23: Gross Admission Rate to General Secondary and FTE long cycle

Gender	Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	9%	10%	11%	12%
Girls	6%	6%	7%	7%
All CAR	7%	8%	9%	10%

Table 24: Gross Enrolment Rate and Completion Rate in General Secondary and FTE long cycle

Gender	Gross Enrolment Rate				Secondary Completion Rate			
	Years				Years			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Boys	11%	11%	13%	13%	6%	8%	10%	9%
Girls	6%	6%	8%	8%	3%	4%	6%	5%
All CAR	8%	9%	10%	11%	4%	6%	8%	7%

Research is under way for the establishment of an "alternative education", which can offer training and socioprofessional integration opportunities to several categories of children who have not been able to access the traditional system or to complete normal schooling there.

It has been found that the average length of schooling for women is 2.8 years compared to 5.7 for men and that school drop-out worsens as girls reach puberty. However, for young girls and boys who have started to invest in income-generating activities, who married and / or had children during this period of dropping out of school, catching up and reintegration into the formal system is proves difficult. It is therefore important to offer alternative education models including vocational training and literacy.

An "alternative education" should allow both boys and girls to catch up with their schooling, thanks among other things to:

- diversification of educational pathways;
- the establishment of bridges between general education and technical and vocational education on the one hand, and between formal and non-formal education, on the other.

Requirements and major challenges of the education system

Today, education is considered an inalienable human right. The challenges of the sector and especially those relating to the promotion of gender arise from several situations that must be addressed and among which we can note:

- an enrolment rate that remains low in several disadvantaged areas, in particular for girls and minorities;
- a still insufficient completion rate, particularly among girls;
- a virtual absence of design and implementation of anticipation and management systems for drop-outs as well as the inadequacy of the strategy for combating gender-based violence in schools;

- a high rate of illiteracy, in particular for 15-24 year olds (65% of this age group);
- a low rate of enrolment for girls in higher education and in scientific disciplines in particular.

Table 25: Gross and net enrolment rate in 2012, 2016, 2017 and 2018

Education cycle	Year	Gross enrolment rate (%)			Net enrolment rate (%)		
		Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Basic (Basic 1)	2012	75.71	99.82	87.81	59	73.6	63.3
	2016	89.37	114.56	102.02	ND	ND	ND
	2017	96	124	110	ND	ND	ND
	2018	103	129	116	ND	ND	
Secondary (Basic 2)	2012	11.92	22.86	17.39	ND	ND	ND
	2016	11.84	18.23	15.04	13.78	20.48	17.14
higher	2012	1.6	4.4	3			

Source: UIS UNESCO, 2021 and statistical yearbooks 2016-2017, 2017-2018

An observation of school drop-out shows that it is very high in the CAR. Indeed, out of 1.4 million school-age children, only 49% completed primary school in 2017 and 50% in 2018¹¹² and low completion rates were observed at the Basic 1 and Secondary level (11% and 6%) while children aged 13-18 constitute about 20% of the total population of the country. Most of the unpaid teachers have given up their posts. 55% of the national education system is made up of teacher-parents¹¹³.

In addition, the central role of women in household maintenance and the recovery of the country does not guarantee them equitable access to educational opportunities: While 68% of boys go from primary to middle school, this only concerns 46% of girls, i.e. an index of 0.68 (i.e. less than 7 girls would complete basic 1 for every 10 boys)¹¹⁴. Several factors are responsible for this disparity between girls and boys, in particular the traditional roles and norms which encourage early marriages and pregnancies (among the highest in Africa), ignorance of laws promoting compulsory access for all to school, violence at school or on the way to and from school.

Inequalities between girls and boys persist at all levels of education, but the gap is even greater in higher education. Although there is a political will to improve the availability and quality of access to school, the inadequacy of school infrastructure and massive drop-out during the cycle jeopardises the achievement of SDG 4: Ensure equal access to quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities, including targets 1 to 3. Analyses show that this inequality of access to education between girls and boys in the CAR increases with the level of education.

The high rate of illiteracy is another facet of the inequality of access to education between men and women. According to the MICS6-RCA 2018-2019 survey, the illiteracy rate is 75.1% for women and 52.6% for men, which means that 8 out of 10 female heads of household are illiterate. If we compare these MICS6-RCA data obtained in 2019 with those produced by MICS3 obtained in 2006, we see an increase of 8.4% in illiterate women and 17.2% for men. On the other hand, a comparison of the data obtained by MICS6-RCA 2018-2019, and the UNESCO estimates carried out in 2018 included in the Education Sector Plan 2020-2029 show a gap in the illiteracy rate between the two models of 1.1% in women and 2.6% in men¹¹⁵. This shows that illiteracy is on the

¹¹² Statistical yearbook 2016-2017, 2017-2018.

¹¹³ Education Cluster Strategy, Central African Republic, 2017-2021.

¹¹⁴ RESEN, 2018.

¹¹⁵ The illiteracy rate calculated by UNESCO in 2018 based on data from the *Multiple indicator survey* of 2010 is much

increase in the country, which can also be explained by the mismatch between population growth and the increase in qualified teaching staff on the one hand and viable school infrastructure, to which we can add the destruction by armed conflict and insecurity of part of the existing school infrastructure. This situation has a negative impact on the living conditions of women, and on the education of their daughters, since the "intergenerational" gender disparity is rightly mentioned.

Two areas of intervention can be identified, if gender inequalities are to be reduced in education in the CAR, or at least to achieve SDG No. 4: improve girls' access rate to education and fight against their dropping out of school. In terms of access to school, several challenges now face Central African society. For the parents of students, the challenge would be to convince them to give the same rights of access to school to girls and boys by abandoning all practices that are harmful to the development of young girls, by paying their school fees and by providing them with all the material necessary for learning. The Central African State has many challenges to overcome in order to significantly reduce school drop-outs. The first is infrastructural, that is to say the construction of viable schools capable of respecting human dignity. The second challenge is linked to the quality of the teaching workforce. This involves recruiting a qualified workforce capable of meeting the challenges of improving the quality of education. The third challenge would be to enforce the law on the compulsory nature of primary school for boys and girls regardless of age. The fourth challenge would be to put school back in its place as a catalyst for social advancement through the fight against poverty and access to decent employment.

Domestic burdens are a brake on girls' equitable access to education. They are very exposed to repeat years and drop out earlier because of early marriages or pregnancies. The implementation of this project will provide an opportunity for reintegration into school for this group commonly referred to as teenage mothers. The problem that remains is the scaling up of this strategy to the national level in order to ensure that the achievements of the project benefit all Central African children.

The need for the construction of sex-separated latrines for students and teachers is reflected in the results below from the survey carried out among a few schools in seven regions as part of this work.

Table 26: Proportion of schools with separate Girls / Boys, Male / Female Teachers latrines

REGIONS	Schools with separate Girls / Boys latrines.			Schools with separate latrines for Male and Female Teachers		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
REGION 1	50%	50%	100%	75%	25%	100%
REGION 2	50%	50%	100%			
REGION 3	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%
REGION 4	0%	100%	100%			
REGION 5	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%
REGION 7	100%	0%	100%			
GRAND TOTAL	35.7%	64.3%	100%	100%	0%	100%

Source: PGP study 2019

VI.2. Gender, health and reproductive health

VI.2.1. The organisation of the health system.

higher for women (74%) than for men (50%).

The organisation of the health system in the Central African Republic is in the form of a three-level pyramid: central, intermediate and peripheral according to the architecture adopted by the 35th WHO regional committee for Africa in Lusaka in 1985¹¹⁶.

The central level is responsible for designing, developing and enforcing government policy in the area of public health, population and HIV / AIDS. It is also responsible for coordinating, controlling and evaluating the activities of the services which contribute to the implementation of this policy, defining health strategies and ensuring the management of all human, financial and technical resources.

The intermediate level includes seven health regions (RS) corresponding to the administrative regions of the country. It is attached to the Private Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Population. This level ensures the relay between the central authority and the peripheral level.

The peripheral level is made up of 35 health districts, including 3 in Bangui (Health Region No. 7) and 32 districts in the interior of the country. The Health District, the operational level of the health system, is responsible for the integrated implementation of activities.

The major challenge for the health system in the Central African Republic concerns above all the reduction of maternal and infant and child mortality.

VI.2.2. Context of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

Health problems in general and those of mothers and children in particular, including the reduction of maternal and child morbidity and mortality, have been the main concerns of the international community and African countries for many years. .

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 after the MDGs, provide the general objectives that the various countries involved seek to achieve by 2030. This essentially means:

- Reducing the maternal mortality rate to less than 70 per 100,000 live births;
- Reducing the under-five mortality rate to at least 25 per 1,000 live births;
- Reducing the neonatal mortality rate to at least 12 per 1,000 live births;
- Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services;
- Achieving universal health coverage;
- Achieving internationally set targets for stunting and wasting.

The Central African Republic, like the other countries that have signed up to these recommendations, is committed to improving the health of the mother and child. In 2015, the Ministry of Health, with the support of the WHO, reviewed the initial roadmap. This review identified the following main issues:

- weakness in the governance and leadership of the ministry of health, in terms of coordination and planning;
- insufficient financing of the MNH with a low budget allocation, insufficient mobilisation and difficulty in disbursing the allocated funds;
- the weak organisation of the partnership, of intra and intersectoral collaboration, including the weak involvement of the community;
- the poor distribution of HR with their low qualitative and quantitative availability;
- the low quality of care with the inadequacy of the material and human technical platform, and failure to comply with norms and standards;
- insufficient communication and social mobilisation in health facilities and community settings;

¹¹⁶ Emergency plan for mortality reduction, MSP - WHO - 2018.

- the low availability of drugs, contraceptives, inputs and other quality supplies;
- insufficient monitoring with the absence of M&E plans, non-determination of indicators, failure to conduct evaluations and reviews, insufficient supervision and insufficient updating of strategic information (studies, surveys, etc.).

In addition, the country is characterised by high fertility, the main causes of which are precocity and tardiness. According to the results of the MICS4 survey (2010), a Central African woman gives birth to an average of 6.2 children before the end of her reproductive life. Girls aged 12 to 19 give birth on average to about one living child in their late teens. This exposes them to the risk of maternal morbidity and mortality (obstetric fistulas for example).

According to the results of the 2010 MICS survey: the rate of early and unwanted pregnancies among girls is 36% and these pregnancies generally end in voluntary terminations, often performed under inappropriate conditions that endanger the lives of these young people mothers.

Pregnant women who have followed at least 4 antenatal visits represent 38.1% of cases and those who have benefited from the assistance of qualified personnel at the time of childbirth represent 53.8% of cases.

The prevalence of modern contraceptives rose from 6.9% in 2000 to 9.3% in 2010. The highest coverage in 2010 was observed in Bangui (30%) and the lowest in the Basse-Kotto prefecture (1%).

The prevalence of HIV / AIDS infection in the general population is 4.9%; it is 3.7% in pregnant women, and the rate of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) is 12% according to MICS 2010 and 7.8% in 2016 according to programme monitoring data.

The spiral of violence that the CAR is experiencing has also affected the health system of this country both in terms of availability and accessibility, which it is struggling to cope with. In 2010, 86% of the Central African population did not have access to health services¹¹⁷. This trend has not changed over time. In fact, health centres and hospitals are insufficient in number and coverage is sometimes non-existent in certain areas, due in particular to the flight of qualified personnel during the crisis. Many local health structures are destroyed or obsolete and health personnel have not always had access to comprehensive, quality training. Although the country has defined a Minimum Activity Package (MAP) by level and by type of health facility (FOSA), this MAP is still highly theoretical in its application because many planned activities are not actually carried out due to lack of substantial technical platform¹¹⁸. In 2015, the HeRAMS survey revealed that the CAR has 1,008 health facilities, 94% of which are community-based. These infrastructures are unevenly distributed in the regions. The analysis of the distribution of public sector health facilities according to density over a radius of 1000 km², shows that some regions have less than 1 facility (regions 5 and 6), others have between 1 and 2 facilities (Regions 1, 2, 3 and 4), region 7 alone has 567 facilities¹¹⁹. Currently, 34% of health facilities are not function or not very functional. In addition to their rarity in certain regions, the accessibility of health facilities is also made difficult by the poor condition of the roads and insecurity. Currently, 34% of these health structures are not or not very functional¹²⁰.

Regarding women's health, maternal mortality which was estimated at 850 per 100,000 live births in 2010 worsened with the conflict, this indicator rose to 880 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018. This rate represents the 2nd highest rate globally (UNICEF 2018). As a result of the conflict, access to health services has declined in insecure areas, increasing the risk of death from difficult deliveries. In 2013 there were 890 deaths per 100,000 live births, and in rural areas only 36% of pregnant women were assisted by qualified personnel¹²¹.

¹¹⁷ DSPPC, 2010

¹¹⁸ National health development plan 2006-2015

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Preliminary results HeRAMS (Health Resource Availability Mapping System) on 974 health facilities, August 2015.

¹²¹ MEPCI. CASEE, Monitoring the situation of children and women, MISC-3, 2006. Bangui, 2007.

The contraceptive coverage rate was 17.8% in 2018¹²². 29% of women with a secondary education level and above claim to use a modern FP method compared to 14% for those with only primary level and barely 7% among women who do not attend school.

In terms of family planning (FP) MICS6-RCA 2018-2019 informs us that the utilisation rate is 14.4% (including 25.7% in urban areas and 8.7% in rural areas) for modern methods, compared to 3.5% (including 3.1% in urban areas and 3.6%) for traditional methods.

VI.2.3. Gender and COVID 19

COVID 19 arrived in the CAR in a context where there were many sites of internally displaced persons and a high disease burden due to the measles epidemic, the high prevalence of malnutrition, HIV infection, tuberculosis and malaria.

Since the first case of coronavirus declared in the Central African territory on 14 March 2020, the number of infected people has continued to increase to reach the peak of 4,875 people infected around October 2020. Faced with the evolution of the pandemic, the Central African government has taken a number of measures to contain the pandemic, in particular lockdowns with the consequence of stopping certain economic activities and slowing down others. Women were less infected by this pandemic than men (623 infected women compared to 4,252 men between April and October 2020)¹²³. However, the lockdown has weakened support for GBV survivors and increased workloads for women in caring for the sick, the elderly and children. There was also a decrease in hospital attendance by woman due to fear of being infected, which limited access to health services, maternity and family planning.¹²⁴

VI.3. Gender and HIV / AIDS

In a context of acute humanitarian crisis which exposes them to abuse of all kinds, Central African women are victims of other health problems such as sexually transmitted diseases and HIV / AIDS. In 2018, according to UNAIDS¹²⁵, the prevalence of HIV infection was estimated at 4.2% among women aged 15 to 49 and 2.9% among men of the same age. Among young people aged 15 to 24, the prevalence was 0.6%, higher among young girls than among boys (1.68% compared to 1.04%). In 2019, the prevalence of HIV infection among pregnant women was 5.0%.

In terms of prevention, poor access to reproductive health information services was noted: 32.9% of young people (34.9% of girls vs. 31.2% of boys) declared that they had not received any information on HIV / AIDS. Women are therefore more vulnerable than men because of their limited knowledge of prevention methods and their difficulties in demanding protection in the event of sexual intercourse.

Women's health is an issue for the perpetuation of the power relationship between men and women. In the CAR, it is generally up to the man to decide whether to use a family planning method or not, a condom to prevent STDs / AIDS or not. The norms and values of "Gender" that Central African society gives to women lead to inequalities in health which perpetuate diseases, disabilities and are the causes of death. However, consideration of women in relation to everything that affects their health and life is a fundamental and inalienable right for every Human. The promotion of gender equality will then consist of promoting changes in society so that women can decide about their own reproductive lives.

During the humanitarian crisis, the increase in the prostitution of women and girls and the high number of rapes,

¹²² ICASEES, 2021.

¹²³ National report "Socioeconomic impact of COVID 19". 2021.

¹²⁴ Focus group discussions with women's groups in the Bangui and Bégoua area revealed that during the lockdown, women's workloads increased. In addition, the majority of women interviewed were afraid to go to hospital during lockdown, for fear of being infected or of being considered an infected person.

¹²⁵ CNLS (2020)., "National Strategic Plan for HIV AIDS in the Central African Republic".

exposes them more to HIV / AIDS.

VI.4. Gender-based violence

Like many countries in the world, the populations of the CAR, especially girls and women, suffer from the disastrous consequences of GBV, a scourge that devastates many people in the communities. Moreover, in a conflict situation, women are vulnerable, because of their social status and gender. Their bodies are often used as weapons of war to gain the upper hand over the enemy. Women, therefore, often suffer gang rape, which exposes them to slavery, early and unwanted pregnancies, STDs / AIDS, and even forced sterilisation by destruction of their genitalia. This amounts to saying that a woman does not always decide what directly affects her body and her choices, and therefore her fundamental right to be human. In 2018, the signatories of the Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) of the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)¹²⁶, recorded a total of 10,055 incidents of GBV / SV, of which 20% were incidents involving sexual violence (Rape = 16% and Sexual assault = 4%), and 80% were incidents involving other types of GBV (physical assault, psychological violence, denial of resources and early marriage) of which 2% were early marriages, 92% of the victims were girls compared to 8% boys. There was also a 43% increase in cases of SV against women compared to 2017.

In total reported GBV cases (13,028 cases) in 2019¹²⁷, SV incidents were 23% (rape = 19% and sexual assault = 4%) and 77% of the incidents involving other types of GBV (physical assault, psychological violence, denial of resources and early marriage) including 2% early marriages. 94% of victims were women and girls compared to 6% men and boys. There was an increase in SV cases of 49% compared to 2019.

In 2020, there was a decrease in cases of GBV. Indeed in the 9,216 cases of GBV reported in 2020¹²⁸, SV incidents were 24% (rape = 20% and sexual assault = 4%), 76% were other types of GBV (physical assault, psychological violence, denial of resources and early marriage) including 1% early marriages. 93% of the victims were women and girls compared to 7% men and boys. However, compared to 2019, there was a 25.3% decrease in SV cases.

These situations show us the extent of the occurrence of GBV incidents even though these statistical data are not representative of the total incidence or prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in this country. In addition, women themselves, more than 80% in some regions, legitimise violence against them by their spouses.¹²⁹ GBV also manifests itself in the workplace where sexual harassment and other forms of psychological violence in the workplace are most observed, but no study has so far been conducted in the CAR to assess its extent and effects on women.

The care of survivors is based on a model that is inspired by the principles identified in good practices and international standards recognised by the Central African Republic and which is defined in the "Central African Legal Aid Strategy 2021-2022". This strategy, which takes into account a broad vision of access to justice, as recommended by the United Nations Principles and Guidelines¹³⁰ and tends to make the link between access to law and access to judges as a vector of human development and the fight against poverty, as highlighted by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is implemented by humanitarian partners in collaboration with public health services. To facilitate holistic care¹³¹ of survivors, a centre dedicated to the health of victims of sexual violence has been created in a public hospital in Bangui. However, medical coverage for the specific care of rape survivors remains very low throughout the territory of the Central African Republic. Indeed, of the 625 rape

¹²⁶ GBV Statistics Annual Report (January-December 2018) .GBVIMS-RCA.

¹²⁷ GBV Statistics Annual Report (January-December 2019) .GBVIMS-RCA.

¹²⁸ GBV Statistics Annual Report (January-December 2020) .GBVIMS-RCA.

¹²⁹ Out of 17 group discussions conducted with women and girls during the period 27-30 January 2021, there was consensus on the legitimisation of the violence experienced in 14 groups, who felt that in some regions, when a woman does something wrong, she should be punished by corporal punishment by her husband.

¹³⁰ The United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in the Criminal Justice System (2012) which complement the Basic Principles on the Role of the Bar (1990) and the Lilongwe Declaration and Plan of Action on access to legal aid in the criminal justice system (2004).

¹³¹ This care is based on four pillars: medical, psychological, legal and socioeconomic.

survivors who reported their case to GBVIMS actors in 2018, or 39% of the 1,621 rape cases, had access to medical care services within 72 hours. The reasons for the poor support for survivors are as follows: poor understanding of the protocol for clinical management of rape cases by some healthcare workers, the level of extreme poverty of the majority of survivors¹³², the use of kits intended for the management of GBV for other purposes and the non-free issuance of medical certificates to survivors of GBV in public health facilities.

Several initiatives have been put in place by the government with the support of development partners to protect the population from GBV, particularly that of the UMIRR¹³³ whose jurisdiction extends over the entire territory. However, no practical provision has been put in place to protect survivors against further assaults, exposing them to greater risks of abuse, given the regular proximity of perpetrators of GBV in the family circle of survivors. Rather, the presence of victims of family rape leads to a deterioration of the social climate, generating a high rate of violence and tensions in the homes.¹³⁴ However, despite an overall decrease in GBV between 2019 and 2020¹³⁵, an increase in GBV / SV was observed during the 2nd quarter of 2020 compared to the 2nd quarter of 2019¹³⁶. This is explained by the deterioration in the security situation over almost the entire extent of the territory on the one hand, but also by the effect of COVID-19 with the restriction of movements and the partial lockdown of populations on the other.

Target 3¹³⁷ of SDG5 has chosen 2 indicators to measure the evolution of GBV in the CAR. In 2018, SDG531 (Proportion of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in a relationship before the age of 15 or 18 years) and SDG532 (Proportion of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who had suffered mutilation or genital ablation, by age) retained for the CAR were 70.02% and 24%¹³⁸. However, these two indicators measured by MICS6-RCA, 2018-2019 give values of 61% for SDG 531 and 21.6% for SDG532. These very positive results show the extent of the work carried out by the partners involved in the fight against GBV to eliminate all practices that are detrimental to the development of women and girls by 2030.

VI.5. Gender, environment and climate change

Like many other countries, the CAR, through its Government, has engaged in several initiatives relating to the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change.

At international level, it has ratified several Environmental and Social Standards such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and many other multilateral environmental agreements etc. The CAR prepared and presented its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in September 2015 to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as a prelude to the adoption of the Paris Agreement during the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the said convention. After the adoption and entry into force of this agreement, the CAR's commitments were confirmed as being those contained in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

At national level, several laws relating to the exploitation and protection of the environment have been promulgated by the Central African government. However, their implementation does not greatly benefit the women who suffer from the consequences. For example,

- The forest code (Law: 08.022 of 14 November 2008) authorises: Section 3 of the artisanal exploitation of

¹³² The majority of survivors are unable to afford the medical costs required by medical staff for treatment.

¹³³ The mission of this body includes: the implementation of preventive measures against GBV and violations of children's rights, the application and roll-out of standard tools and principles for victim care, contribution to the penal chain in the repression of GBV and violations of children's rights.

¹³⁴ Interview with the IRC's WPE Programme Coordinator Gender and GBV Specialist

¹³⁵ See GBV Statistics Annual Report (January-December 2019 and 2020).GBVIMS-RCA.

¹³⁶ See National Report "Socioeconomic impact of COVID 19". 2021.

¹³⁷ This involves eliminating all harmful practices, such as child marriage, early or forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

¹³⁸ See Report National voluntary monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs (2019).

- the permanent forest estate in Articles 23 to 28, but less than 2% of women take part in this activity;
- The environmental code (Law: 07/018 of 28 December 2007) in Chapter 2: Basic principles of environmental management, it is noted that fewer women benefit from special attention in feasibility studies as well as project execution, although these are enshrined in law.

As part of the current review of the CAR's NDC, an analysis will be carried out in the sectors of agriculture, water resources, energy and forestry and gender-sensitive climate criteria and indicators in the region. The use of sectoral actors will be developed to ensure that gender is taken into account in the revised NDCs.

With rainfall that varies between 800 mm in the North and 1600 mm in the South and an average annual temperature oscillating between 15 ° C in the South and 38 ° C in the North¹³⁹, the country is already feeling the effects of climate change with the increase and irregularity of rainfall in the South and prolonged droughts in the North. Indeed, the CAR straddles two major climatic zones, Sahelian in the North and equatorial in the South and has two hydrographic basins in the north connected to Lake Chad by the Chari River and in the south connected to the Congo River by the Ubangi, all suffering from the effects of deteriorating climatic conditions. It has a forest area which is an extension of the forests of the Congo Basin and it has immense mineral resources.

Several direct or indirect factors are responsible for these climate changes in the CAR. First, we have slash-and-burn agriculture. According to the Ministry of Environment and Ecology (MEE 2011), the rate of deforestation in favour of agriculture in the CAR is estimated at 0.40% per year. The production of firewood is the second factor in deforestation. Wood remains the main source of energy for Central African households. According to MICS6-RCA 2018-2019, 90.2% of households in the CAR use firewood and charcoal as fuel for cooking, of which 79.5% in urban areas and 96.1% in rural areas. The exploitation of minerals, in particular diamonds, is the third factor in environmental degradation and constitutes a threat to riparian forests and aquatic flora. Finally, the exploitation of timber and NTFPs is the fourth factor of environmental degradation.

In addition to this, women suffer disproportionately from poverty as they are all the more vulnerable when climatic conditions cause an increase in drought and flooding in rural rather than urban areas, whether or not they are overpopulated, thus increasing the poverty ratio between men and women. Indeed, the majority of women in the CAR make a living from the exploitation, processing and marketing of natural resources, and are the first victims of these climate changes. However, women's vulnerability to climate change is also pressing and can be mitigated if women are directly involved or associated in decision-making like men despite their social status which sees them as too fragile and severely affected by climate change. Often, they are responsible for food production, water supply and domestic energy.

Table 27: Energy resources used by households for cooking nationally and by place of residence (percentage of households using the resource)

	Wood	Charcoal	Agricultural / grass-straw waste	Oil
Urban environment	79.5	18	1	0.1
National rural environment	96.1	1.5	0.4	00
	90.2	7.4	1.4	0.1

¹³⁹ CPDN (Predicted Contribution Determined at National Level), 2015.

Source: ICASEES, 2021

At political level, a Forest Code and another Mining Code setting out the modalities of exploitation of forest and mining resources have been enacted by the government but these documents do not discriminate between the rights of women and those of men, yet the women who are involved in these sectors suffer from multiple discrimination such as access to land.

In a country where agriculture employs 70% of the working population, of which 80% are women, the latter are the most affected by climate change. Indeed, the resistance of farming systems to climate change and variability depends on soil fertility. Unfortunately, many farmers, and particularly rural Central African women, do not have enough financial, technological, livestock and time to maintain their land as they wish. However, infertile soils produce little, which further aggravates poverty. The direct and / or indirect effects of climate change constitute threats to agricultural yields in the CAR, endangering the livelihoods of more than 2/3rds of the population, including women, and which will exacerbate their already very fragile level of vulnerability. .

Women should not be presented as victims alone but as essential agents of change and their leadership is important in the face of their all-too-accurate understanding of their experience as the main managers and custodians of natural resources (water, forests, biodiversity, soil fertility, etc.) as well as their direct and stronger involvement in relation to the climate (agriculture, etc.). The complementarity between the knowledge, skills, practices and priorities of men and women should not be overlooked when designing and implementing inclusive, effective and sustainable initiatives for the adaptation and mitigation of climate change, which meet the specific needs of all and ensure that every individual, whatever their gender, can benefit from and contribute equitably to the development process.

VI.6. Gender, Water, Hygiene / Sanitation

Water and sanitation remain the major daily concern of households, especially women, as well as many organisations that use them. Access to drinking water is very limited: 18% of the population in 2015 (1.2% of the rural population and 42.8% of the urban population), compared to 33.1% on average for sub-Saharan Africa¹⁴⁰.

In Bangui and in the hinterland, the use of the time of women and young girls in general reserves a very important role for supplying families with water. The main supplier of drinking water is SODECA, whose number of subscribers is constantly increasing. However, many households do not have access to running water distributed by SODECA. Thus, the search for water becomes a chore especially for women and girls, who invest a large part of their time on it.

The search for water to supply households has a very negative impact on the education of girls in rural areas. The artisanal distribution of pure water to households in urban areas constitutes an IGA for young distributors, which somewhat relieves the women whose income makes it possible to obtain it.

The CAR is irrigated by a vast hydrological network which facilitates the availability of fresh water. The Central African Republic has a renewable water resource potential capable of serving the estimated population of 5.2 million¹⁴¹. However, it is clear that the CAR's drinking water and sanitation coverage remains one of the lowest in Africa, yet the SDG targets for drinking water are much more ambitious than the MDGs and variously aim to ensure universal access to basic services (SDG 1.4) and achieve universal access to securely managed services (SDG 6.1). However, access to drinking water supply and sanitation services is extremely limited in the country. In fact, the destruction and looting of the infrastructures of the Société de Distribution de l'Eau en Centrafrique (SODECA) during the recurrent crises, has accentuated the limited access to drinking water in secondary centres.

The rate of access to drinking water is estimated at less than 30%, of which 31.8% is in urban areas and 27.6% in

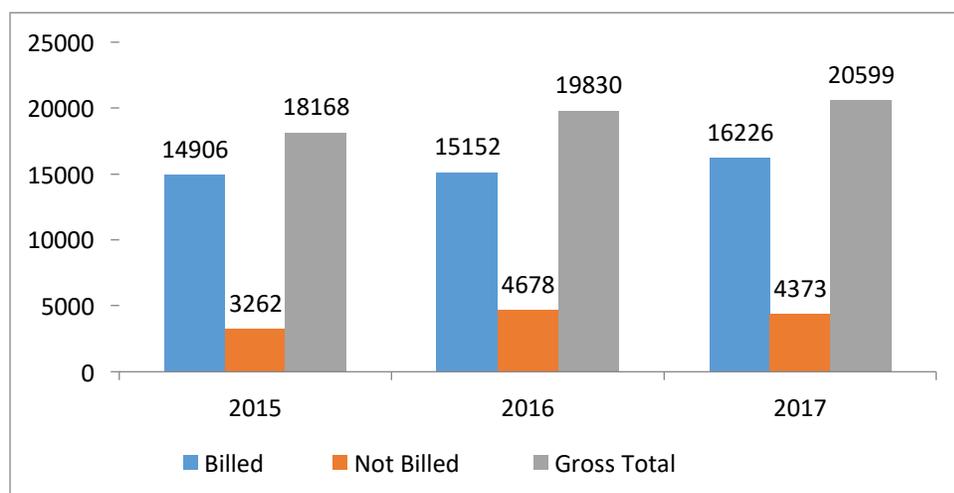
¹⁴⁰ Database of the [Joint Monitoring Programme in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#) of World Health Organisation / United Nations Children's Fund, consulted in 10/2019.

¹⁴¹ See the SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

rural areas¹⁴². The data provided by UNICEF support this estimate: Only 30% of the total population had access to drinking water between 2017 and 2018. In the city of Bangui, the rate is 36.5% and 27% in rural areas¹⁴³. On the other hand, the national coverage rate for the basic sanitation service remains below 30% in 2018.

This lack of water availability has negative consequences on the activities of women and girls. In addition, the time devoted to collection per day is around 30 minutes for 55% of people usually responsible for collecting water, from 31 minutes to 1 hour for 21.9% of people assigned to this task and more than an hour to 3 hours for 17.2% of people responsible for collecting water¹⁴⁴. As a result, they have to travel long distances to obtain the water they need for household needs, which is not only painful, but it takes a long time and prevents them from going on other income-generating activities.

Graph 5: Evolution of the number of subscribers to the water company (SODECA) from 2015 to 2017



Source: Billing and Customer Service Department (SODECA)

Table 28: Breakdown of SODECA water consumption (in m³) 2015 - 2017

Quantity of water consumed (in m ³)	2015	2016	2017	Average consumption	Average percentage of consumption (%)
Total households	1,548,533	1,669,022	1,793,157	1,670,237	14.1
Total companies	1,819,661	1,860,772	1,845,801	1,842,078	15.6
Total Government Administration	1,091,041	1,286,244	1,505,118	1,294,134	10.9
Total amount of water consumed	4,459,235	4,816,038	5,144,076	4,806,450	40.7
Total amount of water lost	7,362,217	7,436,856	6,240,186	7,013,086	59.3
Total amount of water distributed	11,821,452	12,252,894	11,384,262	11,819,536	

¹⁴² WSP, 2015

¹⁴³ JIM and UNICEF, 2017 in: SDG implementation monitoring report published by UNDP in 2019.

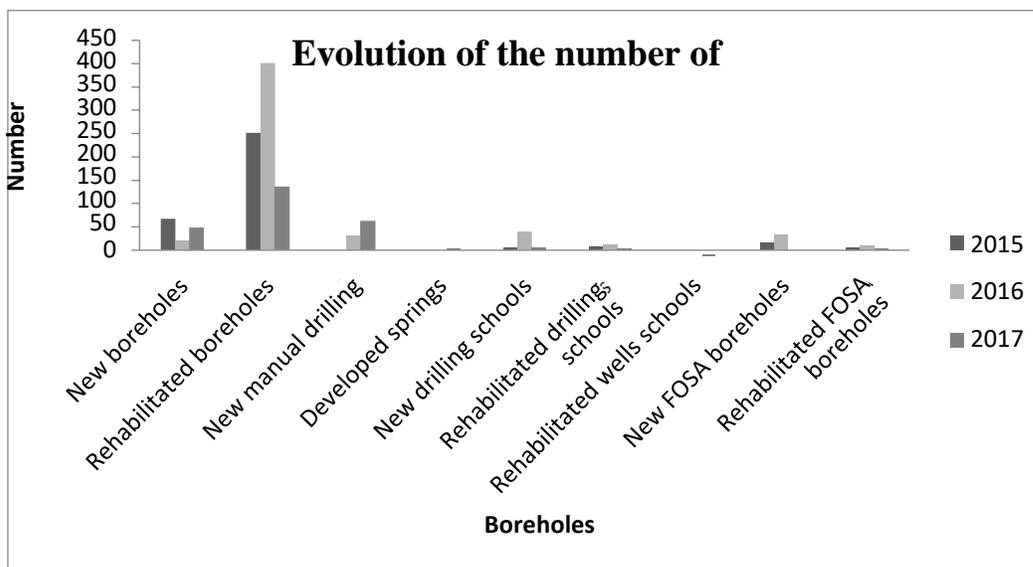
¹⁴⁴ ICASEES, 2021

Source: Billing and Customer Service Department (SODECA)

According to SODECA, in 2017, 136 boreholes were rehabilitated compared to 401 in 2016 and 251 in 2015. In 2017, 49 boreholes were newly constructed compared to 20 and 68 respectively in 2016 and 2015. This number has seen a slight increase this year with the various drilling operations following the water crisis in 2019. Despite this, drinking water needs are still very high in some rural and urban areas.

According to the "Diagnosis of the monitoring and evaluation of drinking water, hygiene and sanitation by public institutions in the Central African Republic, DGH June 2017", in 2015 in the CAR, 68% of the population uses improved water sources.

Graph 6: Evolution of the number of boreholes available



Source: Billing and Customer Service Department (SODECA)

Access to WASH services in educational structures and health facilities is still low: Indeed, 73% of schools and 27% of health facilities (FOSA) do not have access to water.

The drinking water supply is characterised by disparities not only between regions, but also between rural and urban areas. In 2016, the rate of access to drinking water in the Central African Republic was estimated at 68.5%, of which respectively 89.6% in urban areas and 54.4% in rural areas.

Table 29: Water, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure by region

	Safe water (SODEC A or pump)	Electricity (ENERCA)	Mobile phone coverage	International radio reception	National radio reception	National television reception	Internet access
Region 1	36	18	55	95	50	9	14
Region 2	24	0	50	97	6	0	15
Region 3	28	0	35	74	2	0	7
Region 4	60	0	33	83	3	0	3
Region 5	50	0	33	92	25	0	25
Region 6	17	3	37	97	0	0	17
Region 7	88	100	100	100	100	100	100
CAR	36	12	43	89	15	6	16

Source: Municipal Monograph Report, ICASEES 2016

The distribution of tasks within households should be reviewed in order to make men and boys more responsible for fetching water, thus allowing women / girls to continue to perform their other tasks better.

Availability of latrines and sanitation facilities

The availability of latrines in homes, public places, workplaces, schools and health facilities remains a major social problem in terms of unsanitary conditions and dignity. While men find it easier to urinate in the open air in the absence of a toilet thanks to the morphology of their urinary tracts, the fact remains that contact of the hands with the sexual organs when urinating is a public danger in the absence of hand washing after use. In rural areas, toilet promotion projects have not been appropriated by communities who persist in defecating in the open, causing water contamination with rainwater run-off.

According to the "Diagnosis of the monitoring and evaluation of drinking water, hygiene and sanitation by public institutions in the Central African Republic, DGH June 2017", in 2015 in the CAR, in terms of community sanitation, 29% of the population practise open air defecation and only 20% of households have a place to wash their hands.

Also, according to this diagnosis, only 35% have access to adequate sanitation facilities. The availability of latrines in schools remains a concern of this kind because 41% do not have a latrine.

The situation is even more severe in basic sanitation, the rates of which are 21.8% in general, 43.6% in urban areas and only 7.2% in rural areas.¹⁴⁵

VII. OTHER IMPORTANT UPGRADING PRIORITIES

VII.1. Agricultural transformation and industrial development

In the Central African Republic, following the various crises that shook the country's meagre industrial fabric, the few agricultural firms that existed until around the 2000s such as SOCADA, UCATEX, CETAC, CENTRAPALM, ACDA, etc. have almost all disappeared.

¹⁴⁵ Diagnosis of the monitoring and evaluation of drinking water, hygiene and sanitation by public institutions in the Central African Republic, DGH June 2017.

For an essentially agricultural economy, everything remains to be done to put in place an industrial base capable of relaunching the socioeconomic development of the country in a sustainable manner.

As for agricultural production, it is relatively inadequate compared to the immensity of the national agroecological potentialities, which are favourable to the needs of plants, guaranteeing diversification in the types of production.

Indeed, the soil potential is estimated at 15 million hectares, compared to only 0.7 million exploited annually. The highly diverse vegetation is made up of vast pastures for herding transhumance, areas for hunting and large forest reserves.¹⁴⁶ There are food production-herding, cotton-food production-herding, forest-coffee and hunting-tourism systems. Despite this enormous potential, the results of agricultural activity are mixed and the development of this sector seems compromised for technical, technological, political and sociological reasons.

The possible solutions to these problems are linked to the exploitation of research themes centred on: the management of space and farmer / herder conflicts, improvement in farm performance, integration of herding into agriculture, studies of occult social practices and the adoption of management advice as a roll-out method.

It is within a framework of research-development partnership where the research themes must result from the problems posed by the farmers that one can develop solutions likely to progressively break the Central African agricultural development of the impasse.

Despite its poor performance, agriculture remains the leading development sector of the Central African economy, as it contributes 45% of GDP and employs 70% of the working population (81.3% of the female workforce.).

Women play a predominant role over men in agriculture. Indeed, they participate in cash crops (coffee and cotton) and are the main producers of food crops, while ensuring control of domestic livestock activities and land management.

However, the low incomes, the poverty of the rural population, and the feminisation of poverty in agriculture are particularly visible and can be explained by:

- the difficulties of women's access to land;
- the small size of the farms;
- difficulties in accessing production factors;
- the low level of education of women;
- the difficulty of access to decision-making at all levels;
- the poor state of the roads and the isolation of the farms which aggravate the arduous tasks of women in relation to the flow of products to the main marketing centres.

In addition, according to customary law, access to land is by inheritance and generally privileges men over women.

The practice of land management, in particular in Bangui, is characterised by a duality between the customary and the formal. However, the situation differs according to the environment concerned, and the nature of the terrain.

In rural areas, due to the heritage nature of the land, customary officials (village chiefs and / or land chiefs) have the power to dispose of and allocate land. The notion of land chief excludes women from the power to own or allocate land. In addition, as land registry services are not always present in the field, especially in rural areas, a large part of the available land is subject to "untitled occupation", with a risk of eviction at any time. Indeed, land is acquired as a result of land clearing and then individual exploitation, or is managed by customary officials,

¹⁴⁶ The problem of agricultural development in the Central African Republic and research perspectives, Henri Ouikon - April 2007.

which poses the problem of its development and monetisation. The primacy of customary rules over land law leads to unregulated land occupancy for agricultural activities.

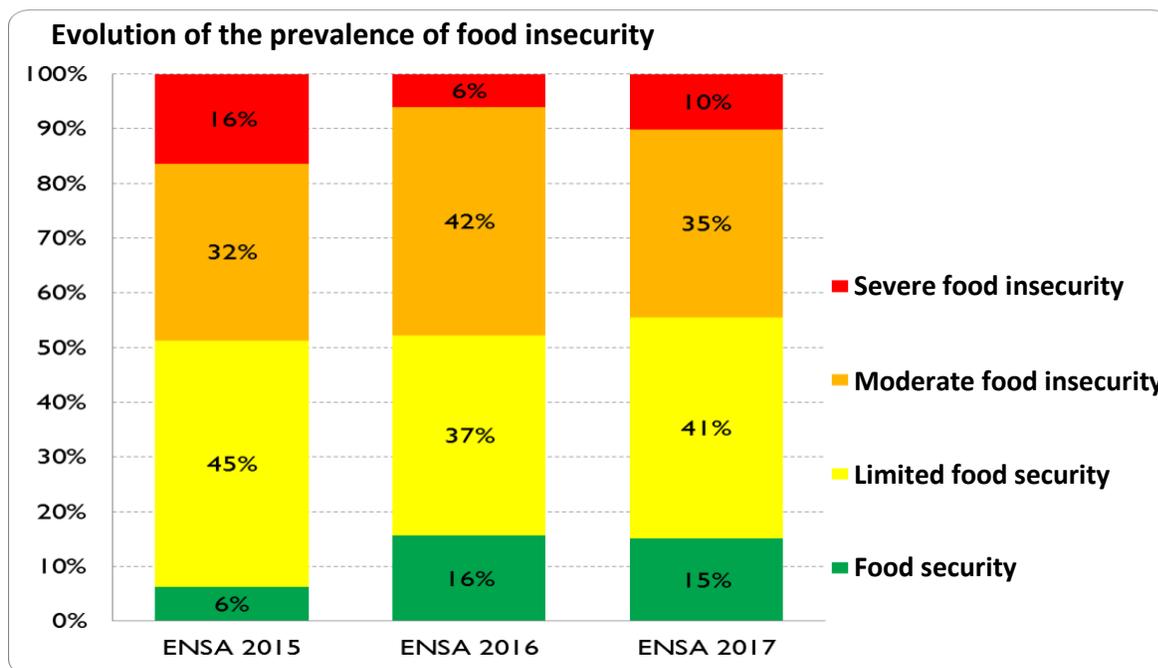
In large urban centres, land disputes and conflicts are increasing with demographic growth. Obtaining a title for land in the city is possible but financially difficult for most Central Africans, regardless of gender. For the official allocation of land, the price varies from 500 CFA francs and 5,000 CFA francs per m², plus expenses relating to registration in the land registry, stamp duty, demarcation costs, taxes, and various additional costs. After payment of these costs, the Ministry for the Reconstruction of Public Buildings issues a land registry excerpt and an allocation decree, valid for four years for the development of the land. Once this period has passed, the land is taken over by the State. A building permit completes the document and construction must start within six months of the permit issue date. Thus, the cost price of land in the city becomes exorbitant, and its development restrictive. Under these conditions, due to lack of financial resources, women are excluded from land ownership.

Practical measures should be taken to promote access for the poorest social strata, including women, with a view to greater equity between men and women in access to rural land and to credit, ultimately contributing to promoting more secure land tenure and women's economic power. To this end, a land bill proposed by the Ministry of Rural Development is currently being validated.

Strict application of the law is another facet of the land issue. It requires significant advocacy and communication actions with customary chiefs, men, women, and the rural population in general.

Currently, the poor performance of the agricultural sector, combined with the adverse effects of recent crises, leads to food insecurity and malnutrition. Nationally, 35% of households are moderately food insecure and 10% severely food insecure¹⁴⁷.

Graph 7: Evolution of the overall prevalence of food insecurity



¹⁴⁷ ICASEES: Social dashboard, 2018.

Source: GER 2018, ICASEES.

Among the initiatives taken by the Government and its partners to meet the challenge of food security and raise the level of participation of women, we can mention the interventions of FAO which, through its Country Programming Framework (CPF), targets 4 priority areas: *Support programme for improving the production environment; the Rural sector development and food and nutritional security improvement programme; the Programme for the prevention and management of food crises, risks of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies; the Programme for the development of sub-regional and regional cooperation to ensure a continuous revival of agricultural development.*

VII.2. Private sector development and female entrepreneurship

Since 2016, the Central African economy seems to have found a new lease of life, with the growth rate hovering around 4% per year¹⁴⁸. However, in 2017 and 2018, the growth of this still moribund economy struggled to cross the forecast 5% milestone, due to constraints mainly linked to the consequences of the prevailing insecurity (a large part of the territory still being occupied by groups armed), which prevents the peasant masses from peacefully carrying out their agricultural activities. This climate of insecurity has also caused the postponement of certain international private investments which should further support the recovery of the Central African economy.

As a result, the business environment remains one of the least attractive in Africa, the Central African private sector still being embryonic and only made up of small and medium-sized enterprises which operate mainly in the informal economy.

The World Bank "Doing Business" 2018 Report Ranks CAR 184th out of 190 Countries¹⁴⁹, which represents a gain of one place compared to 2016.

The notorious insufficiency of energy (electricity) and communication (NICT) infrastructure, the low level of tax coverage, the many delays observed in the execution of works contracts, the numerous cases of financial embezzlement, accumulation of internal payment arrears towards local entrepreneurs and the general feeling of impunity which prevents the advent of justice and peace, are all major constraints facing the country, making it less attractive and uncompetitive vis-à-vis international economic operators.

The recent adoption of a national private sector recovery plan, which reorganised the consultation structure between the private sector and the State, could constitute a framework conducive to the promotion of the private sector.

Likewise, the start of fibre optic installation work constitutes a real opportunity for the promotion of companies in the ICT sector. Strategic discussion should be carried out with a view to promoting the involvement of women and young people in performing the various works, as well as for the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the ICT sector.

The National Strategy for the Promotion and Development of Female Entrepreneurship in the CAR, drawn up in November 2010 with the technical and financial support of the UNDP, highlighted:

- IGA niches likely to be implemented and developed by women;

¹⁴⁸ Africa Economic Outlook, 2018.

¹⁴⁹ AfDB Group: Country Strategy Document (CSP 2017 - 2021).

- the activities that can be offered to women in ex-conflict zones and a strategy for their reintegration;
- a programme to develop non-financial services adapted to established or potential women entrepreneurs;
- avenues for using Micro-finance to develop Female Entrepreneurship;
- the summary typology of businesses or economic units headed by women;
- the conditions for establishing female company bosses;
- and the possibilities for young girls graduating from higher education to engage in entrepreneurship.

This national strategy had the vision of "leading urban and rural women to initiate, create, manage and develop income-generating activities and viable businesses in the promising niches of the Central African economy", through the following 4 strategic priorities:

- Strategic priority 1: Information on / awareness of entrepreneurial activity and market access;
- Strategic priority 2: Promotion of sustainable access for women to non-financial services;
- Strategic priority 3: Promotion and sustainability of women's access to finance;
- Strategic priority 4: Improvement of the regulations, the institutional framework and the infrastructures for promoting female entrepreneurship.

Today, after around 10 years of implementation of this strategy, it is essential to conduct an evaluation in order to measure progress and identify the various obstacles which still hamper the development of female entrepreneurship in the Central African Republic.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The CAR has the legal arsenal necessary and conducive to the consideration of gender in the various strategic sectors for the development of the country. In recent years, several initiatives have been launched and carried out by the government of the Republic within the political, institutional and legal framework with a view to improving respect for equality between men and women and human rights. However, despite the progress made, the implementation of these initiatives has been hampered by several obstacles that will have to be overcome in order to eliminate all gender inequalities in this country.

Despite certain obstacles linked to the political and military crisis that the CAR has been experiencing since 2012, the evolution of the situation with regard to the integration of Gender in the policies, programmes and projects of the country is relatively unsatisfactory. In fact, in view of the stated political will, the resources deployed in programmes for the advancement of women and initiatives to support gender mainstreaming in national and sector strategies have not always been commensurate with the results. research. In addition, the delay in the implementation of some of these initiatives and the lack of monitoring of others have greatly reduced the progress of reforms in terms of eliminating gender inequalities in the country's sectoral policies.

These persistent gender inequalities have a negative impact on the results of government action for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, growth, social equity and poverty reduction. They undermine the country's economic and social development efforts.

The integration of equality between women and men in all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life in the CAR is a decisive objective in terms of human rights and a means of achieving real sustainable development. This is a prerequisite for achieving a level of sustainable growth that will benefit all citizens.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to help the Central African Republic move forward on the path of gender equality and in order to establish the gender-peace-humanitarian and development nexus, the following recommendations have been made to the various stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of the various provisions relating to this issue.

Appeal to political will

1. Promote the effective application of the existing legal framework relating to the protection of women's rights. The government must indeed take measures to enforce the laws that have been passed to promote the advancement of women and their rights. There is a need to enhance the operational capacities of public and private actors who will be involved in monitoring cases of violations of these laws. This action will aim to: (i) train magistrates to apply laws to promote equality; (ii) raise civil society awareness in order to identify, monitor and denounce cases of non-application of laws on equality; (iii)) achieve wide dissemination of texts to promote equality; (iv) track down discriminatory practices and bring perpetrators to justice.
2. Create and commission the Gender Observatory and endow it with effective means of action in order to implement the law on parity and make governmental and non-governmental institutions accountable in terms of gender mainstreaming;
3. Develop and implement advocacy and lobbying campaigns to encourage adherence to quotas for women by political parties in candidate lists for future elections in the CAR (including through changes in electoral systems for better representation of women in politics);
4. Raise awareness of political party leaders, government decision-makers and new legislative and municipal authorities on the importance of involving women in the peacebuilding process;

5. Organise advocacy and lobbying campaigns to facilitate obtaining the birth certificate by making this important document available in sufficient quantity in the registrars of births, deaths and marriages of the CAR;
6. Develop and implement advocacy and lobbying campaigns on the access of rape survivors to health care and in particular the free medical certificate for them

Need to continue strengthening the institutional framework

7. Accelerate the process of institutional strengthening of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, the Family and the Protection of the Child, through the adoption of its organic text, with the allocation of sufficient human resources for the proper conduct of activities at national level as well as the development of a sector plan for the theme;
8. Support capacity building in the field of gender with elements dedicated to the following aspects:
 - Strengthening the capacities of the MPWFPC in terms of gender integration and the fight against gender-based violence, human rights, in the field of Women, Peace and Security, to better support the gender units which will be created in the other technical ministries;
 - Capacity building of the Observatory for Gender Equality so that it can better fulfil its role and achieve its objectives;
 - Capacity building of sector ministries, technical committees in charge of reforms, prefectural working groups in charge of gender, project coordinators, civil society organisations, "gender" units responsible for mainstreaming gender and gender-based violence in programmes and projects.
9. Set up a Gender Unit within the technical ministries which will be directly attached to the Observatory of Gender Equality to promote the inclusion of gender in the policies and programmes of these different departments;
10. Facilitate the participation of women in the mechanisms of the SCC and CVJRR to enable them to obtain justice;
11. Invest in initiatives aimed at strengthening female leadership, particularly through the strengthening of personal capacities and self-esteem among women;
12. Carry out in-depth studies in order to obtain detailed and data broken down by gender that would facilitate the reading of women's participation in peacebuilding. Use the results to better integrate women into the process;
13. Conduct studies to assess the real level of gender mainstreaming in the CAR's investment plans, programmes and projects and to ensure effective programming in the peace-humanitarian-development nexus.

Work at grassroots and community level

14. To roll out the law on parity, and the national policy for the promotion of equality and equity, in order to guarantee the promotion of gender at national level;
15. Greater involvement in information, awareness-raising and training courses on knowledge and exercise of women's rights, including the right to participate in public life;

- 16.** Strengthen the capacities of women at the grassroots level in terms of peacebuilding;
- 17.** Support the establishment of support programmes for female entrepreneurship including the following elements: i) guarantee fund for the financing of micro-enterprises in which women and girls are promoters; ii) support funds for entrepreneurial, technical and vocational training for women; iii) support for the development of production sectors in which women and girls are generally involved (food production, market gardening, etc.); iv) promotion of gender-sensitive community micro-projects benefiting women entrepreneurs; v) establishment of banking institutions specialising in the financing of IGAs performed by women.
- 18.** Establish sex education and reproductive health programmes for young people to deal with unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS;
- 19.** Reduce sociocultural and economic obstacles to girls' education, via a mechanism for calling for proposals for innovative projects on the issue, the creation of vocational schools for girls at regional level and / or the creation of community accommodation for young girls and women / girls' learning centres;
- 20.** Carry out the coherent implementation of the DDDR programme and strengthen the presence of ISFs and CAAF including women in the main insecure areas in order to better protect the population, allowing them to go about their activities freely, for the improvement of agricultural productivity and the living conditions of the population.

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Law No. 19-0012 on the electoral code of the CAR 20 August 2019.

XI. ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of people interviewed

Organisation	Name of the contact person	Role
Ministry for the Promotion of Women	Ms. Aline Gisèle PANA	Minister for the Promotion of Women, the Family and the Protection of the Child
	Mr. Theodore KOINAM	Director General of the General Directorate for Gender Promotion
Ministry of Labour	Mrs. Augustine DAMALA	Principal Inspector of Labour, in charge of Social Protection
The Minister of Agriculture	Abel KPAWILINA	Head of Mission Agriculture
Ministry of Mines	Jean Francois Thalo	President of the NGO APDC
Ministry for the Promotion of Women	Theodore KOINAM	DGPG
Ministry of Justice	Mr. Thierry MOSKIT	President of Children's Court V.
	Mrs. Lucille Eureka MAZANGUET	Vice-President of the Children's Court
	Mr Benoit Narcisse FOUKPIO	1st Advocate General of the Public Prosecutor
Ministry of Health	Dr. Aimé DODANE	National Gender Expert SENI
CAM CAR	Etienne NGOUNIO	Programme Officer
RCO	Mrs Kay SCHWENDINGER	Head of the Office of the Resident Coordinator
	Leopold Kouandongui	RCO economist
UNDP CAR	Ms. Christine Meta Mpinda	Gender Specialist
	Dominique Malo	Governance Programme Specialist
UNFPA	Mr Raymond Goula	Assistant to the Resident Representative
IRC	Mrs Elisabeth MEKOUYOU OBAMA	Gender Specialist
UNAIDS	Thomas TCHETMI	Strategic Information Adviser

UN WOMEN	Mr. Ulrich Martial SANDY	Head of Elimination of violence against women programme
IRC	Mrs Elisabeth MEKOUYOU OBAMA	Gender Specialist
War child	Innocent Mbaitoubam	
Organisations of women farmers	NDOUET Brigitte Bernadette	President of the Association of Women for Socioeconomic Reintegration (AFERSE)
Organisation of women producers	TOUAGUENE Marthe	Head of Food Processing Unit
Central African Women's Leadership Network (RELEFCA)	Mrs Lina EKOMO	RELEFCA President
Central African Women's Organisation (OFCA)	Mrs Marguerite RAMADAN	OFCA President Minister Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office

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