



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
4 February 2013  
English  
Original: French

---

**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Sixteenth session**  
Geneva, 22 April–3 May 2013

## **National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\***

### **Djibouti**

---

\* The present document has been reproduced as received. Its content does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Methodology and consultation process .....	1–9	3
II. Legal and institutional framework .....	10–40	3
III. Promotion and protection of human rights in practice .....	41–73	7
A. Principle of non-discrimination and equality before the law .....	41–42	7
B. Right to life, liberty, security and physical integrity of the person .....	43–44	7
C. Right to a fair trial .....	45–48	8
D. Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment .....	49–52	8
E. Right to freedom of the press, expression and association .....	53–55	8
F. Right to an adequate standard of living .....	56–59	9
G. Right to work, social security and freedom of association .....	60–61	9
H. Right to education and culture .....	62–63	9
I. Right to housing and a healthy environment .....	64–73	10
IV. Follow-up and implementation of accepted recommendations .....	74–155	10
V. Best practices .....	156–158	20
VI. Difficulties and constraints .....		20
VII. Request for technical assistance .....		21

## **I. Methodology and consultation process**

1. This report was drawn up in accordance with the general guidelines for the preparation of reports submitted under the universal periodic review mechanism. It also takes into account resolution No. 16/21 of 25 March 2011 of the Human Rights Council, which in paragraph 6 states that the second and subsequent cycles of the review should focus, *inter alia*, on the implementation of the accepted recommendations and the development of the human rights situation in the State under review.
2. There were 37 recommendations made and accepted by our country during the first cycle of the universal periodic review mechanism, and they are dealt with in detail below.
3. During the dialogue, Djibouti undertook to consider eight recommendations and rejected four.
4. As is the case for all our reports for the treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council, this report was prepared and drawn up in a participatory and inclusive manner.
5. The process began in September 2012, after the mid-year break, with the establishment of an ad hoc committee to work on the recommendations mentioned above. For each recommendation, the State party's responses were compiled, analysed and formulated.
6. The outcome was submitted to the intersectoral committee for drafting and submitting reports to the treaty bodies.
7. The committee, which is coordinated by the department dealing with human rights, shared the outcome with others involved, including parliamentarians, local elected officials and civil society organizations.
8. It was only after these consultations took place that the Interministerial Committee began drafting this report.
9. Once the drafting was complete the report was validated at the national level and was submitted for adoption by the country's highest authorities.

## **II. Legal and institutional framework**

10. Djibouti is in East Africa, at the mouth of the Red Sea. Because of its location it plays an important role internationally, in particular in combating terrorism and piracy. Together with Yemen, it controls what is no doubt the seaway with the heaviest traffic in the world.
11. Djibouti has an area of 23,000 square kilometres and a relatively small population. According to the latest census, taken in 2009, it had 818,159 inhabitants.
12. The population is young, with 49.5 per cent under 20 years of age, and is distributed as follows:

Table 1  
Resident population, by region and type

Region	Urban population			Sedentary rural population	Nomadic population	Total population
	Regular	Special groups	Urban total			
Djibouti (city)	353 801	121 521	<b>475 322</b>			<b>475 322</b>
Ali Sabieh	22 630	15 309	<b>37 939</b>	11 977	37 033	<b>86 949</b>
Dikhil	19 347	5 539	<b>24 886</b>	22 510	41 552	<b>88 948</b>
Tadjourah	12 157	2 663	<b>14 820</b>	23 482	48 402	<b>86 704</b>
Obock	9 933	1 773	<b>11 706</b>	9 780	16 370	<b>37 856</b>
Arta	11 043	2 217	<b>13 260</b>	11 345	17 775	<b>42 380</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>428 911</b>	<b>149 022</b>	<b>577 933</b>	<b>79 094</b>	<b>161 132</b>	<b>818 159</b>

- Special groups: includes refugees, undocumented persons and people residing temporarily in the country (less than six months).

13. Djibouti is a relatively young country. In June 1977 it was one of the last African States to gain independence.

14. Djibouti is an exception in East Africa, which has constantly been the theatre of bloody civil wars and extremely adverse weather conditions that bring the region both flooding and drought.

15. After a time of single party rule, the country in 1992 adopted a Constitution that set up a State based on the rule of law and a pluralist democracy.

16. The Constitution also established the basic principles underpinning democracy.

17. These principles include:

- Respect for human rights;
- Equality before the law and non-discrimination; and
- Separation of powers.

18. The separation of powers is reflected in an executive and a legislative branch elected through universal suffrage and a judicial branch that is independent of the other two.

19. The Constitution was revised twice, in 2008 to establish the Court of Audit and in 2010 to abolish capital punishment. Such punishment had not been applicable since 1995, when a Criminal Code that did not include the death penalty had been adopted.

20. The 2010 revision also called for the establishment of a Senate, conferred the status of a constitutional body on the Ombudsman, whose office had been set up by an ordinary law in 1999, and reduced the term of office of the President from six years to five.

21. The adoption of the Constitution set the groundwork for the country to develop an extensive palette of laws that recognize and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms.

22. Djibouti is committed to these principles, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, whose provisions are an integral part of the country's Constitution.

23. To highlight still more the country's adhesion to these principles, the Constitution devotes a chapter to inherent human rights, thus guaranteeing:

- Equality before the law without distinction based on language, race, sex or religion;
  - The right to life, liberty, security and integrity of the person;
  - The presumption of innocence and the right to a fair and just trial;
  - The right to see a lawyer and a doctor in the event of arrest;
  - The prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention;
  - The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, worship and opinion;
  - The right to hold property and to the inviolability of the home;
  - The privacy of correspondence and freedom of movement;
  - Freedom of expression and association, the right to carry out trade union activities and the right to strike;
  - The prohibition of torture and inhuman, cruel, degrading or humiliating mistreatment or treatment.
24. Numerous other laws were subsequently enacted to give effect to the rights and liberties mentioned in the Constitution. Specifically, they address:
- Elections, which are founded on universal, direct suffrage expressed through a secret ballot;
  - Political parties, which must be organized democratically and without discrimination;
  - Freedom of communication, which ensures that each citizen has the right to “complete and objective information and the right to take part in information by exercising their fundamental freedoms of thought, opinion and expression enshrined in the Constitution”.
25. The Organic Act on Elections, which dated back to 1992, was revised in 2012 with the introduction of a measure of proportional representation in the legislative elections.
26. National law also includes second-generation rights, i.e., economic, social and cultural rights.
27. The Labour Code, which had dated back to the colonial period, was revised in 2006.
28. The new version sets out general principles such as the prohibition of forced labour, a minimum age for employment and non-discrimination, as well as aspects directly related to wage earners, relating for instance to notice of dismissal, paid leave and the right to join the trade union of one’s choice.
29. In the same spirit of individual welfare and fulfilment, the country strives to ensure that each child receives the education he or she needs through a policy of “universal and compulsory education through the age of 16”.
30. Health too is a priority of the Government. Act No. 48/AN/99/6 L sets out the main lines of health policy in the following terms: “The nation proclaims the right to health for all. Ensuring this right is a basic task of the State, which shall adopt the principles and the means required to fulfil this mission.”
31. The protection of human rights goes beyond the conventional limits referred to above; it takes into account the environment and sustainable development. The preamble, or rather the general introduction, of the Environment Code adopted in 2009 reads as follows: “The environment of Djibouti is a national treasure and an integral part of world heritage. Its preservation is thus of vital interest at the local, national, regional and

international levels in meeting the needs of current and future generations. The aim of this law is to establish basic rules and fundamental principles of national policy in the field of environmental protection and management so as to ensure sustainable development, in accordance with multilateral environment agreements. All citizens have the right to a healthy environment in the conditions set out by this law. This right goes hand in hand with the obligation to preserve and protect the environment.”

32. The Government has made unprecedented efforts to better protect groups that usually suffer from discrimination, such as women, children and disabled persons.

(a) For women, the country has acceded to or adopted the following instruments and policies:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Djibouti on 2 December 1998;
- Act of November 2002 establishing a quota system whereby at least 10 per cent of elected officials and persons in high posts of the State must be of either sex;
- Implementing decree of November 2008 for high posts of the State setting the minimum at 20 per cent;
- Act No. 65/AN/12/6 L of 2012 reorganizing the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Family Planning and for Parliamentary Affairs;
- Act No. 154/AN/12/6 L establishing a national gender policy (2011–2012).

(b) For children:

- Act ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990);
- Act instituting the Family Code (2002);
- Act ratifying the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the two protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2009);
- Act establishing juvenile courts (2009);
- National Strategic Action Plan for Children in Djibouti (2011–2016).

(c) For disabled persons:

- Act ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its protocol (2010);
- Act on trafficking in human beings (2007).

(d) For persons living with HIV/AIDS:

- Act No. 174/AN/07/5 L of 27 April 2007 on protective measures for persons living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups;
- Act No. 196/AN/07/5 L of 16 July 2007 establishing a solidarity fund for orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS.

33. The institutional framework for the protection of human rights is also ensured by the Constitution, which in article 8 sets out that “the institutions of the Republic shall allow for the normal and regular exercise of popular sovereignty and ensure the full enjoyment of public rights and freedoms”.

34. According to article 7 of the Constitution, these institutions are the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

35. The executive branch contributes to the protection of human rights through the role played by the Head of State, who is the guarantor of respect for the Constitution.

36. The various Government departments fully participate in the promotion and protection of human rights. The departments most active in this regard include those dealing with justice, health, education, the promotion of women and national solidarity.

37. The legislative branch is embodied in the National Assembly; it too has significant responsibilities. It alone adopts the legislation setting the rules for:

- The enjoyment and exercise of citizens' rights and civil rights; nationality; the status and security of persons; organization of the family; the system of property ownership and succession and contract law;
- Fundamental guarantees of the exercise of public freedoms and guarantees relating to constraints imposed by national defence considerations;
- The definition of crimes and misdemeanours and the penalties applicable to them and provisions relating to criminal procedures, amnesty, judicial procedures, the status of judges, ministerial officials and the legal and judicial professions and the prison regime;
- The fundamental principles of labour law, freedom of association and social security.

38. The judicial branch, which is independent of the other branches, also plays a crucial role. Judges who follow strictly only the law ensure respect for the rights and individual liberties of all.

39. Numerous other institutions also work with those listed above to form a framework for the protection of basic rights.

40. These include:

- The Constitutional Council, which ensures compliance with the Constitution. Any citizen may bring cases before this body if they believe that a text applied against them is at variance with the country's fundamental laws;
- The Office of the Ombudsman;
- The National Human Rights Commission.

### **III. Promotion and protection of human rights in practice**

#### **A. Principle of non-discrimination and equality before the law**

41. The ministry in charge of family matters and the other State structures concerned are working actively with NGOs engaged in this field to spread knowledge of the laws that have been adopted to give effect to this principle, which is enshrined in the Constitution and in the international instruments to which Djibouti is a party. Activities have been stepped up to raise public awareness of measures taken against discriminatory practices.

42. A law has already been adopted to end discrimination against women in respect of pensions and in other fields.

#### **B. Right to life, liberty, security and physical integrity of the person**

43. Djibouti already abolished the death penalty in 1995.

44. Progress has been made in guaranteeing these rights by strengthening the domestic legal framework through reforms to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure and through the adoption of specific laws.

### **C. Right to a fair trial**

45. In order to ensure equal access to justice by all, new courts created under the law on the organization of the judiciary are gradually being set up and are being given appropriate infrastructure that meets the standards in force. The administrative court, the juvenile court and personal status courts are some of the new judicial bodies that are already up and running.

46. The State is continuing to recruit and train judicial personnel. Between 2009 and 2012 over 30 judges, 20 clerks and a number of other judicial officials were recruited and trained, and new groups of police recruits were added to criminal investigation departments throughout the country.

47. Reforms of the Civil Code and of the civil, administrative, commercial and auditing procedures are currently under way or have been adopted with a view to strengthening the array of domestic laws.

48. Circuit courts have been set up to bring the justice system closer to the people in the remotest areas of the country. A reform has been initiated of the legal aid system to improve access to justice for the neediest population groups.

### **D. Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

49. This principle is enshrined in the Constitution. It is implemented by the country's jurisprudence and was mentioned in the previous report. It has been included in the draft reform of the Criminal Code and of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

50. Both these texts are now undergoing revision in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee against Torture and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture.

51. The texts now under consideration incorporate the definition of torture from article 1 of the Convention, recognize torture as a distinct offence and include other procedural rules to guarantee the rights of the defence.

52. Measures are being taken and considerable efforts are being made to improve the everyday life of persons in detention, to facilitate their access to drinking water and health care and to bring places of detention into line with international standards.

### **E. Right to freedom of the press, expression and association**

53. To promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the State is stepping up measures to develop information and communication technologies (ICT). An ICT department has been set up.

54. The High Communications Authority, the regulatory body for the media, guarantees and ensures freedom and protection of the press and of all means of mass communication, with due respect for the law. It ensures compliance with codes of ethics and rules of conduct for media professionals.

55. Professional organizations of persons working in the media also contribute to upholding ethical values in their field of work. Specifically, journalists' associations defend freedom of the press, protect the public's right to free, complete, honest and accurate information and monitor the security of journalists as they perform their duties.

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

56. For the authorities in Djibouti, it is a priority to reduce poverty, empower women and provide access to resources for all. The Government has thus implemented a series of measures to reduce imbalances in public financing and facilitate access to resources for all.

57. Specifically:

- A long-term planning study has been carried out under the title "Djibouti 2035". Its vision of the country emphasizes social welfare and presents Djibouti in 2035 as "a well-governed, united country, at peace and with a healthy and competitive economy, that serves as a beacon of cultural radiance and social well-being";
- Programming tools: A framework of expenditure in the middle term, with a programme budget and a communal development plan;
- State structure audits, strengthening of financial comptrollers, centralization of State resources with the Central Bank.

58. As part of its efforts to share wealth, the State is continuing to empower women through a programme of microcredit for the most indigent groups and of support for rural women, bringing them access to water and strengthening their ability to raise livestock.

59. Through the ministries in charge of family matters and national solidarity, the Government had also provided women in regions in the interior and in rural areas with social and financial support.

## **G. Right to work, social security and freedom of association**

60. Freedom of association is respected and recognized under the law, including the right to strike.

61. With regard to social security, the country's authorities are currently establishing universal health insurance, which inter alia will guarantee access to medical care for the neediest population groups.

## **H. Right to education and culture**

62. To ensure education for all by 2015 in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, allocations for education have increased and the provision of education free of charge is gradually being introduced.

63. Some of the measures taken to support free-of-charge kindergarten and primary school education include the following: increases in allocations for education; construction of classrooms; capacity-building for teachers; procurement of teaching materials; and contributions from technical and financial partners.

## I. Right to housing and a healthy environment

64. The State is continuing to implement measures that have been adopted in this field. As part of its national environment programme, the Government has developed a national strategy for wastewater management in urban areas. A construction project is currently under way to build 1,000 publicly subsidized homes.

65. *Rights of women and children and protection of the family, of elderly people and of disabled persons.*

66. Beginning in 2001, the National Strategy for the Integration of Women in Development was implemented with a view to ensuring gender equality and equity. The Strategy was the subject of a final evaluation on 22 and 23 February 2010, when the National Forum of Women of Djibouti held a session devoted to taking stock of its work. In light of the progress made during the decade of its activities, one of the Forum's recommendations called for the country to adopt a national gender policy.

67. The National Gender Policy for 2011 to 2021 was drawn up in a participatory and inclusive manner. It aims by the end of the decade to "make Djibouti an egalitarian society, without discrimination, where men and women with the necessary abilities in all fields of social, economic and political life work on an equal footing and in perfect harmony with the country's development".

68. The Policy has five strategic orientations: it seeks to establish a sociocultural, legal, economic, political and institutional environment conducive to gender equity and equality and to effective gender mainstreaming in development initiatives.

69. The Policy is a legally binding instrument.

70. The promotion and protection of human rights were strengthened with the drafting in 2010 of a National Strategic Action Plan for Children in Djibouti for 2011 to 2015. The Plan was drawn up in accordance with one of the recommendations issued in 2008 by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

71. A two-day workshop was held in November 2012 to assist in the implementation of the Plan. It raised awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the protection of children's rights among a pool of journalists.

72. To help overcome the taboo associated with violence against women, the Government, through the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, held a wide-scale public awareness campaign on types of gender violence, including marital or domestic abuse, rape and other kinds of violence.

73. Two guidebooks were produced and broadly circulated in 2010 and 2011. These included:

- Guidebook on violence, a practical guide intended for associations;
- Legal guidebook on gender violence, including female genital mutilation, a guide produced for the officers of the criminal investigation department.

## IV. Follow-up and implementation of accepted recommendations

### Recommendation 1: Submission of reports to the treaty bodies

74. Since February 2009, when the recommendations were drawn up, Djibouti has made a real effort to eliminate delays in the submission of reports to the treaty bodies.

75. In August 2010 it submitted to the respective bodies the following reports:

- Report on implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the core document and the report on implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The latter was submitted to the Committee against Torture in November 2011.

76. In July 2011 Djibouti also submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women its report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

77. Lastly, in January 2012 Djibouti submitted to the Human Rights Committee its report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### **Recommendation 2: Establishment of an independent body to ensure respect for the rights of the child**

78. In October 2010 the country adopted a National Strategic Action Plan for Children in Djibouti.

79. This Plan, which was adopted using a participatory, concerted and analytical approach, is aimed at establishing a protective environment for all children, conducive to the realization of basic rights and capable of ensuring fair access to basic social services for all.

80. Four main areas of action were defined to achieve this objective:

- Survival of the child;
- Development of the child;
- Protection of the child;
- Lastly, participation.

81. The Plan has an institutional framework that includes:

- A National Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- A steering committee for the National Strategic Action Plan;
- A technical committee.

82. The various roles are defined by a decree adopted by the Council of Ministers.

### **Recommendations 3 and 4: Ratification of human rights conventions**

83. Djibouti on 30 September 2011 ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

84. Djibouti is currently carrying out the necessary consultations for the ratification of the two basic human rights conventions that it has still not ratified:

- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

85. On the other hand, the country in 2010 ratified:

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthening of the capacity of the National Human Rights Commission**

86. In April 2012 the Government adopted a decree guaranteeing that the members of the National Human Rights Commission would have the necessary independence and immunity to carry out their duties.

87. It is also now in the process of revising all the texts governing the Commission so as to bring them into line with the Paris Principles.

88. The Commission's capacities have been built up both by the State and by technical and financial partners. It now has a financed budget, appropriate premises and a staff.

89. Members of parliament are now preparing a bill to replace the decree that established the Commission. It should be adopted this year. The new law will bring the Commission into line with the Paris Principles, thus also making it possible for the Commission to join the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions.

90. The Commission has actively taken part in the drafting of periodic reports and the report for the universal periodic review mechanism, within the Interministerial Committee.

91. It has held numerous workshops specifically for journalists, judges and lawyers and for members of civil society organizations as part of its effort to raise awareness and familiarize people with the principles of human rights.

**Recommendation 6: Birth registration**

92. The registration of children born at hospital is systematic and does not pose a problem. Staff from the civil registry office visit the country's maternity wards every day to register births, which are later reported in the national birth certificate registry. The parents then declare the births with the civil registry office, which issues them with birth certificates.

93. Difficulties arise, however, when a child is born outside a hospital, be it in an urban or a rural area.

94. In such cases, the parents have one month to declare the birth with the civil registry clerk. The birth is then registered by the clerk.

95. According to the law currently in force, if the birth is not declared within a month the parents must request a late-issue birth certificate. Such certificates are issued after an on-site inquiry and are later entered into the national birth registry.

96. Both the authorities and the community are increasingly protective of the right of children to birth registration – the very first “right” of the child once he or she arrives in the world.

97. The Government frequently carries out mobilization activities aimed at informing people about the importance of this right and at teaching them how to go about obtaining a late-issue birth certificate.

98. The community takes part in these activities as well, through the community programme for the promotion and protection of human rights, which has been implemented since 2007.

99. Lastly, since 2009 the service provided by the national civil registry office has been computerized, and the civil registries are now in digital format. Birth certificates can thus be issued quickly.

**Recommendation 7: Child labour**

100. Child labour, sexual exploitation and begging by children are to a great extent a result of poverty.

101. The efforts made to implement programmes to reduce poverty and fight unemployment, together with the National Strategic Action Plan for Children in Djibouti, will make it possible to step up the efforts already under way in these different fields.

**Recommendations 8 and 32: Literacy**

102. There is still a need to support literacy, although support from partners is drying up.

103. To reduce illiteracy among girls and women, the Government, through the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, and with support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), started a pilot literacy project in rural areas in the national languages. Thirty women received literacy instruction at sites in each of the country's five regions in the interior. This effort will be generalized following an assessment of the pilot project.

**Recommendations 9 and 10: Strengthening of education, parity between girls and boys, access to and improvement of education**

104. The national education master plan for 2010 to 2019 addresses the recommendations in question.

105. In respect of disparities between girls and boys, specifically in basic education, objective number 2 of the master plan calls for "the elimination of disparities between the sexes in primary and secondary education by 2015, and the establishment of equality in this field by 2019".

106. Another objective of the master plan is the provision of education for all. The Government is aiming to reach the target of 100 per cent school enrolment for primary school by 2015, and a 90 per cent gross enrolment ratio for ages 11 to 14 by 2019.

107. Current trends are moving towards these forecasts. In 2012 the parity rate stood at 0.88 between girls and boys, with boys more numerous.

108. The gross enrolment ratio has increased by 10 per cent in five years; in 2012 it stood at 78.2 per cent, as against 67.9 per cent in 2008.

Table 2

**Trends in the gross intake ratio and the gross enrolment ratio**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross intake ratio</i>	<i>Gross enrolment ratio</i>
2003–2004	50.7%	49.5%
2004–2005	57.0%	51.5%
2005–2006	64.6%	54.6%
2006–2007	68.5%	57.8%
2007–2008	76.9%	68.3%
2008–2009	76.3%	67.9%
2009–2010	73.6%	72.9%
2010–2011	76.8%	75.0%
2011–2012	76.0%	78.2%

*Six objectives  
of the 2010–2019 national education master plan*

- 1. Together with the private sector, associations and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, develop preschool education by focusing the efforts of the Ministry of National Education on poor children and children in rural areas.*
- 2a. Achieve the objective of 100 per cent enrolment in primary education by 2015 and a 90 per cent gross enrolment ratio for children aged 11 to 14 by 2019.*
- 2b. Eliminate disparities between the sexes in primary and secondary education by 2015 and ensure equality in this field by 2019.*
- 3. Ensure that 100 per cent of pupils at basic education schools have a mastery of 80 per cent of the knowledge and competencies set out by the curriculum for languages mathematics, sciences and life competencies.*
- 4. Reform secondary education and technical and vocational teaching and training, with a view to ensuring excellence and the relevance of such training to the labour market.*
- 5. Improve the quality and relevance of higher education and university research in all their aspects.*
- 6. Improve governance at all levels so as to ensure effective and efficient management of the quality of services provided and the use of resources.*

- Ministry for the Promotion of Women: the department in question has since May 2011 been called the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Family Planning.
- Ministry of National Education and Higher Education: This department has now been divided in two: the Ministry of Basic Education and the Ministry of Higher Education.

**Recommendations 11 and 12: Female genital mutilation**

109. The issue of female genital mutilation and gender violence is a major concern for the Government and for the national community in its entirety.

110. Implementation is continuing of the national strategy for the total elimination of all forms of excision, which was adopted in 2006, as follows:

- In 2009 a law was adopted strengthening penalties against persons carrying out this practice and their accomplices;
- A communication strategy was drawn up and launched in 2009 for the total elimination of all forms of excision; it has four major themes:
  - Communication and mobilization in society;
  - Formal and informal education;
  - Accompanying measures; and
  - Institutional capacity-building.

- A national committee for the total elimination of all forms of excision was set up by presidential decree in 2009 and placed under the aegis of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women;
- In 2010, 35 male and 30 female members of the clergy were given training with the aim of establishing a core of religious leaders to take part in the dialogue on this question;
- In July 2011, 99 communities in the capital city and the country's regions publicly committed themselves to eliminating all forms of excision;
- Constant mobilization activities (workshops, radio and television programmes, plays, skits) have been carried out, with strong support from technical and financial partners.

**Recommendation 13: Non-discrimination and strengthening of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women**

111. The principle of non-discrimination is guaranteed by the Constitution.
112. The need for women to contribute as much to national development as men is recognized at the highest decision-making level.
113. The main objective of the National Strategy for the Integration of Women in Development implemented between 2000 and 2010 was to empower women in the four priority areas of health, education, decision-making and economic activity.
114. The various measures taken by the Government have made it possible to achieve significant progress, in particular in terms of health, education and decision-making.
115. The gender gap is narrowing. Implementation of the National Gender Policy Action Plan for the period from 2011 to 2021 will make it possible to continue efforts along the same lines.
116. Girls are completing their studies with increasing frequency. They are thus able to participate in the labour market on the same footing as their male counterparts.

**Recommendations 15 and 1: Strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Health**

117. A considerable effort has been made to strengthen the capacities and competencies of mother and child health-care programmes in the context of work to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.
118. This commitment has resulted in the following achievements:
- Increase in prenatal and postnatal consultations;
  - Reduction of in-hospital mortality;
  - Increase in antenatal care (from 63.60 per cent to 87.27 per cent);
  - Reduction of maternal mortality (from 546 per 100,000 in 2002 to 300 per 100,000 in 2011);
  - Increase in vaccination coverage;
  - Reduction of the infant mortality and child and infant mortality rates respectively from 67 and 93 per 1,000 live births in 2006. A study is currently under way and will provide figures for 2012.
119. To reduce the population's mortality rate, the Ministry of Health increased health coverage in terms of staff, infrastructure, medicines and human resources, taking into

consideration the geographic health services plan and the national development policy for health.

120. At the same time, the Ministry of Health is continuing its efforts to bring health structures closer to the people in populated areas and to reduce the dependence of the interior regions on facilities in the capital.

121. Some regional hospitals have thus been built, and others are under consideration.

122. Such facilities are equipped with high-level technical means covering the following services: internal medicine, paediatrics, gynaecology and obstetrics, emergency treatment and intensive care, and other specialties. These will assist in meeting needs for referrals and counter-referrals to and from primary health-care facilities in each region, in accordance with the standards established by the geographic health services plan.

123. A large number of health posts have been built in rural areas with a view to implementing the policy aimed at providing health services locally.

124. Strategies have been launched to set up mobile health teams in the health system so as to gain access to people in the most secluded areas and to nomads.

125. The Ministry of Health has also established programmes to effectively combat communicable diseases so as to reduce the population's mortality and morbidity rates. For example, in efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, voluntary screening has been extended through diagnostic and case-management teams operating in all the country's regions. Until 2005 such screening had been available only in the city of Djibouti. This has made it possible since 2003 to stabilize the prevalence of HIV at 2.9 per cent.

126. Activities to fight tuberculosis are quickly and effectively being decentralized, as the number of direct observation diagnostic and therapeutic centres has risen from 8 to 20. Despite the high quality of case management, prevalence of the disease is high in Djibouti owing to the presence of people displaced from neighbouring countries.

127. To control malaria, insecticide-impregnated bednets have been distributed more widely to the public, and at the same time vector-control activities have been carried out throughout the country.

128. This coordinated and simultaneous action has made it possible to halt the propagation of malaria. The country is now in a transitional phase aimed at the complete elimination of the disease.

129. The Ministry of Health is also working to reduce mortality resulting from lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

130. A health policy cannot be developed without a genuine human resource development strategy.

131. Human resources are involved in the three levels of the health pyramid; it is human resources that ensure not only that the reform will be implemented, but also and above all that quality care can continue to be provided.

132. To achieve these objectives, the Ministry of Health is:

- Recruiting foreign specialized doctors;
- Strengthening the initial training programmes at the faculty of medicine and at the paramedic health training institute;
- Stepping up the recruitment of paramedics;
- Training doctors from Djibouti in specializations and in public health;

- Increasing and harmonizing remuneration;
- Raising low-end salaries.

133. The planning for the period from 2013 to 2017 places priority on the implementation of a health sector human resources development strategy.

134. The staff at the Ministry of Health is constantly growing. It rose from 509 in 1999 to 2,353 in 2012.

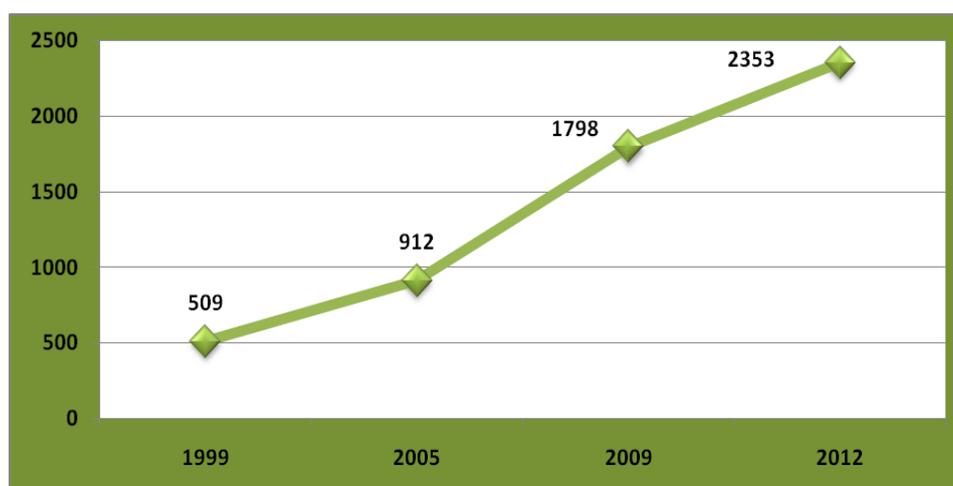
Table 3

**Medical and paramedical staff with diplomas**

	<i>Year</i>		<i>Planned</i>
	<i>1999</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013–2017</i>
General practitioners	23	149	75
Specialist doctors	10	58	13
State certified nurses	53	285	207
State certified midwives	31	175	114
State certified laboratory assistants	15	75	63
Advanced technicians	10	260	171

Figure 1

**Ministry of Health staff, 1999–2012**



**Recommendations 17 and 18: Poverty reduction and right to food**

135. Combating poverty and unemployment is beyond any doubt the first priority of the Government, which in 2007 launched the National Social Development Initiative.

136. The Initiative was designed and is being implemented in an inclusive and participatory manner; it focuses on four strategic themes:

- Access to basic social services;
- Reconstruction of the country's production base to create the necessary jobs in sufficient numbers to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment;
- Assistance for persons with high vulnerability or with special needs; and

- Good governance.

137. Specifically, to meet the commitments thus undertaken, the Government intends to draw up and broadly introduce social safety nets as an original mechanism providing social protection.

138. This mechanism, which is fairly new, is aimed at three population categories:

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women and their young children;
- Persons unfit for work and who are not covered by the social security system;
- Lastly, persons fit for work but who are relatively or completely unskilled.

139. Along with the policy of social safety nets, a microfinance policy has been drawn up for the benefit of the most impoverished households.

140. The microfinance policy has already produced some benefits and positive results. For example, in 2012 some 15,000 households received food supplies during the seasonal food shortfall period and during Ramadan.

141. In urban areas, 3,021 households in need of food received assistance through a food stamp programme.

142. A stonemasonry project has been developed in urban and rural areas to establish income-generating activities for vulnerable people with very little or no skills.

#### **Recommendations 18 to 22: Capacity-building in the justice system and improvement of access to justice**

143. After a decade in which the human and material capacities of the justice system have been strengthened, the Government has since 2010 been drawing attention to the importance of ensuring access to justice for all, and in particular for the most disadvantaged. Three basic measures have been taken to achieve this objective.

144. In 2011 a law was adopted on legal aid, thanks to which it is now possible to ensure that the most disadvantaged can receive support from the State allowing them to defend their rights.

145. Since 2011 circuit court hearings have been organized, thus making up for a lack of courts in the interior regions. The entire staff of the competent court relocates to the main town of a region, where the court holds its sessions and settles disputes submitted for its consideration.

146. This initiative, supported by the United Nations Development Programme, has successfully addressed — albeit temporarily — a form of injustice that had affected citizens in the regions in question.

147. Another measure that significantly helped make the justice system more accessible to citizens was the establishment in 2012 of a welcome and guidance service at the Ministry of Justice.

148. As its name indicates, the aim of this service is to provide citizens, many of whom are unaware of their rights and do not know where and with whom they should apply for service from the justice system, with information and guidance.

#### **Recommendations 24 to 34: International cooperation**

149. As soon as Djibouti accepted the universal periodic review mechanism (17–18 February 2009) the Government and the United Nations system (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, the United Nations Development

Programme and the United Nations Population Fund) signed a biennial workplan entitled “Djibouti Government Human Rights Support Programme for the National Human Rights Commission, civil society and the police, the prison administration, lawyers and gendarmes”.

150. This joint programme of work is based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, or in other words it is based primarily on the Government’s development priorities.

151. The programme, which has regularly been renewed, has highlighted a number of desired outcomes:

- Building the capacities of the National Human Rights Commission and civil society;
- Human rights mobilization activities for the public, the national police, judges and lawyers, etc.; and
- Elimination of delays in the submission of reports and submission of six reports to the treaty bodies for each programme term (of two years).

152. Some major efforts have been made to achieve these results. Several training events have been held for the members of the National Human Rights Commission and the Interministerial Committee, as follows:

- Techniques for drafting and submitting reports to the treaty bodies (March 2009);
- Basic training on United Nations human rights protection mechanisms, including the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (September 2010);
- Basic training on reporting techniques for human rights violations (September 2010).

153. These training activities provided the necessary tools for the Interministerial Committee to eliminate the country’s delays in presenting reports to the treaty bodies.

154. Essential training was also provided to others involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the following events:

- From 8 to 11 November 2010, a human rights awareness-raising workshop was held for representatives of the national police, the gendarmerie and the prison guard service;
- On 22 and 23 January 2012, a training workshop was held for judges and lawyers on judicial procedures and human rights;
- On 5 and 6 November 2012, a training workshop was held on the role of journalists in the promotion and protection of human rights.

155. With the general aim of promoting and protecting human rights, Djibouti is also cooperating with other partners both multilaterally and bilaterally. It is thus cooperating with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the International Organization for Migration on questions relating to migration and trafficking in persons.

## **V. Best practices**

### **A. Seminars on Government activities**

156. These events are held periodically and are chaired by the country's President. They bring together members of the Government, the National Assembly and regional and communal councils, as well as representatives of the private sector and professional and trade union organizations, members of the army and the national police, persons from State technical services and departments and civil society and eminent figures from traditional circles and from the regions. The events have a dual purpose:

- To meet the obligation to report on Government activities; and
- To encourage a dialogue between the Government and the people being governed.

### **B. National seminar on strengthening of integrity and combating corruption**

157. This event is similar to the one described above.

### **C. Community management committees**

158. These are groups of community members who are trained in human rights and who have been assigned the task of working with others involved in tackling such problems as development, the environment, harmful practices and any other subject related to human rights.

### **D. Units assigned to work on human rights within the law enforcement command structures**

### **E. Involvement of religious leaders in the promotion and protection of human rights**

### **F. Head of State Award for the Advancement of Women**

## **VI. Difficulties and constraints**

- (a) Lack of human and material resources;
- (b) Difficulties encountered in establishing synergy between those involved in promoting and protecting human rights;
- (c) Weakness of technical, human and financial means available to the national statistics agency, in particular in respect of analysis;
- (d) Lack of sectoral statistics;
- (e) Sluggish change in mentalities regarding women's rights, female genital mutilation, early marriage and the perception of the role and place of women.

## **VII. Request for technical assistance**

- (a) Strengthening of public bodies involved in the promotion and protection of human rights;
  - (b) Strengthening of the national statistics agency;
  - (c) Capacity-building for the Interministerial Committee for the drafting and submission of reports;
  - (d) Strengthening of the National Human Rights Commission and of civil society.
-