



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Combined second and third periodic reports submitted by the Dominican Republic under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2019^{*}, ^{**}

[Date received: 30 October 2023]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The present document was submitted pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure. It contains the responses of the State party to the Committee's list of issues prior to reporting ([CRPD/C/DOM/QPR/2-3](#)).



A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 1 (a) of the list of issues (CRPD/C/DOM/QPR/2-3)

Measures taken to implement recommendations made by the Committee (CRPD/C/DOM/QPR/2-3)

1. The Dominican Republic maintains its commitment to ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of their disability status. The Government has continued to analyse the country's legal and regulatory framework with a view to harmonizing legislation and enacting inclusive laws and standards.
2. Support has been provided to the committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Dominican Republic in order to ensure that an inclusive, rights-based approach is taken to matters relating to persons with disabilities.
3. In June 2023, the executive branch enacted Act No. 34–23 on services, inclusion and protection for persons with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This law is based on five principles: autonomy, equality, inclusion, cooperation and participation.
4. Act No. 43–23 accords official recognition to sign language in the Dominican Republic. It was enacted by the executive branch in response to the need to recognize and promote sign language in the Dominican Republic as an affirmative action measure aimed at reducing communication barriers and ensuring the integration of deaf persons into their family and community as well as their social, labour, economic, cultural and political integration.
5. In 2020, seven years after the enactment of Act No. 5–13, the general law on equal rights of persons with disabilities, steps began to be taken to establish the governing bodies of the National Council on Disability (CONADIS).

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 1 (b) of the list of issues

Promotion of non-profit organizations of persons with disabilities

6. In accordance with resolution No. 02/2022, which provided for the establishment of the National Centre for the Promotion and Development of Non-Profit Associations, CONADIS promotes, encourages and facilitates the institutional strengthening of non-profit organizations that provide services to persons with disabilities and those that are formed by persons with disabilities and their families. CONADIS also offers technical support for their activities and projects and co-signs agreements for the development of programmes of benefit to society.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 1 (c) of the list of issues

Incorporation of inclusive strategic action lines in the National Development Strategy covering the period up to 2030

7. The National Development Strategy establishes four strategic lines of action, with their corresponding objectives and sets of measures, which define the development model that the Dominican Republic is seeking to establish and are to be the focus of its public policies. The second strategic line of action is aimed at building a society with equal rights and opportunities for all in which education, healthcare, decent housing and quality basic services are guaranteed for every member of the population and in which reducing poverty and social inequality is a priority.
 - General objective 2.1. Quality education for all
 - General objective 2.2. Comprehensive healthcare and social security coverage
 - General objective 2.3. Equal rights and opportunities

- General objective 2.4. Territorial cohesion
- General objective 2.5. Decent housing in healthy surroundings
- General objective 2.6. National culture and identity in a globalized world

8. The National Development Strategy establishes specific objectives and courses of action oriented towards persons with disabilities. They include measures aimed at ensuring universal inclusive education and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. (See annex 2 – Identification of inclusive strategic lines of action in the National Development Strategy oriented towards persons with disabilities.)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 2 (b) of the list of issues

Participation of persons with disabilities in the structure of CONADIS

9. In 2020, seven years after the enactment of Act No. 5-13, the general law on equal rights of persons with disabilities, steps began to be taken to establish the governing bodies of the National Council on Disability (CONADIS). The National Board of Directors of CONADIS was established first, followed by the National Executive Committee in 2021. Both the Board and the Committee are collegiate bodies that include representatives of both the State and civil society. CONADIS was then reorganized in accordance with the provisions set out in the aforementioned law.

10. The National Board of Directors is made up of 32 institutions, 18 of which are integrated with institutions formed by persons with disabilities and institutional service providers for persons with disabilities. The National Executive Committee is made up of 10 institutions, 8 of which are organizations of persons with disabilities and organizations providing services for this sector of the population.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 2 (b) of the list of issues

Participation of persons with disabilities in the structure of CONADIS

11. CONADIS provides support to civil society organizations to enable them to qualify for State-subsidized funding. The number of non-profit associations that qualify for and are receiving government funds has been increasing year by year. As of 2022, 86 such associations had qualified for funding, and 39 of them were receiving grant funds. Currently, there are 90 qualified non-profit associations, and 48 of them are receiving such funds.

12. The following non-profit associations are specifically dedicated to serving women and girls with disabilities:

1. Círculo de Mujeres con Discapacidad (Circle of women with disabilities)
2. Red LUNA de Mujeres Dominicanas con Discapacidad Visual (LUNA network of Dominican women with visual impairments)
3. Fundación las Guerreras Sobre Ruedas RD (Dominican women warriors on wheels foundation)
4. Fundación Nido para Ángeles (Nest for angels foundation)
5. Fundación Dominicana Unidos Frente al Autismo, Inc. (United autism foundation of the Dominican Republic, incorporated)
6. Fundación Dominicana de Autismo, Inc. (Dominican autism foundation, incorporated)
7. Instituto de Ayuda al Sordo Santa Rosa, Inc. (Santa Rosa Institute for the assistance of the deaf, incorporated)
8. Asociación Pro-Educación del Sordo, Inc. (Association for the education of deaf persons, incorporated)
9. Asociación Dominicana de Síndrome de Down (Dominican Down syndrome association)

10. Atención a Necesidades Especiales Asociadas a Discapacidad Auditiva o Física (Meeting special needs associated with hearing or physical disabilities)
11. Centro Alternativo Experimental del Sordo (Alternative experimental centre for the deaf)

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

Denial of reasonable accommodation as a prohibited form of discrimination on the basis of disability

13. Article 4 (7) of Act No. 5-13 defines “discrimination on the basis of disability” as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”. Accordingly, a denial of reasonable accommodation that results in a lack of universal accessibility constitutes an act of discrimination by virtue of its exclusionary effect.

14. Article 336 of the Dominican Criminal Code establishes that: “Any distinction made between natural persons on the basis of their origin, age, sex, family status, health status, disability, customs, political opinions, union activities, occupation, real or supposed membership or non-membership in a specific ethnic group, nation, race or religion constitutes discrimination.” This applies to any distinction made between legal persons as well. The Criminal Code also establishes the penalties to be imposed when an act of discrimination as defined in that article is committed.

15. Finally, article 74 (3) of the Dominican Constitution establishes that human rights treaties, covenants and conventions signed and ratified by the Government of the Dominican Republic have constitutional status and are directly and immediately applicable by the courts and other organs of the State.

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

16. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs, as the lead agency for mainstreaming the gender equality approach throughout the public administrative structure, has developed the plans described in the following paragraphs with the aim of establishing an equality policy.

17. The National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2020–2030 establishes disability as one of the seven cross-cutting lines of action that have been incorporated into all parts of the plan and, accordingly, a number of measures place special emphasis on addressing the needs of women with disabilities and ensuring that they have access to the full enjoyment of their rights on an equal basis. Persons with disabilities, and especially women with disabilities, are therefore included in the Plan’s seven cross-cutting lines of action:

1. Education for equality
2. Comprehensive healthcare for women
3. Economic autonomy
4. Citizenship, democracy and political and social participation
5. Violence against women
6. Gender equality and environment
7. Digital technologies for women’s empowerment.

18. The National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2020–2030 has three specific indicators related to women with disabilities:

- 2.3.4 Proportion of women of childbearing age (15–49 years) with disabilities who receive preventive and sexual and reproductive healthcare services suited to their needs
- 3.4.3 Percentage of the total number of people covered by the old age, disability and survivors' insurance plan who are women
- 4.1.6 List of awareness campaigns concerning the rights of women living with disabilities

19. In the area of violence against women, the Strategic Plan for a Violence-Free for Women was approved and launched by an expanded Council of Ministers. The Plan is based on a differential approach that recognizes the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women with disabilities who experience gender-based violence. The Strategic Plan establishes that services must be provided in a manner that is sensitive to the context and profile of women in situations of violence.

20. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has provided sign language training to a total of 42 people, including personnel working with victims of violence. It has also ensured the physical accessibility of the safe houses that serve as secure, confidential temporary shelters for women victims of violence and their children under 14 years of age. The shelters have ramps to ensure their accessibility for people with physical-motor disabilities. In addition, wheelchairs, crutches and walkers have been acquired and are available for women and their children if they need them.

21. To combat the prejudice and stigma to which women with disabilities may be particularly subject, the Ministry of Women's Affairs carries out various awareness-raising and training efforts. In September 2021, the Bimonthly Meeting on Gender and Disability was held. The Meeting's objectives were to provide an opportunity for participants to reflect upon, analyse and deepen the scope of research on gender and disability, to identify and understand relevant issues and to provide an opportunity for participants to work together to devise means of putting an end to the multiple forms of discrimination and violence experienced by women with disabilities.

Women's housing allowance (*Bono Mujer*)

22. The Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Dominican Republic has instituted the *Bono Mujer*, which covers between 8 and 12 per cent of the total cost of a housing unit, so that more women can have a decent dwelling of their own. This assistance is provided in addition to other housing allowances made available by the Dominican Government, such as a moving allowance (*Bono Inicial*), a continuing housing allowance (*Bono Tasa*) and a tax-based allowance (*Bono ITBIS*). To date, 55 women with disabilities or dependants with disabilities have received the *Bono Mujer* to help them attain independence and economic autonomy.

National Policy on Caregiving

23. One of the commitments made in the National Multi-Year Public Sector Plan is the establishment of a national caregiving system. This is also the objective of one of the high-priority programmes in the 2022 budget bill.

24. The establishment of the Intersectoral Panel on Caregiving is a key step towards the fulfilment of the commitment to work to build a national caregiving system made in the Government's 2020–2024 programme. This commitment forms part of its broader policies on equal opportunities, gender equality and women's empowerment, with special emphasis on poor and vulnerable households, young children, people in situations of dependency, older adults and persons with disabilities.

25. This policy is set out in the 2021 report entitled "*Comunidades de cuidado: construyendo una política nacional de cuidados con los actores del territorio*" (Communities of care: building a national caregiving policy with the people of the nation). The objectives of the Communities of Care pilot project, which was launched in 2022, are to move

caregiving into the formal sector of the economy and to afford social security coverage for certified caregivers through home care services. A first training curriculum on the care of persons with disabilities has been developed in order to further the professionalization of caregiving.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 5 of the list of issues

Policies based on the principle of the best interests of the child and guarantees for the rights of persons with disabilities

26. The National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) administers the National Protection System for Children and Adolescents, which is designed to implement and strengthen the Foster Care Programme with a view to ensuring the enjoyment of the right to live in a family. An internal specialized foster care protocol is to be developed for the placement of children and adolescents with health conditions or disabilities.

27. There are three specialized Regime II non-profit associations working with the Protection System to run government-funded programmes to ensure residential care for children and adolescents with disabilities. These programmes are housing 96 children and adolescents and providing them with medical care, physical and occupational therapy, food, schooling and recreational activities.

National System for Protection and Integrated Early Childhood Services

28. Act No. 342–22 was promulgated by the executive branch to provide the necessary authorization for the development of the National System for Protection and Integrated Early Childhood Services and the establishment of the National Institute for Comprehensive Early Childhood Services (INAIPI) to assist the country’s most vulnerable children and families.

29. INAIPI offers early stimulation services, early education, support and at-home care. It works to foster good parenting practices and assigns mentors for families with children up to the age of 1 year old and women with high-risk pregnancies in order help to ensure their access to public services. The approach used by the Institute ensures the inclusion of children and contributors with disabilities.

National Fund for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities

30. The Office for Children and Adolescents (GANA), the “Get Ahead” (Supérate) Programme and CONADIS launched the National Fund for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities in December 2022. The Fund will help to improve the quality of life of this population and to ensure its members’ access to services and support to meet their basic needs.

31. The Fund includes a conditional cash transfer component to provide social protection services to children and adolescents with severe disabilities in the Dominican Republic. A total of 2,000 people have qualified for assistance from the Fund, and 59 per cent of them are already receiving cash transfers. CONADIS is working in synergy with its partner institutions to increase the efficiency of the relevant processes and expand its assistance to the target population.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 6 of the list of issues

Disability awareness programmes

32. CONADIS conducts a programme designed to raise awareness in Dominican society about the rights of persons with disabilities. This programme contributes to efforts to:

- Build a more inclusive form of citizenship

- Do away with all aspects of the charity-based culture
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities
- Strengthen the full enjoyment of their rights by all persons with disabilities and promote respect for their dignity

33. The CONADIS workshop on respectful treatment is primarily aimed at the staff of public and private organizations and is designed to ensure that the persons with disabilities whom they serve will receive the same treatment as everyone else. These workshops are conducted in both in-person and virtual formats. The virtual workshops are delivered in two ways: (1) pre-recorded courses on the Academia CONADIS platform; and (2) real-time workshops delivered via online platforms.

34. The following table shows the number of workshops held in the last three years.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of institutions</i>	<i>Workshops</i>	<i>Participants</i>
2021	44	87	2 475
2022	172	172	5 392
2023	53	135	5 211

35. In order to promote the use of the correct disability-related terms, a terminology guide is included in the various training and instructional modules delivered by CONADIS.

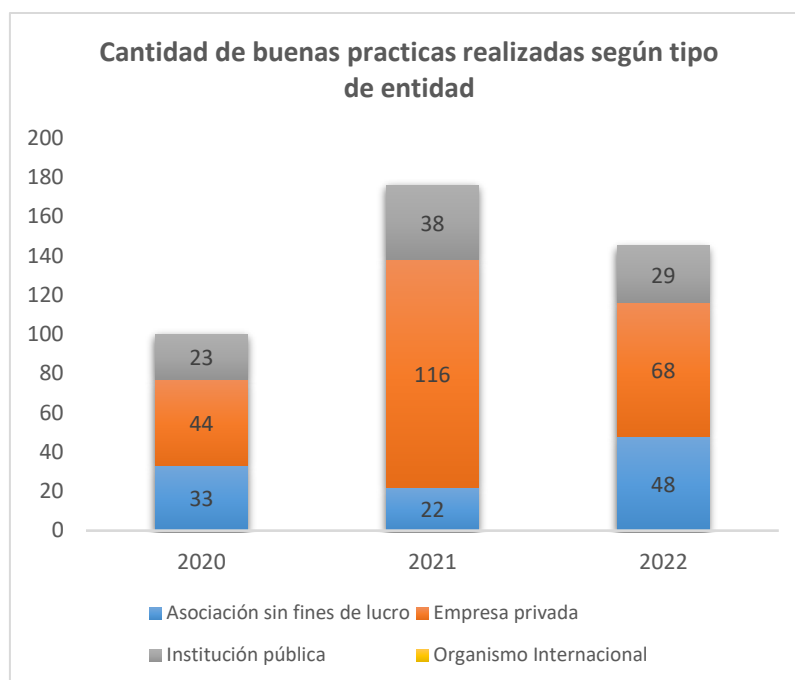
36. CONADIS has promoted and carried out multiple campaigns focused on educating people and raising their awareness regarding disability issues. These initiatives have been publicized on digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The most noteworthy campaigns have included the following:

- Use of appropriate terminology: Educating the public about the importance of the type of language used when referring to persons with disabilities and promoting the use of respectful and accurate terms
- The CONADIS glossary of terms: Providing a complete guide to commonly used terms relating to disability and promoting their correct use throughout society
- #ConadisSomosTodos: Raising awareness of the challenges and needs of persons with disabilities.

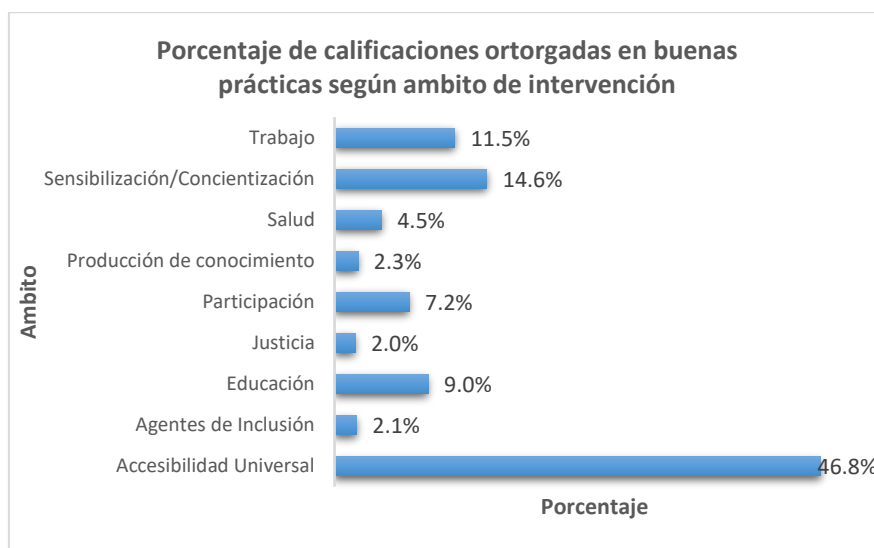
37. In addition, these campaigns use accessible printed and audiovisual materials that are disseminated through communications channels and are publicized with interested organizations.

“The DR Includes”(RD Incluye) Seal of Good Inclusive Practices for Persons with Disabilities

38. CONADIS continues to develop its programme for furthering the recognition and visibility of all good practices that promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families in different social environments.



39. Since its inception, the Seal of Good Inclusive Practices has been becoming more and more widely used. This attests to the growing interest of Dominican organizations in joining the effort to build an increasingly inclusive society. The following chart illustrates the types of good practices recognized in the last three years:



40. The sixth edition of the “The DR Includes” Seal, launched in 2022, added a new category, “Agents of inclusion”, which is used to recognize companies and institutions with an outstanding track record marked by ongoing efforts to employ good inclusive practices in accordance with Act No. 5-13 and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thereby demonstrating their commitment to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities.



41. CONADIS has designed a public awareness strategy as part of its annual workplan for 2024. As part of this strategy, it will work in close consultation with non-profit associations of persons with disabilities and non-profits providing services to this population group in order to track civil society perceptions on the ground. Based on this analysis, it will work to raise awareness, help to cultivate a culture of recognition and foster a social, rights-based approach in the implementation of relevant measures.

Accessibility (art. 9)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 7 of the list of issues

Adoption of standards and regulations on accessibility to the physical environment

42. The National Accessibility Evaluation System (SINAC) is a tool that can be used by public and private institutions to automatically file their reports on compliance with current standards.

43. In order to make this possible, uniform physical accessibility standards have been developed by the Dominican Quality Standards Institute (INDOCAL) with technical support from CONADIS. Some of these standards have already been approved and published, while others are still going through the approval process:

- NORDOM 779: Physical environment accessibility: general criteria and universal design requirements
- NORDOM 826: Physical environment accessibility for individual users: accessibility requirements for pedestrian traffic signs and signals in public urban and rural locations
- R-007: Regulation governing barrier-free architectural designs, now undergoing public consultations being conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Buildings
- Universal accessibility. Part 1: Movement, handling, location and communication (DALCO) criteria for facilitating the accessibility of the environment
- Universal accessibility. Part 2: Accessibility management system

44. The following accessibility standards relating to information and communications are in place:

- NORDOM 826: Accessibility requirements for Web content
- NORDOM 139802: Software accessibility requirements
- NORDOM: Easy Read guidelines and recommendations for document preparation (in the process of being vetted).

45. In an effort to improve pedestrian and vehicular transportation services, two standards have been introduced:

- NORDOM 881: Physical environment accessibility: passenger mobility system. Part 1: Passenger road mobility system
- NORDOM 882: Physical environment accessibility: passenger mobility system. Part 2: Fixed infrastructure and facilities associated with the passenger mobility system

46. Institutions register on the SINAC platform by completing a self-assessment. SINAC then generates recommendations concerning accessibility in any areas where barriers are identified. The institution can then develop a plan for eliminating these barriers, along with a corresponding budget item and timetable.

47. One of the measures implemented by the National Institute of Transit and Land Transportation (INTRAN) is the Safe Pedestrian Project, which makes proposals and coordinates improvements at intersections with high pedestrian flows, with emphasis on the mobility needs of people with reduced mobility. In addition, the Ministry of Public Works and Communications has introduced a national programme on the construction and renovation of inclusive sidewalks and curbs throughout the country.

48. Together with the Office of the Deputy Minister for Civil Society Relations of the Ministry of the Office of the President, the Dominican Municipal League and the Office of the Mayor of the National District, CONADIS is working on a road map for the development of inclusive municipalities in order to promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in their communities. A total of 14 municipalities, which also have inclusion departments, have been prioritized for the implementation of this road map and will be the focus of efforts to secure buy-in for the workplan that is currently under development. In addition, efforts are being made to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and to reach the point where municipal ordinances can be signed that will commit these municipalities to implementing measures for the promotion of equal rights and opportunities. One of the main components of these ordinances focuses on improving the accessibility of public spaces and services in the municipality and on prioritizing budget allocations for that purpose.

Measures adopted to ensure the accessibility of information and communications

49. Act No. 43-23 has been promulgated by the executive branch. This law accords recognition to the use and inclusion of sign language as an official mechanism of communication for deaf persons in the country. Its aim is to reduce communication barriers and ensure the accessibility of information and communications for the deaf population.

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 8 (a) of the list of issues

Provision of training on the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and emergency

50. CONADIS has created a security, emergency and contingency plan procedure. In 2020, it produced a handbook on adequate healthcare for persons with disabilities in order to establish parameters for situations of risk.

51. The objective of these guides is to equip the healthcare personnel responsible for providing prevention, care and treatment services to persons with disabilities with guidelines for the appropriate management of persons with disabilities in the Dominican Republic that is in accordance with the latest evidence and a rights-based approach.

52. The National Emergencies and Civil Defence Commission, with the support of the Protection, Gender and Age Advisory Group and a consortium involving Oxfam, Plan International and Habitat for Humanity, has rolled out a campaign to raise awareness of how to assist persons with disabilities, those with chronic illnesses and older persons in emergency situations. The campaign involved producing printed brochures to be distributed in all community centres or shelters during an emergency or disaster situation. The brochures

contain information on where to go in the event of a particular problem or situations of violence and where to seek medical assistance, food supplies or other logistical provisions.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 8 (b) of the list of issues

Accessibility of shelters

53. Shelters run by the Ministry of Women's Affairs for women victims of violence remain open and available in times of emergency or disaster, as has been the case during hurricanes and other natural disasters and during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. These shelters have an accessible architectural design.

54. CONADIS has been included among the institutions represented in the Emergency Operations Centre, the coordinating body for disaster preparedness and response. Sign language has been incorporated into the alerts that are issued by the Centre, with the support of the mass media.

55. CONADIS likewise participates actively in the various working sessions of the Technical Risk Prevention and Mitigation Committee. This Committee has recently completed drafting a preliminary document under the national emergency plan, amending Decree No. 275-13, in which the specific needs of vulnerable groups and risk awareness are addressed.

56. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning and Development is coordinating the establishment, with multilateral cooperation funds, of a national policy on early warning systems within which the pillars that will serve to promote disaster risk reduction among the general public are defined.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 9 (a) of the list of issues

Repeal of legal provisions concerning the legal capacity of persons with disabilities

57. With regard to legislation, article 74 (3) of the Dominican Constitution establishes that human rights treaties, covenants and conventions signed and ratified by the Government of the Dominican Republic have constitutional status and are directly and immediately applicable by courts and other organs of the State. Accordingly, by its very nature the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has constitutional rank and article 12 of the Convention must be considered to have this status with the Dominican judicial system.

58. Act No. 5-13 provides for the equal recognition of persons with disabilities before the law, as specified in the relevant article. The National Congress is currently considering a bill to amend the Civil Code.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 9 (b) of the list of issues

59. The Monetary Board issued decision No. 4 of 30 September 2015 amending the regulations on protection for users of financial products and services. The decision establishes that the policies and procedures of financial intermediation and exchange institutions must guarantee the provision of financial services, documentation and information to persons with disabilities, as well as access to the institutions' physical spaces. Undoubtedly, this decision represents a first step towards the elimination of restrictions that impede access to banking services, on an equal basis with others, for persons with disabilities and the independent management of their financial affairs.

Access to justice (art. 13)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 10 (a) of the list of issues

60. The judiciary has adopted the following substantive measures to ensure the participation, proper treatment and access to justice of persons with disabilities, especially those in vulnerable situations:

- The equality policy of the judiciary for persons with disabilities
- A guide and protocol for ensuring dignified treatment in access to justice
- A protocol for supporting users from vulnerable groups in judicial premises
- A guide to making tailored curricular adjustments
- A guide to good practices for universal accessibility in court buildings
- A protocol for conducting forensic interviews with victims and witnesses in vulnerable situations
- A protocol for action to combat violence, discrimination and harassment

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues

Promotion and provision of training on the rights of persons with disabilities

61. The National School of the Judiciary carries out awareness-raising and provides training on the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People and disability-awareness workshops for judges as well as for all those working in the administration of justice, public defenders and the legal community.

62. The Council of the Judiciary has harnessed synergies that allow for activities to be systemized and facilitate initiatives benefiting vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. One of the main remits of the judiciary's Inclusive Justice Directorate and its equity and vulnerable groups and alternative methods departments is to mainstream the human rights perspective, especially with regard to vulnerable groups. A series of activities are carried out under this remit, including:

- Workshops, talks and meetings with civil society
- Printing and dissemination of materials (books, brochures)
- Provision of guidance and information for users and vulnerable groups

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 10 (c) of the list of issues

Implementation of procedural accommodations

63. The judiciary has established mechanisms that make it easier for persons with disabilities to take part in judicial proceedings and takes the reasonable accommodations appropriate to the person's age and disability into account in cases where persons with disabilities are involved either as victims or witnesses. Possible accommodations include confidential interviews by behavioural experts and the assistance of a court interpreter, as described below in the section on forensic interview centres for victims and witnesses in vulnerable situations.

64. There are currently 589 registered court interpreters. This number includes 42 sign language court interpreters trained and certified by the National Judicial Training School in coordination with CONADIS and 15 registered court interpreters who know sign language and have received instruction in legal language so that they are able to provide support for those who need it in any stage of the proceedings.

Liberty and security of person (art. 14)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 11 (a) of the list of issues

Guarantees of due process

65. Articles 68 and 69 of the Constitution set forth judicial guarantees and rules of due process that apply in all judicial proceedings, whether criminal, civil or labour-related, and to which all persons are entitled, regardless of their status.

66. Article 40 of the Constitution establishes that everyone has the right to liberty and security of person and that any restrictions on liberty must be exceptional and subject to court supervision and strict criteria. The foregoing rules apply specifically to criminal proceedings; avenues of recourse and due process safeguards for challenging arbitrary deprivation of liberty are also in place.

67. Act No. 5-13 and its implementing regulations require the elimination of all obstacles that might prevent persons with disabilities from exercising their rights and the implementation of action to this end in the form of reasonable accommodation, procedural accommodations and universal accessibility measures.

68. Additionally, the Code of Criminal Procedure sets forth a series of core principles that require the adoption of measures to ensure equality before the law.

69. Act No. 339-22, authorizing and regulating the use of digital platforms for court proceedings and administrative procedures in the judiciary, was adopted by the executive branch in 2022.

Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 15)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 12 (a) of the list of issues

Prohibition of medical treatment without the consent of persons with disabilities

70. In the Dominican Republic, patient autonomy must be respected and no invasive procedures or procedures with permanent consequences may be performed without the knowledge and consent of the person concerned or, if this person has a serious cognitive disability, the consent of their legal representative.

71. This prohibition is enshrined in the country's legal framework, in the Constitution, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the General Health Act (No. 42-01), the law regulating the actions to be taken to uphold the right to health of the country's population.

72. Article 28 of the General Health Act specifically provides that every individual has the right to make decisions and to receive information on their treatment plans so as to ensure that they understand it and can decide whether or not to accept it (paragraph h), and that they are aware of all procedures to be carried out and of any risks and consequences of any kind that might arise as a result of the procedures.

73. Similarly, in article 49, the Mental Health Act (No. 12-06) of 2006, which is in line with the Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illnesses and the Improvement of Mental Health Care of the Organization of American States (OAS), stipulates that no treatment may be administered to persons suffering from a mental disorder without their informed consent, except in the cases provided for in articles 54, 55, 56 and 60 of the same chapter of the Act, concerning legal representatives, qualified and legally authorized health professionals and the prohibition of psychiatric, surgical and other treatments. respectively.

74. Article 153 of the General Health Act establishes responsibilities and penalties in the event of a violation of the law.

75. Additionally, article 51 of the Mental Health Act establishes that persons affected by a mental disorder may request that one or more persons of their choice are present during the procedure followed as a condition for giving their consent. The persons selected by the person

being treated may be any of those with whom he or she is associated or any of those already established in articles 54 et seq.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 12 (b) of the list of issues

Prevention of torture

76. Article 42 of the 2015 Constitution enshrines the right to integrity, establishing that all persons have the right to respect for their physical, psychological and emotional integrity and to live without violence, and the Government establishes the legal protections necessary to uphold these rights. Paragraph 1 of the same article provides that no person may be subjected to acts intended to cause pain, torture or humiliating treatment that might result in loss of or deterioration in his or her health or physical or psychological integrity. Respect for these rights in turn entails respecting, jointly and holistically, the right to human dignity, right to life, right to liberty and security of person, right to equality, right to privacy and personal honour and freedom of expression and information, since these rights are interdependent, inalienable, non-transferable, fundamental and universal.

77. The Dominican legal framework provides for the investigation of acts of torture and barbarism and establishes penalties for their punishment; however, national law needs to be aligned with current doctrine on the concept.

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 13 (a) of the list of issues

Measures taken to investigate the situation of children with disabilities who have been abandoned

78. In the event of abandonment and ill-treatment of children with disabilities, as a first step the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), working with the Public Prosecution Service's Directorate for Children and Adolescents, adopts measures to protect their integrity and initiates the appropriate legal proceedings.

79. CONANI takes coordinated action to ensure the restitution of the rights of children and adolescents through its various expert offices. Reports of cases involving children and adolescents with disabilities are followed up accordingly. In 2023, the Regional Management Department dealt with 14 cases, involving 5 boys and 9 girls, who were referred to the Angeles Home for protective residential care.

80. Since March 2022, the Operations Unit has been taking action to address the situation of vulnerable children and adolescents, including those in street situations and those in situations at mobility close to the border, and also the worst forms of child labour, including begging, trafficking in persons, people smuggling, and sexual and commercial exploitation. This has included providing support and assistance and making appropriate referrals for children and adolescents with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.

81. CONANI also runs a non-residential social and family support and follow-up programme, currently in its pilot phase, under which a multidisciplinary team of experts provides support and follow-up for children, adolescents and families, including minors and families with disabilities, who have been referred by the Operations Unit or by a protection centre. The personnel assigned to the programme work in coordination with the institutions that form part of the child and adolescent protection system, other governmental and non-governmental agencies, and other social support programmes.

82. At present, CONANI is operating 10 halfway houses. These residential care centres provide temporary shelter for children and adolescents who are at personal, family or social risk either because their social and emotional links with their family have broken down or because, although they still have a relationship with their family, staying in the family home would pose a temporary threat to their development, as well as children and adolescents who, for reasons of neglect, physical violence and emotional abuse, require the protection of the State.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 13 (b) of the list of issues

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

83. The Government of the Dominican Republic has taken various steps to address exploitation, violence and abuse against women. These include the following:

- At the legislative level, the Government has enacted laws and policies aimed at preventing and punishing gender-based violence, including Act No. 24-97 on Gender-based and Domestic Violence. Through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, it has also introduced policies and programmes to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women
- Act No. 137-03 on Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking of Persons in the Dominican Republic: the aim of this law is to prevent and punish activities involving exploitation and abuse of persons
- Act No. 88-03 on Shelters: this law provides for the establishment of shelters and refuges throughout the country to serve as safe houses, on a temporary basis, for women, children and adolescents who are victims of domestic or intra-family violence

Support services

84. Various support services for victims of gender-based violence have been established, including helplines, shelters and comprehensive care centres for women victims of violence.

85. The telephone helpline processes reports and organizes rescue services for women victims of gender-based and domestic violence, along with their children and other family members. The aim is to respond swiftly to cases of violence and femicide by providing confidential, effective and timely round-the-clock telephone assistance 355 days a year.

Awareness-raising and education

86. Sensitization and educational campaigns are organized to raise awareness of gender-based violence and promote equality in relationships.

Access to information and communications technologies

87. To ensure access to information and communications technologies for women in the Dominican Republic, various programmes and projects have been launched to facilitate access to technology and digital skills for different segments of the population, including women. These include:

- The "Software for Women" course
- The "Social Digital Package" project
- The "Reporting and Registering Violence" programme

88. Women in the Dominican Republic can report cases of violence and abuse through various channels, including

- Telephone hotlines and helplines: helplines and hotlines have been established through which victims of gender-based violence can seek help and guidance
- The Office of the Special Prosecutor: public prosecutors specialized in cases of gender-based and domestic violence are responsible for investigating and prosecuting cases of violence against women
- Online platforms: online platforms and mobile applications have been developed through which cases of violence and abuse can be reported, including <https://asistenciamujer.do/> and WhatsApp 829-421-3242

89. The victim support policy for victims of gender-based and domestic violence adopted by the Ministry for Women's Affairs encompasses the provision of comprehensive, free legal representation, psychological and psychosocial assistance and shelters. In order to guarantee equality and non-discrimination in access to these services, the Ministry has trained a team

to use sign language and has also provided training to the personnel who operate the *212 hotline for women with disabilities.

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 14 (a) of the list of issues

Measures taken to prohibit the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls

90. One of the measures to prevent forced sterilization is the requirement for consent: procedures of this type are not permitted without the full, informed consent of the person to be sterilized, and the patient's signature is mandatory to authorize the sterilization.

91. In this connection, article 55 of the Mental Health Act states that treatments involving sterilization, psychosurgery, other irreversible procedures and clinical and/or experimental trials cannot be carried out on persons with mental health disorders. Thus, such practices are prohibited by law.

92. Article 159 of the General Health Act states that health authorities and healthcare officials have the authority to process cases and investigate the existence of healthcare-related violations within their respective areas of responsibility. They may act on their own initiative, on the request of the Public Prosecution Service, where warranted by the nature of the case, or in response to complaints filed by private individuals.

93. In addition to the fact that any incident of this nature may be brought before the corresponding judicial authority through the Public Prosecution Service, as established by law, any person who has knowledge of an act that might constitute an offence may report the incident. Furthermore, any person who has been a victim of a criminal offence or unlawful act may initiate legal proceedings to claim compensation for the injury suffered.

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 15 of the list of issues

National Human Rights Plan

94. To mark Human Rights Day on 10 December 2022, the Government presented an updated and extended version of the National Human Rights Plan, which reaffirms the political will of the Dominican Republic to develop the mechanisms for promoting and safeguarding the fundamental rights of all persons in the country.

95. The Plan envisages a programme to uphold the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers by putting in place measures to strengthen migration management mechanisms throughout the country, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and national laws.

96. Accordingly, the Plan includes measures to foster a culture of respect and solidarity towards migrants, refugees and marginalized persons within the framework of national laws.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 16 of the list of issues

The Angeles Home

97. The Angeles Home is a residential care institution run by CONANI with the aim of providing comprehensive services for children and adolescents with disabilities who do not have parental care or whose family is not in a position to provide care and protection. The main reasons for admission include being found wandering the streets (7 per cent), reported abandonment (14 per cent) and family neglect (29 per cent).

98. Currently, 140 children and adolescents (72 boys and 68 girls) with some form of disability, whether sensory, physical, intellectual, cognitive or psychiatric, reside in the Angeles Home. Their disabilities include infantile cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, visual impairment and hearing impairment.

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 17 of the list of issues

99. On 1 August 2023, the executive branch promulgated Act No. 43-23, according official recognition to sign language in the Dominican Republic. The aim of the Act is to promote the use and inclusion of sign language as an official communication mechanism for deaf individuals.

100. One of the new measures provided for in the Act is the establishment of an institutional interpretation service, formed of interpreters and interpreter-guides who, upon accreditation by CONADIS, serve as a communication channel enabling deaf persons to fully exercise the rights enshrined in the Constitution and national laws.

101. Furthermore, the Act mandates the executive branch, the judiciary, the legislature and autonomous agencies to promote the use of sign language and the involvement of interpreters and interpreter-guides in the delivery of information, documentation, cultural and educational programmes, in the transmission of the sessions of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies and in the communication of messages from the national and municipal authorities.

Education (art. 24)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 19 (a) of the list of issues

Adoption of measures for inclusive education

102. The Ministry of Education, with technical support from UNICEF, is launching an inclusive education model designed to strengthen the inclusive education policy in the Dominican Republic. Its purpose is to transform the education system in mainstream schools, special schools and educational centres through different schooling strategies at the national level:

- Special schools for students with severe or multiple disabilities
- Dedicated schools and classrooms for deaf students
- Dedicated classrooms for educational inclusion. These are educational spaces, within mainstream schools, for students with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder who require a period of adaptation to develop skills prior to joining a mainstream classroom
- Classrooms for transition to adult life, focused on preparing young people to live and work as autonomously and independently as possible. To this end, the instruction provided must promote the development of professional ethics (safety at work, enjoyment, performance of tasks, knowledge of and respect for basic work rules) and the acquisition of appropriate work skills and abilities that will facilitate their subsequent inclusion in the labour market
- Mainstream schools engaging in inclusive practices

103. With regard to increasing education opportunities for students with disabilities, according to the National Information Survey conducted in March 2023, 27,465 students with disabilities are currently enrolled in mainstream and special schools, representing 91.4 per cent of the number of these students identified in 2021.

104. Regarding higher education, CONADIS and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology signed a collaboration agreement in 2022 to introduce an inclusive

approach in the formulation of higher education system policies and guidelines for the transition to a good quality, more inclusive system.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 19 (b) of the list of issues

Transition from special education to schools in the inclusive education system

105. The goal is to build an inclusive education model through the participation of prioritized schools that are transitioning from a segregated education model to an inclusive model, where everyone can participate and learn together. Training has been provided to 227 professionals (national, regional and district education officers, management and support teams, and teachers) from the 7 centres involved in the project in the past school year, and there are plans to expand the training to 37 centres and 2 vocational schools in the next school year.

106. To this end, the coverage of the Centres for Diversity has been expanded to include the 18 regional school boards and 122 district special education officers. In addition, under the Transition to Adult and Working Life Programme, in August 2023, 21 administrative officers, 11 teachers and 5 support staff (security) were recruited for the first labour school specifically for students with autism (“La Virgen”, in district 10-02 of La Victoria) to cater for 105 students with disabilities between the ages of 12 and 20 years. Also, the Centre for Disability agreed to relinquish building No. 3 of its facilities to the Ministry of Education for the exclusive purpose of setting up the labour school for the comprehensive education of students with autism.

107. In 2024, the Ministry of Education introduced a new tool for monitoring the number of students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream schools. Until now, only students with disabilities enrolled in special schools were monitored. This has led to two noteworthy achievements:

- The allocation of funds to mainstream schools with students with disabilities. For this purpose, the Directorate for Special Education developed a tool to collect information on the needs of each mainstream school according to type of disability
- The registration, by type of disability, of the 27,465 students identified as at March 2023 on the basis of administrative records contained in the School Management Information System

108. In collaboration with the “Get Ahead” (Supérate) Programme, the authorities are implementing the procedures and actions necessary to strengthen and operationalize four transition classrooms in “Get Ahead” (Supérate) programme facilities that will benefit 99 students with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities.

109. With the support of the ONCE Foundation for Latin America (FOAL) and the Perkins School for the Blind, an educational model for students with deafblindness and multiple disabilities has been created that was first rolled out during the 2023/24 academic year. Lastly, five additional 30-passenger school buses have been purchased, benefiting 180 students with disabilities.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 19 (c) of the list of issues

Inclusive education strategy

110. Regarding higher education, in fulfilment of the commitment to develop an action plan assumed under the cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and CONADIS, training sessions on dignified treatment, information gathering and institutional assessment of the inclusion of persons with disabilities were held in 2022. Twelve such sessions were held on various university campuses, with 320 participants representing different fields and regions of the country.

111. Follow-up visits were made to each university in 2023 to discuss the initiatives that higher education institutions were undertaking in the area of the inclusion of persons with disabilities (achievements, strengths and current challenges), to monitor the incorporation of

the Washington Group questions in their administrative records and to emphasize the importance of data collection through institutional and national surveys.

112. The Ministry of Education has expanded its in-service training strategy to formally include the topic of educational assistance for students with disabilities in the summer training programme for expert personnel and teachers throughout the education system, with 16,198 principals, counsellors, psychologists and teachers having received the training to date.

113. There is continued coordination with the National Teacher Training Institute to provide for special education teachers and deaf teachers and educators to pursue a master's degree or diploma courses. Thus far, 176 scholarships have been awarded, as follows:

- 96 scholarships for special education teachers to pursue a master's degree in speech and language disorders
- 80 scholarships to take the diploma course in the teaching of sign language as a first and second language, aimed at deaf teachers and educators
- 41 individuals have completed the diploma course in inclusive and social education aimed at transforming the culture in classrooms and schools and developing inclusive education training plans for itinerant teachers, within the framework of the agreement with the Poveda Cultural Centre and the InteRed Foundation on training in the areas of visual impairment and deafblindness
- The Salomé Ureña Higher Institute of Teacher Training will shortly begin offering a diploma course in the teaching of written Spanish for persons with hearing impairments (for hearing teachers)

114. CONADIS has developed training programmes for the pre-university education system, in which 207 officers, teachers and administrative personnel of prioritized schools took part in 2022, to promote inclusive education and identify gaps in socioeconomic inclusion.

Health (art. 25)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (a) of the list of issues

Accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services

115. Under article 28 of Act No. 42-01, the healthcare system must provide services in an impartial manner to anyone who needs them. Prior to the issuance of their operating licence, healthcare centres must meet specific accessibility requirements for persons with motor disabilities.

116. The architectural features of most of the buildings housing public healthcare centres are such that access to some centres is limited. However, funds have been earmarked for the refurbishment of several public health centres. Moreover, new buildings intended for the provision of health services, mainly primary care services, must meet the National Universal Design Standard (NORDOM 779).

117. There are also deficiencies in terms of the availability of interpreters and healthcare professionals capable of communicating with users with hearing impairments; however, policies on inclusiveness and non-discrimination apply to staff recruitment.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (b) of the list of issues

Disability Assessment, Registration and Certification System

118. The Disability Assessment, Registration and Certification System enables persons with disabilities to benefit from public policies and enjoy access to social services and benefits and comprehensive rehabilitation so as to ensure that they have equal opportunity to fully enjoy their rights under equal conditions with others.

119. The initial steps towards implementation of the assessment system, including the choice of design aspects and the definition of age-specific performance indicators, were taken in 2022.

120. The information system is currently being digitized to ensure access for persons with disabilities in the different regions of the country.

121. In the period from January 2021 to September 2023, 7,585 persons with disabilities of all age groups, including 4,264 children and adolescents and 3,321 adults, received their disability certificate.

122. The disability certificate incorporates the information needed to operationalize policies and programmes aimed at providing vulnerable populations with access to public services.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (c) of the list of issues

Implementation of recommendations made by the Women with Disabilities Circle

123. Regarding progress made on implementing the recommendations flowing from the participatory assessment of the sexual and reproductive health rights of women with disabilities, the Women with Disabilities Circle – a body that represents this group in the Dominican Republic – has taken various steps to raise the group’s visibility and demand the realization of these rights.

124. In addition, with government subsidies and support from international agencies, projects have been launched in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention, the detection of gender-based violence, and leadership and empowerment, among other topics.

125. Civil society organizations have taken the following actions:

- Profamilia runs practical programmes in the areas of family planning, general medicine, psychology, gynaecology and obstetrics (monitoring) and offers counselling on contraceptives and sexual and reproductive health
- The Women with Disabilities Circle has carried out various projects ranging from guidance on the right to sexual and reproductive health, to conceptualization of disability for healthcare professionals and the provision of pap smears to Circle members

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (d) of the list of issues

Access to health services for migrants with disabilities

126. Access to emergency and primary healthcare services is guaranteed to all persons residing in the Dominican Republic. Immigrants, whether documented or otherwise, receive free care at national health centres like any Dominican national.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (e) of the list of issues

Strengthening mental health services

127. Concerning progress made in strengthening mental health services, guidelines are being developed on the establishment of support groups by type of disability.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 20 (f) of the list of issues

Free and informed consent

128. The procedure for obtaining free and informed consent for admission to psychiatric care facilities requires that the measure be explained verbally to the user before he or she signs the consent form.

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 21 of the list of issues

129. The Dominican Republic does not deny access to emergency health services or primary care to anyone in need. Article 3 of the General Health Act (No. 42-01) establishes that: “All Dominican and foreign nationals who have established their residence in the country have the right to health promotion, disease prevention and health protection, recovery and rehabilitation services, without any discrimination whatsoever”.

Work and employment (art. 27)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 22 of the list of issues

National Employment Plan 2020–2024

130. The Ministry of Labour developed the National Employment Plan with the aim of creating 600,000 decent jobs in the formal economy by 2024. The Plan establishes objectives and clear, achievable strategic lines of actions, at both the sectoral and regional levels, prioritizing women, single mothers, young people, including those who are neither studying nor working, and persons with disabilities. The Plan was developed on the basis of a strategy for fostering opportunities for dialogue and consultation with the country’s different productive sectors.

National Employment Service

131. This is a free public service operating in accordance with the International Labour Organization Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) and the Labour Code; its goal is to link employment supply and demand through job placement.

132. The National Employment Service consists of a network of 40 employment offices located in different provinces, where jobseekers can submit their curriculum vitae and be referred to job openings at companies registered in the “RD Trabaja” employment portal of the Ministry of Labour.

133. The National Employment Service coordinates with other State institutions to guarantee access to employment services such as job placement and support for entrepreneurship. The “Route to Employment” Programme, consisting of localized job fairs designed to bring services such as career counselling and inclusive job placement to the entire population and thus guarantee universal access and opportunities for all, was launched in 2023.

134. To promote the employment of persons with disabilities, young people and women, the National Employment Service has organized the following activities:

- Workshops on inclusive job search techniques led by non-profit organizations with a focus on supporting persons with disabilities
- An inclusive job fair, with vacancies to be filled by persons with disabilities
- Coordination with the Ministry of Youth to promote youth employment through the job and entrepreneurship fairs organized by the Ministry
- Guidance for businesses, including publication of a guide to the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Inclusive Career Counselling Day, including a workshop on job search techniques
- Inclusive Employment Day, held in November 2022, offering job placements in the hotel sector, including job interviews conducted in sign language
- Support for the ONCE Foundation’s Agora Programme, to promote employability and job placement and the inclusion of persons with visual impairments in the active population, and for the Dominican Foundation for the Blind.

- In 2022, the Santo Domingo Teaching Workshop provided training to 173 unemployed young persons from vulnerable backgrounds, including 69 with disabilities, in crafts, special projects (painting and pointillism, among others), plumbing, construction and carpentry, thus enabling them to enter the labour market

135. The purpose of the Temporary Employment Programme (Resolution No. 24-2021) is to promote the labour market integration or reintegration of young people and adults and to stimulate activity in the country's productive sectors. Within the framework of this Programme, in which the Ministry of Labour subsidizes the first six months' wages, four persons with disabilities officially recognized by CONADIS obtained jobs, in what was the first job placement experience under this type of subsidized programme run by the Ministry.

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 23 of the list of issues

136. Through legislation and public policies, the State guarantees that vulnerable persons living in poverty can exercise their social and economic rights. Since 2019, the Government has been disbursing solidarity allowances in the amount of 6,000 Dominican pesos per month under the subsidized scheme of the Dominican social security system. The allowances target persons experiencing multidimensional poverty (ICV1 and ICV2) who, as well as other factors of vulnerability, such as having a disability or being a single mother of a child with a disability, are excluded from or do not participate in society.

137. The National Fund for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities was established in December 2022 through administrative resolution No. 009-2022. Beneficiaries receive cash transfers designed to improve the standard of living of the household.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 24 (a) of the list of issues

Participation of persons with disabilities in elections

138. In October 2022, a meeting was held with representatives of the disability collective with a view to strengthening the means of guaranteeing the political and electoral rights of persons with disabilities. Consensus was reached on the establishment of a covenant on ethics and a road map. Among the steps taken to set up a voting mechanism, consideration was given to creating a model template, for the use not only of persons with disabilities.

139. Height-adjustable tables for persons with physical-motor disabilities and users of wheelchairs, canes and walking frames, among other assistive devices, were also discussed.

140. Regarding the accessibility of communications, the Central Electoral Board participated in the aforementioned meeting and has consulted with organizations of persons with disabilities concerning the measures or reasonable adjustments needed to enable persons with disabilities to vote.

141. In the context of the 2024 congressional, municipal and presidential elections, the Central Electoral Board is leading the "Accessible Vote 2024" project, based on lessons learned from the observation of the 2016 elections by the organization Participación Ciudadana and of the 2020 elections by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

142. The Central Electoral Board is currently working on the first phase of the project, which consists of finalizing the registration forms for voting from home and accessible voting and publishing the forms on the portal. It is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders understand the scope and objectives of the project before proceeding to the detailed planning and implementation phase.

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 25 (b) of the list of issues

Adoption of an accessibility plan for tourism sites

143. Several important actions have been taken to promote accessible tourism, including the mainstreaming of ISO Standard 21902 on accessible tourism. This Standard establishes the guidelines for quality that providers of tourism services should take into account when choosing to join the accessible tourism value chain.

144. Various programmes are being implemented to promote accessible tourism, including the International Blue Flag Programme for beach quality assessment. Eligibility for Blue Flag certification, which is updated annually, includes accessibility criteria.

145. Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism is running a programme, under an initiative promoting tourism for all, to make tourist destinations accessible.

146. The Ministry of Culture, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and civil society organizations, is working to promote inclusion in museums, with advice from the Louvre museum in Paris. Initiatives in this area include making infrastructure accessible, training team members to use sign language and providing materials in Braille. In addition, the Ministry of Culture, with support from CONADIS, has formed the Dominican Orchestral Theatre made up of some 160 performers including musicians, singers, dancers and actors with disabilities.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 26 (a) of the list of issues

Measures taken to collect data on the situation of persons with disabilities

147. The National Statistics Office has taken the following measures to regularly collect information on the situation of persons with disabilities:

Tenth National Population and Housing Census (2022)

To obtain data on the entire population with disabilities, including persons with hearing impairments, the Washington Group short set of questions has been incorporated into the Tenth National Population and Housing Census.

National Multi-Purpose Household Survey

The report of the National Multi-Purpose Household Survey provides the authorities with data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the population and the living conditions of household members.

2023 National Survey of Economic Activity

148. The National Survey of Economic Activity constitutes a relevant source of information for decision-makers and policymakers regarding the nationwide economic performance of the country's main economic sectors.

149. To meet demand for information on the involvement of persons with disabilities in the country's economic activity, the 2023 National Survey of Economic Activity will, for the first time, include a section on persons with disabilities.

Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 26 (b) of the list of issues**National Statistics Plan 2020–2024: Plan of Action**

150. The National Statistics Plan is the main instrument for coordinating and planning the State's statistical output so that policymakers and the general public can make the best use of and benefit from the data.

151. One of the aims is to disseminate statistics more widely through alternative media, including the arts and photography, with a focus on youth, disability and gender.

152. Another aim is to create user-oriented mechanisms to facilitate the use and understanding of accessible statistical information by persons with hearing and visual impairments.

153. According to the methodological guide for the statistical use of administrative records (2022), administrative records must include information on variables such as gender, nationality, income, disability, migration status and geographical location to highlight the diversity of individuals.

International cooperation (art. 32)**Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 27 of the list of issues****Data collection on the situation of persons with disabilities**

154. As the lead agency and coordinator of the National System for International Development Cooperation, the Department of International Cooperation under the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Planning and Development has taken steps to promote the inclusion of affirmative action for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, in international cooperation initiatives. These steps include the preparation of the first Multi-Year International Cooperation Plan and the adoption of resolution No. 17-2022.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)**Reply to the issues raised in paragraph 28 of the list of issues****Establishment of a monitoring mechanism in accordance with the Convention****SIMORED-Plus**

155. The Government has introduced the SIMORED-Plus Recommendations Monitoring System, an expanded version of the SIMORE system that links the monitoring of international human rights recommendations with the Sustainable Development Goal and related targets and tracks general observations. The latest version includes improvements in functionality that strengthen the State's follow-up and implementation mechanism, thereby ensuring an innovative leap forward, in line with the priorities of the international community and the country's foreign policy.
