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## **National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\***

### **Djibouti**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Principal characteristics of the country

1. Djibouti is located at the centre of a geographical area that is regularly hit by natural weather-related disasters, such as droughts and floods, and faces sociopolitical instability caused by several conflicts that have led to a constant influx of migrants and refugees, all of which has a strong impact on social services and the State budget.
2. With a total surface area of 23,200 km<sup>2</sup>, Djibouti shares 506 km of borders with three countries in the Horn of Africa – Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia – and has 314 km of coastline on the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el Mandeb Strait, at the southern entrance to the Red Sea.
3. As of 2023, the population of Djibouti is estimated at 1,001,454, with almost 78 per cent living in the capital, Djibouti City. Women account for 47.13 per cent of the population, while school-age children (5–14 years old) make up 20.62 per cent and young people aged 15–29 years old 26.72 per cent. The economically active population (30–59 years old) makes up 35.71 per cent of the total population, while people aged 60 and over account for just 6.21 per cent.
4. Trends in the main sociodemographic indicators of Djibouti.

	2017/2018	2022/2023
<b>Total population</b>	<b>948 249</b>	<b>1 013 179</b>
Life expectancy at birth	52.9 years	63.6 years
Men	51.8 years	61.8 years
Women	54.1 years	65.4 years
Median age	20 years	20 years
<b>Birth rate</b>		
Crude birth rate	39 ‰	39 ‰
Total fertility rate	2.9	2.6
<b>Mortality</b>		
Infant mortality rate (0–12 months)	58.0 entre ‰	58.0 ‰
Infant and child mortality rate (0–5 years)	67.8 ‰	67.8 ‰
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	383	383
<b>Marriage</b>		
Average age at first marriage		
Men	30.7 years	29.4 years
Women	29.9 years	25.2 years
Rate of permanent celibacy at age 50		
Men	2.40%	2.40%
Women	2.90%	2.90%
Rate of permanent celibacy (men and women)	2.60%	2.60%
<b>Literacy and schooling</b>		
Adult literacy rate (age 15+)		
Men	62.70%	66.60%
Women	43.30%	52.90%
Overall	52.80%	
<b>Gross primary enrolment rate (6–10 years)</b>		
Boys	98.00%	94.10%
Girls	93.60%	94.20%
Overall	95.90%	94.10%

	2017/2018	2022/2023
<b>Universal health insurance</b>		
Number of insured persons	88 255	137 189
	225 653	350 449
<b>Acute malnutrition</b>		
Boys	19.3	11.9
Girls	16.2	8.4
Overall	17.8	10.1
<b>Capacity of public health-care facilities</b>		
Facilities	1 498	3 093
<b>Human resources in the health sector</b>		
	887	3 067
<b>Energy consumption</b>		
Djibouti Electricity (EDD)	57	64.7
National Office of Water and Sanitation (ONEAD)	40	41

5. With regard to the economic situation, the lifting of travel restrictions linked to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic stimulated the resumption of economic activity. The growth rate, which was near zero in 2020, rebounded to 4.3 per cent in 2021.

6. Since the last dialogue, Djibouti has pursued its efforts to further protect human rights and enable its citizens and others living on its territory to live in peace, with dignity and above all in decent living conditions.

7. True to its tradition, Djibouti has worked, and continues to work, to promote peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region, which for decades has suffered wars, terrorism, climate and ecological crises, and the displacement of populations.

8. On the strength of its experience with the Somalia National Peace Conference in Arta, Djibouti has been involved in resolving the Sudanese conflict from the outset. In this context, Djibouti hosted the fourteenth ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from 13 to 15 June 2023, whose agenda included the preservation of peace and security in member States and the prevention of natural disasters.

9. These situations of instability and political crises represent major challenges for the countries of the region, as they strive to fulfil their human rights commitments.

## Methodology used in preparing the national report

10. Pursuant to Decree No. 2017-355 of 2 November 2017, the drafting of the report was the responsibility of the Interministerial Coordinating Committee for the Preparation and Submission of Reports to the Treaty Bodies.

11. The Committee, which brings together the main departments responsible for human rights, carried out very wide-ranging consultations during the preparation and drafting of the report, both in the capital and in the interior regions.

12. The Committee organized meetings with the public sector to collect key human rights data, including data relating to the rights to education and health and the fight against poverty.

13. Working meetings were also organized with civil society, the National Human Rights Commission and local elected representatives.

14. In accordance with the guidance note on the national report for the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, the Interministerial Committee held a working meeting with the Commission on Laws and Human Rights of the National Assembly.

15. This working meeting, held in May 2023 at the headquarters of the National Assembly, was an opportunity for parliamentarians to share their achievements in the field of human rights with the Interministerial Committee.

16. This determination to do more for human rights is reflected in particular in the reform of the rules of procedure of the Commission on Laws, which extended its remit to include the promotion and protection of human rights.

17. Since the last country review in 2018, Djibouti has continued its collaboration and dialogue with human rights protection mechanisms through:

- The submission of the initial report of Djibouti to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in August 2021;
- The submission of its periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in April 2022;
- The submission of its report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in April 2023;
- The submission of the periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

18. As part of its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Djibouti presented its voluntary national report on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development held at the United Nations headquarters in New York in July 2021.

19. In addition to responding to the recommendations made during the third cycle of the universal periodic review, Djibouti has followed the guidance note on the national report for the fourth cycle and clustered the issues as follows:

- Cross-cutting issues
- Civil and political rights
- Economic, social and cultural rights
- Rights of specific persons and groups
- Specific regions or territories

## **Developments in the normative and institutional frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights**

20. The normative and institutional framework for human rights has also undergone significant change. Djibouti has adopted the following laws and strategies to further protect human rights:

- Act No. 97/AN/20/8ème L of 16 November 2020 on Freedom of Communication and Media Ethics and Organic Act No. 96/AN/20/8ème L of 16 November 2020 on Political Pluralism in Election Campaigns
- Act No. 97 of 16 November 2020 on Political Pluralism in Election Campaigns
- Act No. 51/AN/19/8ème L partially amending article 113 of Act No. 133/AN/05/5ème (2006) and extending paid maternity leave from 14 to 26 weeks
- Act No. 66/AN/19/8ème L on the Prevention of Violence and the Protection and Care of Women and Children Victims of Violence
- Act No. 26/AN/18/8ème L of 27 February 2019 on the Establishment of the National Statistics Office
- Act No. 80/AN/20/8ème L of 15 July 2020 on the Establishment of a National Centre for Judicial Studies

- Act No. 043/AN/19/8ème L on the Adoption of the National Strategy for Social Protection 2018–2022
- Act No. 136/AN/21/8ème L of 9 December 2021 on the Adoption of National Disability Strategy 2021–2025
- Act No. 168/AN/22/8ème L on the Establishment of the Disability Support Fund
- Decree No. 2023-043/PR/MJDH of 14 February 2023 on the Organization, Powers and Functioning of the National Watchdog Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices

## **Cross-cutting issues**

### **Equality and non-discrimination**

21. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is guaranteed under the Constitution of Djibouti, article 1 of which states that the State of Djibouti “guarantees equality before the law for all, without distinction as to language, origin, race, sex or religion”. This fundamental right is one of the pillars, if not the pillar, on which the entire Djiboutian legal system rests. Any violation of this principle is punished by the courts, including the Constitutional Council.

22. In order to put this principle into practice, Djibouti has for nearly two decades undertaken major projects to help groups and individuals who are often the victims of discrimination, namely women, children, persons with disabilities, and refugees and migrants.

23. The strong political will to achieve gender equality has enabled women to gain increasing access to positions of responsibility and decision-making in both the public and private sectors.

24. Similar efforts have been made with regard to the rights of persons with disabilities, culminating in the creation in 2018 of the National Agency for Persons with Disabilities, whose mandate is to promote the participation, inclusion and equality of opportunities of persons with disabilities in all sectors of social life.

### **Right to development**

25. Since its independence, Djibouti has strived to preserve peace and security in an unstable region faced with internal conflicts, terrorism and difficult climatic conditions that cause recurrent droughts and floods.

26. This stability is the result, among other things, of respect for human rights and the creation of economic and social conditions that guarantee decent living conditions for the vast majority of the population of Djibouti.

27. In order to realize this right, Djibouti has developed a political and constitutional system that enables its citizens to participate in the management of public affairs and to accede to all State functions.

28. National and local elections are held on a regular basis to ensure that everyone can participate in political and public decision-making.

29. These elections, which meet international standards, guarantee power-sharing and pluralism in decision-making bodies.

30. With a view to guaranteeing the right to development, Djibouti has put in place the necessary mechanisms to attract foreign investment and donor contributions.

### **Environmental challenges**

31. Environmental protection has been made a national priority, with the establishment of a large ministry for the environment and sustainable development during the last ministerial

reshuffle. The Ministry's main mission is to ensure the coordination and implementation of national programmes for environmental protection and hazard prevention, and to monitor actions for the development, protection and management of spaces, ecosystems and coastlines.

32. Several laws have been adopted with a view to protecting fragile ecosystems:
  - Act No. 51/AN/09/06ème L, the Environmental Code
  - Act No. 45/AN/04/5ème L on the Creation of Land and Maritime Protected Areas
33. With the support of international donors, in particular the Global Environment Facility, the country is working on three major projects:
  - Development of agropastoral perimeters as a climate change adaptation strategy for poor rural populations in Djibouti
  - Implementation of priority interventions under the National Action Programme for Adaptation to strengthen resilience in the country's most vulnerable coastal areas
  - Implementation of adaptation technologies in the fragile ecosystems of the central plains of Djibouti

### **Human rights and counter-terrorism**

34. With the adoption of the Criminal Code in 1995, Djibouti introduced legislation that establishes severe punishments for acts of terrorism. To keep pace with the increasingly violent, organized and often transnational nature of terrorism, the 1995 legislation was supplemented by two laws adopted in 2011, one on terrorism and other serious offences, and the other on the financing of terrorism.

35. Under the Act on Terrorism and Other Serious Offences, the penalty for acts of terrorism is 15 years' imprisonment and a fine of 5,000,000 Djibouti francs (FD). If the act of terrorism results in the death of one or more persons, it is punishable by life imprisonment and a fine of FD 10,000,000.

36. Counter-terrorism legislation is fully aligned with the fundamental principles of human rights; individuals prosecuted for terrorism are not tried by special courts or subjected to special procedures.

37. All their rights of defence are guaranteed, and they have the right to a lawyer and a doctor at all stages of the proceedings.

38. The judicial authorities responsible for prosecuting and trying terrorism cases receive human rights training.

### **Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law**

39. The preamble to the September 1992 Constitution states that Djibouti is committed to establishing the rule of law and pluralist democracy.

40. Since 1992, one of the major steps towards achieving this objective has been the construction of an independent justice system with the human and material resources needed to carry out its duties.

41. The number of judges has increased four- or even fivefold, from 35 to 150. There has been a similar increase in the number of court officers, clerks, lawyers, notaries, bailiffs and criminal investigation officers.

42. Numerous buildings have been constructed to accommodate this massive increase in the number of justice professionals.

43. Other measures taken include:
  - The transformation of the Supreme Court into a court of cassation to improve judicial time management;

- The creation of juvenile courts and personal status courts;
- The creation of administrative and financial courts to oversee the management of public funds and public governance in general.

44. With regard to access to justice, in 2020 the Government adopted a revised Code of Civil Procedure, aimed mainly at reinforcing the justice system. Accordingly, new courts have been set up in the regions and in the large municipality of Balbala.

45. In order to improve the quality of the public justice system, in 2020 the Government created the Judicial Training School, whose tasks include the training of judges, justice officials (lawyers, notaries, bailiffs, court clerks and police officers) and any other professionals working in the legal or judicial field.

46. The School, which has been operational for three years, has trained the first cohort of judges, court clerks and lawyers.

## **Civil and political rights**

### **Right to life, liberty and security of the person**

47. Article 10 of the Constitution of 15 September 1992 states that: “No one may be prosecuted, arrested, charged or convicted except by virtue of a law promulgated prior to the acts of which he or she is accused”.

48. The Code of Criminal Procedure, in particular in its provisions on the preliminary investigation conducted by criminal investigation officers, provides for mechanisms to ensure the humane treatment of persons in police custody and to regulate the use of this measure.

49. Police and gendarmerie officers perform their duties in accordance with the law and under the supervision of the judicial authorities, who systematically monitor their activities.

50. In line with its commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Djibouti is continuing consultations with a view to finalizing and adopting the new Criminal Code.

51. The reform of the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure will enable Djibouti to fight more effectively against crime and violence against women, and to harmonize practices to ensure equal treatment of all citizens before the law; to improve the effectiveness of the execution of sentences, including alternatives to imprisonment; and to protect the rights of children, while at the same time promoting the reintegration of prisoners.

52. With the opening of the Obock and Dikhil detention centres, Djibouti has acted on the Council’s recommendations to reduce prison overcrowding and improve prisoners’ general living conditions.

53. The National Human Rights Commission is fully empowered to carry out unannounced inspections of all institutions responsible for enforcing criminal sentences. The independent Commission members monitor conditions of detention and are authorized to consult relevant documents and speak directly with detainees without any police officers present.

### **Fundamental freedoms and participation in public and political life**

54. Djibouti guarantees the free exercise of religion within the framework of respect for the Constitution, laws and regulations in force, public order, morality and the fundamental rights and freedoms of third parties.

55. The exercise of freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed by article 11 of the Constitution, which states that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and opinion, in accordance with conditions determined by law”.

56. To promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the State is stepping up measures to develop information and communication technologies. A ministerial department specifically responsible for this matter has been created.

57. The State of Djibouti has drafted and adopted a number of laws aimed at ensuring that journalists and related professionals enjoy freedom and independence in the exercise of their profession, and that citizens have the right to quality, honest and objective information. These laws include Act No. 97/AN/20/8ème L of 16 November 2020 on Freedom of Communication and Media Ethics and Organic Act No. 96/AN/20/8ème L of 16 November 2020 on Political Pluralism in Election Campaigns.

58. Article 5 of Act No. 97 of 16 November 2020 states that: “Information is disseminated freely, in compliance with the laws and regulations in force in the Republic of Djibouti.”

59. The National Commission on Communication, the media regulatory body, ensures freedom and protection of the press and all means of mass communication in compliance with the law. In this respect, it ensures that media professionals comply with the rules of ethics and professional conduct.

60. Media professional associations also help to preserve ethical values within the profession. These include the Press and Broadcasting Union, which is responsible for defending press freedom, protecting the public’s right to free, complete, honest and accurate information, and ensuring the safety of journalists in the performance of their duties.

61. In Djibouti, everyone has the right to freedom of association with others. This freedom is guaranteed by article 15 of the Constitution, which states: “All citizens have the right to freely form associations and unions, provided that they do so in accordance with the procedures established in the country’s laws and regulations”.

62. With this in mind, the Djiboutian Government encourages the development of associations and, since the beginning of 2023, has been engaged in an extensive process of reform aimed at updating the legal framework governing associations, which dates back to colonial times.

63. While maintaining and consolidating the gains made under the 1901 law, the reform will strengthen freedom of association, regulate the activities of associations more precisely and fill in legal gaps, particularly with regard to foreign associations.

64. Today, associations are one of the most dynamic players in the country’s social, trade union, cultural and scientific life.

### **Human trafficking: full implementation of recommendations 129.80–129.91**

65. Under article 16 of the Constitution, torture, inhuman, cruel, degrading or humiliating treatment, abuse or ill-treatment and all forms of degradation of persons are prohibited and punishable.

66. To this end, Djibouti has taken an important legislative step to intensify its efforts to crack down on trafficking through the adoption of Act No. 133 of 24 March 2016 on the Fight against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.

67. This Act gives full effect to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Its aims are to:

- Prevent and combat trafficking in persons;
- Protect the fundamental rights of victims of trafficking, design a comprehensive framework for prevention and the provision of protection and assistance to victims and witnesses, and for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking in persons in all its forms, with a view to effective and appropriate sanctions;



- Contribute to the fight against human trafficking at the national and international levels, including in the context of organized crime, and promote regional and international cooperation in this field.

68. Under the Act, trafficking for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation is a criminal offence, with penalties ranging from 5 to 10 years' imprisonment, which are sufficiently severe and commensurate with those imposed for other serious offenses. The Act also makes the involvement of a minor or forced prostitution aggravating factors that carry penalties of up to 20 years' imprisonment.

69. This Act, which follows on from the 2007 law, reflects the Government's efforts to combat the problem of human trafficking in Djibouti.

70. In addition, thanks to support from the international community, personnel of the judiciary and security forces have benefited from training and capacity-building on the issues of migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

71. At the institutional level, the National Watchdog Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices was established pursuant to Decree No. 2023-043 of 14 February 2023. The Committee, which reports to the Minister of Justice, has a mandate to prevent and combat human trafficking, protect the fundamental rights of victims of trafficking and devise a comprehensive framework for prevention and the provision of protection and assistance to victims and witnesses, and for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of human trafficking in all its forms, with a view to imposing effective and appropriate penalties.

72. The Committee is represented in the five regions by local units that are responsible for implementing and monitoring the action plan against human trafficking at the regional level.

73. Act No. 159 of 5 January 2017 on the Status of Refugees in the Republic of Djibouti guarantees equal access for citizens and refugees to education, health care, work and mobility outside refugee camps.

74. In addition, the National Migration Strategy has been adopted, with the support of the office of the International Organization for Migration in Djibouti. The Strategy takes into account key issues such as governance and migration management; border control, surveillance, management and regulation; the protection of migrants' rights, saving human lives, and resilience in situations of vulnerability.

## **Right to privacy and family life**

75. Respect for privacy is a constitutional right recognized for every individual. This right is enshrined in article 12 of the Constitution, which establishes the right to property and the inviolability of the home.

76. There are only very limited exceptions to this principle, and they apply only to specific, well-defined situations.

77. Respect for privacy is also guaranteed under article 13 of the Constitution, which protects the secrecy of correspondence and other communications.

78. To give effect to the right to privacy and dissuade anyone from interfering in the lives of others, a chapter on violations of privacy has been incorporated into the Criminal Code. Among other things, it criminalizes "invasion of privacy and violation of the home". Victims of such offences may ask the judge for damages and any other measures they deem necessary to put a stop to the acts that violate their privacy.

79. Article 12 of the Constitution guarantees the inviolability of the home and other private property. Home visits and searches may only be carried out in the forms and under the conditions laid down by law.

80. In accordance with article 471 of the Criminal Code, entering someone else's home by means of manipulation, threats, assault or coercion, except where authorized by law, is punishable by 1 year's imprisonment and a fine of FD 200,000.

81. The rules governing family matters are set out in the Family Code of January 2002. The Code regulates family life while respecting the country's religious and traditional values.

## **Economic and social rights**

### **Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work**

82. The right to decent work is a priority for the Government, which is committed to protecting workers and promoting a safe and healthy working environment.

83. Specific laws have been enacted to protect the rights of workers who are minors. National legislation prohibits the employment of children under the age of 16 and restricts hazardous work for young people aged 16 to 18. Monitoring and control measures have been strengthened to combat child labour and guarantee children's access to education and healthy development.

84. Legislation has been enacted to regulate occupational health and safety standards, including the use of personal protective equipment and the prevention of accidents and occupational illnesses. Regular inspections are carried out to ensure that companies comply with these standards.

85. Djibouti has also signed international agreements and instruments on workers' rights, such as the International Labour Organization Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

### **Right to social security**

86. With regard to social security, Djibouti has adopted a series of policies and reforms aimed at extending social coverage and guaranteeing adequate protection for workers and their families. Social security schemes have been set up, including for pensions and health insurance. These schemes help ensure a degree of economic and social stability for people facing financial difficulties due to illness or retirement.

87. The social protection system provides medical coverage for the entire population (universal health insurance), including people with no income, through the social health-care assistance programme (PASS).

88. Other notable advances include the adoption of Act No. 51/AN/19/8ème L, partially amending article 113 of Act No. 133/AN/05/5ème of 2006, and extending paid maternity leave from 14 to 26 weeks. The costs generated by this reform are covered by the National Social Security Fund, so as not to create any further burden for employers.

### **Right to an adequate standard of living**

89. In 2021, the extreme poverty rate for the country as a whole was estimated at 21.1 per cent, according to the most recent household survey carried out in 2017. In Djibouti City, the extreme poverty rate was estimated at 13.6 per cent, while in the other regions it was estimated at 45 per cent, twice the national rate.

90. When it comes to the general poverty line, the proportion of the population considered poor increased in 2020 due to the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 health crisis, which persists to this day.

91. In March 2021, the Government received approval for \$15 million in funding from the International Development Association.

92. This funding is intended to support the extension of the social protection system and improve food security and access to basic social services for the country's poorest and most vulnerable communities.

93. It will also be used to restructure the resources already allocated to the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic since April 2020, and to extend the scope of the integrated cash transfer and human capital development project, notably through the extension of cash transfers to 2,500 households in urban areas.

94. The reallocation of resources will enable the provision of ongoing assistance to 5,000 households in the form of cash transfers and the distribution of food vouchers to over 27,500 households in urban areas to help them withstand the impact of COVID-19.

## **Right to housing**

95. The Government has put in place an ambitious road map to improve access to decent housing in rural areas. A national housing strategy has been developed, with clear objectives and defined actions to meet the housing needs of the rural population. Specific development plans have been drawn up for each region, taking into account local specificities and community demands.

96. In this context, the Government has undertaken a broad and ambitious social housing programme, which has resulted in the construction and allocation of over 2,500 apartments and more than 12,000 serviced plots. All of these dwellings are equipped with basic services such as roads, drinking water, electricity and schools. These homes are aimed primarily at middle-class people.

97. Those with no resources or on modest incomes benefit from the work of the IOG Foundation for the Right to Housing. To support the Government's efforts to create decent housing accessible to all, the Foundation has built more than 2,600 homes in the capital and hundreds of social housing units in the interior regions since its establishment in 2016.

98. In the interior, the Foundation has built 50 homes in Arta, 100 homes in Tadjourah, 100 homes in Obock, 100 homes in Ali Sabieh, 50 homes in Dikhil, 50 homes in Weah, 30 homes in Holl-Holl, 30 homes in Mouloud and 50 homes in Yoboki.

99. Partnerships have been established with private sector organizations and financial institutions to facilitate access to housing finance and encourage the construction of social housing. For instance, Salaam Real Estate has launched a project called "Salaam City", which involves the construction of 7,496 residential units in Djibouti City, with a financing plan that is accessible to all.

100. To ensure the success of efforts to improve access to adequate housing, awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out to inform communities about housing rights and available opportunities.

## **Right to water**

101. To give all Djiboutians access to quality water, in 2017 a cross-border aqueduct project with Ethiopia was inaugurated. The water is transported from Ethiopia to the southern regions of Djibouti (Ali-Sabieh, Dikhil and Arta in particular) and also covers the growing drinking water needs of the capital and its port areas. This is the third project linking the two countries, after the Addis Ababa-Djibouti train line and an electrical interconnection project.

102. In 2021, a desalination and drinking water production plant was set up as part of the project for the production of drinking water through renewable energy (PEPER), financed by the European Union. This unique installation, the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa, is perfectly in line with the Sustainable Energy for All initiative of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

103. The unit, which has a treatment capacity of 22,500 m<sup>3</sup>/day, supplies nearly 250,000 of the capital's inhabitants with drinking water. This figure will double in phase II of the

project, which aims to expand the desalination plant by increasing its production capacity to 45,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water per day.

104. Water production reached 23,984 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2021, up 3.8 per cent on 2020. This increase was due to simultaneous growth in production in Djibouti City (3.3 per cent) and the districts (6.7 per cent). Water consumption rose by 6.9 per cent to 16,036 million m<sup>3</sup>. Most of this consumption – 85 per cent – was concentrated in Djibouti City and increased by 6.1 per cent. Consumption in the interior rose by 12.1 per cent. The water loss rate in 2021 was 33 per cent, compared with 35 per cent a year earlier. In terms of accessibility, the number of users rose by 7 per cent to 52,324, that is, 3,478 more than in 2020.

## **Right to health**

105. Significant progress has been made in guaranteeing the right to social security and access to health care for the population. The Government has taken steps to strengthen the social protection system and improve access to health care and the quality of health-care services in the country.

106. With regard to social security, universal health insurance was introduced in 2017; this key reform has increased access to health care. The number of universal health insurance beneficiaries was approximately 350,000 in 2022, an increase of 35 per cent since 2018. The social health-care assistance programme (PASS) is the solidarity component of the universal health insurance scheme. This is a subsidized scheme that covers all those previously identified as having “no income”, the majority of whom are from the interior of the country. As of 2023, the number of beneficiaries is estimated at around 183,663.

107. In terms of health coverage, the Government has invested in the organization and strengthening of a health-care pyramid. The bed capacity of health-care facilities doubled between 2017 and 2022, as the number of facilities increased from 1,500 to 3,000. Efforts have focused on setting up regional hospitals, such as the one in Ali Sabieh, which opened in 2021 and covers the southern region, and the hospital in Tadjourah (in the north), which is currently under construction.

108. In terms of human resources, there has also been a significant increase in the number of medical and paramedical staff, from 887 in 2017 to 3,067 in 2022.

109. Since the creation of the Djibouti Medical School, the number of general practitioners and specialists in Djibouti has increased.

110. When it comes to managing acute malnutrition, the Government has focused on awareness-raising and education, as well as strengthening referral channels through community-based approaches to provide specialized nutritious foods in all health centres.

111. Acute malnutrition in children under the age of 5 fell nationwide from 17.8 per cent in 2018 to 10.1 per cent in 2022.

112. To ensure the health and well-being of every woman and newborn in Djibouti, the Government has undertaken targeted interventions to increase universal maternal and neonatal health coverage, offering high-quality continuous, integrated care in order to make the slogan “Survive, thrive and transform” a reality.

113. The country’s successful management of the COVID-19 pandemic has earned it worldwide praise. The appropriate measures were taken in time to contain the spread of the disease and preserve the health system, which in recent years has achieved encouraging results in maternal and child health, with a steady decline in maternal and infant mortality.

## **Right to education**

114. Mandatory schooling for children between the ages of 6 and 16 was introduced in 2000 with the adoption of the Education System Act.

115. Overall, school enrolment has increased significantly in Djibouti over the past 15 years. Student flow data show that the completion rate was 76 per cent at the lower-secondary

level and 65 per cent at the upper-secondary level in 2019, up from 50 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, in 2006.

116. The number of children enrolled in primary school increased by 10 per cent between the 2009/10 and 2019/20 school years. The increase was greater in the five regions (19 per cent) than in Djibouti City (7 per cent). The increase was particularly large in rural areas.

117. As of 2022, the number of schools operating in the country had risen to 334, an increase of 3 per cent since 2021, when the figure stood at 324.

118. In the 2021/22 school year, the breakdown of schools by level of education was as follows:

- Primary level: 210 schools – 156 public schools, 46 private French- and Arabic-speaking schools and 8 schools for refugees.
- Lower-secondary level: 78 schools – 42 public schools, 33 private schools and 3 schools in refugee camps (2 in the Ali-Sabieh region and 1 in the Obock region).
- Upper-secondary level: 46 schools – 22 public schools, 21 private schools and 3 schools in refugee camps.
- Technical education and vocational training: The number of students enrolled in technical education and vocational training rose by 3.7 per cent to 4,937, compared with 4,761 in 2020. This trend, with an average increase of 9 per cent over the 2015–2022 period, is the result of the current government policy aimed at reducing school dropout and combating juvenile delinquency and youth unemployment.

## **Rights of specific persons and groups**

### **Women’s rights**

119. There is strong political commitment at the highest level of the State to combat all forms of gender inequality and to promote the fundamental rights of Djiboutian women and girls.

120. Some of the most recent advances in this area are outlined below.

### **Participation in political and public life**

121. Between 2011 and 2017, the number of elected positions held by women in parliament increased from 9 to 17 (13 per cent to 26 per cent) and included a vice-president and chairs of standing committees such as the Commission on Laws and Human Rights.

122. Six of the 24 members of the current Government are women (25.07 per cent), which is a record for the country.

### **Women’s health**

123. The first National Strategy for Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality (2022–2026) was adopted in 2021 and targets the most vulnerable sectors of the population as well as covering reproductive and sexual health.

124. Women’s health is promoted by raising awareness of and preventing female genital cancers through the annual nationwide “Pink October” campaign.

125. A new state-of-the-art mammography department was established at the Housseina productive health referral centre in March 2021. The purpose of the centre is to provide high-quality, specialized reproductive health care, as well as to strengthen prevention and advocacy on behalf of Djiboutian women.

## **Education and literacy**

126. In terms of gender parity at school, parity has been achieved at primary level, as the ratio of girls to boys increased from 0.86 to 1 between 2009 and 2017. At secondary level, the ratio of girls to boys rose slightly, from 0.73 to 0.85.

127. In terms of women's literacy, there has been an increase in the number of women enrolled in the literacy programme, from 39.5 per cent in 2013 to 62 per cent in 2019.

## **Children's rights**

128. There have been substantial achievements in the area of children's rights, and progress has been made on several indicators.

129. The decrees on the establishment of the National Children's Rights Council and the National Child Protection Platform are further proof of the importance that the Djiboutian Government attaches to children as human capital and the driving force behind the country's future.

130. The Platform, which is used for coordination, collaboration and work, brings together eight ministries and three non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

131. A rapid assessment survey on children in street situations in the municipalities of Boulaos and Balbala was carried out on 13 and 14 March 2023.

132. Fourteen early learning centres are operational, catering for 504 children; girls account for approximately 43 per cent in the regions and 45 per cent in the capital.

133. A foster family programme has been set up so that vulnerable children can be cared for in volunteer families.

134. With regard to gender-based violence and female genital mutilation, the country's efforts over the last 20 years have borne fruit, and the prevalence rate of female genital mutilation has been steadily decreasing. According to the national survey on female genital mutilation and violence against women conducted in 2019, the national prevalence rate was 70.7 per cent among girls and women of all ages.

135. This rate is lower than in 2012, when the figure was 78.4 per cent. This decline is only observed in urban areas, where the prevalence rate fell from 78.5 per cent to 69.1 per cent between 2012 and 2019.

136. The prevalence rate remains stable in rural areas, at around 78 per cent. The 2019 survey shows that the prevalence rate among girls under the age of 10 is very low. In urban areas, the prevalence rate is 21 per cent, compared with 62 per cent in rural areas.

137. In order to reduce this persistently high prevalence rate, the Government has adopted a new strategy to end the practice of female genital mutilation, with a greater focus on rural areas.

## **Persons with disabilities**

138. Djibouti made a firm commitment to improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities on its territory by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010.

139. Pursuant to Act No. 15/AN/18/8ème L of 25 June 2018, the National Agency for Persons with Disabilities was created, with responsibility for coordinating all policies conducted by the various State institutions for persons with disabilities and fostering the promotion, participation and inclusion, on an equal basis with others, of persons with disabilities. Regional branches have been operational since November 2021.

140. Decree No. 2020-306/PRE of 2 December 2020 provided for the introduction of the inclusion mobility card, which grants holders a number of rights and benefits: free access to health care in public facilities, a social assistance allowance, facilitated access to public

transport and leisure activities, exemption from school fees, priority access to the nearest educational establishments and higher education grants, as well as priority access to housing.

141. The National Agency also offers persons with disabilities assistance in obtaining their driving licence and gives technical and financial support to the Centre for Orthopaedic Equipment and Rehabilitation for the provision of prostheses and wheelchairs adapted to each individual.

142. The National Disability Strategy 2021–2025 sets out a responsibility framework with common indicators for all departments to achieve sustainable progress and transformation in the handling of disability in all its diversity.

143. Act No. 151/AN/22/8ème L of 18 July 2022, repealing and replacing the provisions of Act No. 207/AN/17/7ème L on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Special Needs, and Act No. 168/AN/22/8ème L of 9 November 2022 on the Establishment of the Disability Support Fund have strengthened the applicable legal framework and contributed to greater recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities.

## **Refugees and asylum-seekers**

144. As a host country for many refugees and asylum-seekers, Djibouti has continued to consolidate refugees' access to their fundamental rights, in application of the legal instruments adopted in 2017, namely Act No. 159/AN/16/7ème L on the Status of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, and its two implementing decrees, No. 2017–409/PR/MI and No. 2017–410/PR/MI.

145. Djibouti grants *prima facie* status to Yemeni refugees and Somali asylum-seekers from south and central Somalia. Newly arrived asylum-seekers from Ethiopia, Somaliland, Puntland and Eritrea must follow individual refugee status determination procedures through the National Commission on Eligibility for Refugee Status. This commission is responsible for examining asylum-seekers applications in detail, and must decide each month whether or not to grant refugee status. Appeals may be lodged with the National Appeals Commission and the administrative court.

146. On the occasion of the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, Djibouti reiterated its commitment to refugees through their inclusion in the National Development Plan 2020–2024 and new commitments in terms of access to education, social benefits and work.

147. In accordance with the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education in the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, refugee and asylum-seeking children are included in the national education system. In 2020 and 2021, the first two classes of refugee secondary school students obtained their graduation certificates, in application of Decree No. 2020–234/PR/MENFOP, and entered higher education.

148. Since 2018, the Ministry of Health has been responsible for the health of refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Djibouti City and in the refugee villages of Ali Addeh, HollHoll and Markazi, in Obock. Each village has a health centre that provides primary health care, and a referral system is available for patients requiring higher-level care; refugees in urban areas have access to the same health-care facilities as Djiboutian citizens.

149. Also worth noting is the National Social Protection Strategy 2018–2022, as part of which 1,000 refugee and asylum-seeking households in urban areas received support in the form of food vouchers. Similarly, during the pandemic, an inclusive policy to combat COVID-19 was pursued, with every effort made to protect vulnerable refugees, including by setting up hospital services, installing additional beds and respirators, and distributing masks and rapid COVID-19 screening tests in the camps.

150. On another note, the inclusion and empowerment of refugees is ensured by the refugee card, which serves as a residence permit and work permit, so they are free to engage in self-employment or salaried work. The livelihood strategy in force between 2018 and 2022 helped to empower several dozen refugees by giving them access to vocational training in electricity, renewable energy, construction and entrepreneurship.

151. As part of its commitment to refugee issues, Djibouti plans to organize a national forum for the inclusion of refugees in December 2023 and intends to mobilize bilateral and multilateral partners to continue the awareness-raising work begun during the multiple workshops organized since 2018.

### **Internally displaced persons**

152. As a party to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, Djibouti recognizes and protects the rights of displaced persons.

### **Statelessness**

153. Djibouti continues to prevent statelessness at birth and, in accordance with its Nationality Code, grants Djiboutian nationality to any child born in Djibouti to unknown parents.

154. There are two implementing decrees: No. 2017-409/PR/MI setting out the rules of procedure, organization and functioning of the bodies responsible for managing the status of refugees in Djibouti, and No. 2017-410/PR/MI setting out the procedures for the exercise of fundamental rights by refugees and asylum seekers in Djibouti.

### **Migrants**

155. The commitments made by Djibouti at the time of the endorsement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018 were fulfilled in 2021 with the inauguration of the National Migration Coordination Office, established in 2019 pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 2019-279/PR/MI3. Under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, this Office is responsible for centralizing and coordinating all aspects of migration with the institutions and actors concerned. To this end, it is implementing the National Migration Strategy (2021–2026) as well as the Five-Year Action Plan (2022–2027) drawn up in close collaboration with the International Organization for Migration around three pillars.

- The first covers the strategic framework and security, the second protection and health, and the third development.
- On a related matter, a round table bringing together stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling was organized in July 2021 by the Ministry of Justice to consider the establishment of a working group to coordinate the national implementation of Act No. 133/AN/16-ème L of 24 March 2016 on the Fight against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.
- Pursuant to Decree no. 2023-043/PR/MJDH of February 2023 on the Organization, Powers and Functioning of the National Watchdog Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Related Practices, a body responsible for defining and overseeing the implementation of government guidelines, validating and assessing the proper implementation of various programmes and projects, and coordinating the activities of all stakeholders involved in the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling was created.

156. In addition to regular awareness-raising and training workshops on Act No. 133, a training manual has also been produced for border agents, criminal investigation officers and those involved in protecting victims of trafficking, to help them detect, identify and assist migrants who are victims of human trafficking. It complements the manual of standard operating procedures for the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking and migrant smuggling designed with the technical assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and organizes collaboration between the security forces and the judiciary.



157. The significant efforts made during the COVID-19 pandemic included setting up a quarantine centre for migrants, enhancing access to health services for vulnerable migrants, and putting in place epidemiological monitoring at the country's entry and transit points for the care of sick migrants.

## **Regions, territories and decentralization**

158. Since 2018, Djibouti has embarked on initiatives to develop the interior regions, where a third of the country's population lives. To achieve this objective, a road map has been drawn up to support decentralization.

159. This political will has paved the way for the creation of economic opportunities in rural areas, where poverty is particularly prevalent.

160. The regional development plan highlights the importance of creating socioeconomic infrastructure for these regions. Cognizant of the scale of the needs, the Government has mobilized its partners, notably the European Union, to obtain external funding to support these initiatives.

161. Through these concerted efforts, Djibouti is working to reduce socioeconomic disparities between regions and to offer new prospects to people living in rural areas. By promoting balanced development throughout the country, these initiatives help to strengthen social inclusion and improve living conditions for local communities.

162. This strong commitment to regional development is testimony to the Government's long-term vision and dedication to the well-being of the entire population.

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