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Applying the human rights framework to address women's access to justice

Observer Paper Prepared by:

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)*

'Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and addressing structural barriers'

Expert Group Meeting

* This paper summarizes analysis and policy recommendations made by the UN human rights mechanisms, as well as by OHCHR. References of sources used in this paper are included in the annex.

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1. Introduction

Women's human rights in all spheres of life are interdependent and interconnected. The human rights framework provides a roadmap for an integrated, inclusive and intersectional approach in addressing the intertwined aspects of the lives of all women throughout their life cycle. Women's right to access justice is intrinsically linked to women's right to equality in all aspects of family and public life, freedom from gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights and opportunities for economic empowerment.

The right to access to justice for women, a basic cross-cutting human right, represents a means for the realization of all their rights protected under the international human rights' legal framework. It is a fundamental element of the rule of law and good governance, together with the independence, impartiality, integrity and credibility of the judiciary, the fight against impunity and corruption, and the equal participation of women in the judiciary and other law implementation mechanisms. The right to access to justice encompasses justiciability, availability, accessibility, good quality, the provision of remedies for victims and the accountability of justice systems.

It is important to highlight that:

- addressing the obstacles women face in accessing justice before, during or in the aftermath of conflict is essential to eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence.
- the availability of justice signals that women's rights are human rights and that perpetrators of violations or abuses of such rights are held to account.
- accessing justice is a critical pathway to combating poverty, through the protection of income like equal pay and alimony and assets such as land and housing. Strengthening women's property rights also supports income generation, agricultural productivity and the realization of the right to food.
- justice provides legal recourse against unequal pay, sexual harassment and physical and psychological harm and exploitative labour practices.

2. Main obstacles to women's access to justice

Women's access to justice is hampered by several obstacles, including inadequate legal frameworks, procedural and evidentiary requirements and practices, failure to systematically ensure that judicial mechanisms are physically, economically, socially and culturally accessible to all women, the discriminatory interpretation of the law, gender stereotyping, socio-economic inequalities, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, stigma for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and underrepresentation of women in judicial systems. These barriers hinder women's ability to seek redress for human rights violations and participate fully in legal processes.

The current context of gender backlash exacerbates such obstacles. Around the world, we are witnessing an unprecedented backlash against gender equality, rights and autonomy of women

and girls, including freedom from gender-based violence and the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the rights and freedom of LGBTIQ+ persons. This resistance has always existed but has been increasingly organized and resourced, linked to broader attempts at undermining human rights, democratic values and multilateralism, aiming to relegate women's roles only to the family, caregiving, and procreation. This is compounded by the diminished funding to women's rights organizations who have been key actors in defending women's rights and facilitating access to justice for women, including through strategic litigation.

Obstacles women face in accessing justice include:

a) **Discriminatory laws and practices:**

- Inadequate or discriminatory legal frameworks or de facto practices discriminate against women, particularly in areas like family law, property rights, other civil law branches like entering into a contract and accessing financial credit, gender-based violence laws, sexual and reproductive health, education and employment.

In its global thematic work and in its country engagement, OHCHR has called for law reforms and the eradication of de facto practices that allow for child marriage and female genital mutilation. In Mauritania, OHCHR has denounced discriminatory marriage and inheritance laws and unequal access to land ownership as in some countries women may be denied the right to inherit property, own land in their own names, or have equal access to credit or to stand in court.

b) **Gender-based violence:**

- Women are disproportionately affected by various forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and often lack adequate legal protection and support services.

In various countries, including Cambodia, OHCHR called for a comprehensive national law to prevent and address gender-based violence that would define and criminalize all its forms, aligning it with international human rights standards. In Colombia, OHCHR has highlighted the ongoing challenges in access to justice for women and girls survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. In particular, indigenous, afro-descendant, migrant, and LGBTIQ+ women and girls face additional barriers like racial discrimination and biases, stigma and limited access to comprehensive, confidential, and intersectional services.

c) **Socio-economic inequalities:**

- Poverty, lack of access to education, and limited access to resources can prevent women from seeking legal redress and asserting their rights.

OHCHR has highlighted how the realization of economic, social and cultural rights is crucial for women's access to justice. Poverty significantly hinders access to justice, creating a vicious cycle where those living in poverty with limited access to education are less likely to

seek legal recourse and at risk of injustice. This lack of access to justice further entrenches poverty by preventing individuals from challenging abuses, claiming their rights, or accessing essential services, perpetuating a state of impunity and social exclusion.

d) Gender stereotypes and social and cultural norms:

- Deep-rooted gender stereotypes and cultural attitudes can reinforce discrimination and discourage women from reporting abuse or seeking justice or influence judicial decisions.

In its global thematic work, OHCHR has highlighted that gender stereotypes significantly impede women's access to justice, including by influencing judicial decisions and societal perceptions. These stereotypes rooted in patriarchal norms that unequal power relations, based on the idea that women are inferior to men, and justified under the banners of “cultural” and “traditional beliefs”, can affect how judges interpret evidence, assess credibility, and determine legal accountability. This is particularly in cases of gender-based violence as well as in cases where stereotypes about reproductive roles lead judges to deprive of liberty more frequently women perceived as inadequate mothers. Addressing gender stereotyping is crucial for ensuring women's human rights, achieving substantive equality and ensuring access to justice.

e) Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination

- Access to justice for women can be further hampered by factors such as belonging to ethnic, racial, indigenous or minority group, for their colour, caste, language, religion or belief, political opinion, marital status, maternity, parental status, age, urban or rural location, health status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics and illiteracy, among others.

Among other countries, OHCHR identified persistent and systemic barriers to justice for women and girls in Guatemala, especially for Indigenous, Garifuna, and Afro-Guatemalan women. The Office highlighted geographic inaccessibility of judicial institutions, lack of interpretation services in Indigenous languages, insufficient victim support, and long delays in legal proceedings.

f) Limited access to legal aid:

- Women may lack access to legal information, advice, and representation due to financial constraints or geographical barriers.

In its global and country work, OHCHR has consistently advocated for increased funding and support for legal aid services, particularly for women belonging to marginalized groups. The Office has also promoted the creation of specialized services for women, including those experiencing violence, those in conflict with the law, and those facing multiple forms of discrimination. In Cambodia, for example, OHCHR identified the lack of a properly funded national legal aid policy as an obstacle for women and girls to access justice.

g) Challenges in conflict and post-conflict settings:

- Women in conflict or post-conflict affected areas encounter even higher levels of gender-based violence and face additional difficulties in accessing justice, including weaker judicial institutions, displacement and lack of security.

In its global thematic work and in its country engagement, including in DRC, CAR, Sudan, South Sudan, OHCHR has reported the increase in gender-based violence against women in conflict and post-conflict, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and harmful practices such as child marriage. The Office has also documented the difficulties survivors experience in reporting these crimes, accessing medical and psychosocial support, and navigating justice systems that may be ill-equipped or biased. In various instances, women feared for their safety when reporting crimes, particularly if perpetrators were powerful figures in the community or if the justice system was not seen as trustworthy. The Office has also highlighted that weak rule of law, lack of capacity within judicial institutions, corruption and poorly staffed or damaged police stations hinder women's access to justice.

h) Inadequate representation in justice systems:

- Women are often underrepresented in senior roles in legal professions and decision-making positions within the justice system. According to the [International Bar Association](#), worldwide women make up 43% of all judges and hold 26% of all senior positions in the judiciary.

This lack of representation, particularly in positions of power like judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, can lead to biased decision-making, a lack of understanding of women's specific needs, and a reluctance to report or pursue cases of gender-based violence. OHCHR has been supporting the development, dissemination and promotion of CEDAW General Recommendation 40 that calls for gender parity in decision-making positions at all levels in public administration and the judiciary, which is crucial to foster trust, ensure that women's perspectives are represented and facilitate women's access to justice.

3. Human rights guidance

States have at their disposal the international human rights framework to tackle the barriers women face in accessing justice, enhance effective remedies and uphold gender equality.

a. The right to access justice

International and regional human rights treaties contain guarantees relating to gender equality before the law and obligations to ensure that everyone benefits from the equal protection of the law¹. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in

¹ Articles 7 and 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 2 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and articles 2 (2) and 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 13 (1) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. At the regional level, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human

Article 15 provides for equality before the law and equal protection of the law and in Article 2 stipulates that States must guarantee the substantive equality of men and women in all areas of life, including through the establishment of competent national tribunals and other public institutions, to ensure the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination. Article 3 calls for measures to ensure that women can exercise and enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. Among others, article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires States to ensure access to effective remedy.

b. The work of the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies

Human rights mechanisms have addressed access to justice and below we will highlight some of the work developed by Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures.

The Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the body overseeing the implementation of the Convention has elaborated General Recommendations that guide States in operationalizing gender equality, including the right to access to justice and interrelated rights.

- General Recommendation 33 calls on States to ensure that justice systems are accessible, independent, and gender-sensitive at all levels, formal and informal, and that they actively remove barriers preventing women from claiming their rights. It underscores the need for legal aid, timely remedies, effective investigations and prosecutions, and the training of all justice actors on women's rights. States are also urged to facilitate women's participation in justice system and to remove all gender-based barriers to access to civil law procedures, such as requiring that women obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities or family members before beginning legal action and reform all laws and dismantle practices that limit women's legal capacity.
- General Recommendation 21 highlights how restrictions on women's legal capacity, such as entering into a contract or accessing financial credit only with a male relative's guarantee denies women legal autonomy. It outlines how in certain countries, women can't begin legal action alone or her status as a witness or her evidence is accorded less respect or weight than that of a man. Such laws or customs limit the woman's right effectively to pursue or retain her equal share of property and diminish her standing as an independent, responsible and valued member of her community. The Committee explained that when countries limit a woman's legal capacity by their laws, or permit individuals or institutions to do the same, they are denying women their rights to be equal with men limiting women's ability to provide for themselves and their dependents.
- General Recommendation 40 provides comprehensive guidance for States on achieving the equal and inclusive representation of women in all decision-making systems across all sectors, including the judiciary.

Rights), the American Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Maputo Protocol all contain relevant provisions.

- General Recommendation 39 recognizes that indigenous women and girls face systemic barriers to justice and equality, including discriminatory laws limiting their legal capacity, property rights, and nationality, especially when intersecting with disability. It stresses that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, often without access to effective remedies due to racism, poverty, and lack of culturally appropriate services. States are urged to ensure access to both indigenous and non-indigenous justice systems that are inclusive, timely, and culturally competent, that includes providing interpreters, trained professionals, accessible legal aid, and awareness-raising of rights in indigenous languages. States are also urged to promote indigenous women's participation in public life through temporary special measures, protect them from political violence, and ensure their involvement in economic, environmental, and peacebuilding processes through free, prior, and informed consent.
- General Recommendation 35 links gender-based violence against women to systemic and intersecting forms of discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, age, migration status, disability, poverty, and others. It stresses the need for inclusive legal and policy responses that consider these overlapping grounds of discrimination. It reaffirms that gender-based violence must be addressed through effective legal frameworks, including in plural legal systems, with accessible justice and remedies for survivors. It calls for specific funds for reparations, including under transitional justice mechanisms, for reparations to victims of gender-based violence and clarifies that priority should be given to the agency, wishes, decisions, safety, dignity and integrity of victims/survivors.
- General recommendation 34 outlines the significant barriers rural women face to accessing justice due to discriminatory legal systems, overlapping statutory, customary, and religious laws, conflict and post-conflict conditions, limited legal awareness, and sociocultural constraints. It highlights that informal justice systems may be more accessible, although they often reinforce gender discrimination. States are urged to ensure rural women's access to justice by reviewing and reforming legal frameworks to eliminate discrimination, regulating the interaction of plural legal systems, increasing legal literacy, providing affordable legal aid, ensuring physical access to courts through measures like mobile courts, and training justice officials and community leaders on women's rights. It also calls on States to address structural causes of inequality, such as unpaid care work, environmental degradation, and the gendered impact of economic policies.
- General recommendation 30 highlights that women often face legal, procedural, and institutional barriers to access justice that are worsened during and after conflict. It emphasizes that transitional justice must include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, such as truth commissions and reparations, that are gender-sensitive and uphold women's rights. These mechanisms are called to address all forms of gender-based violence and violations, without allowing amnesties for perpetrators, especially in cases of sexual violence. States are urged to guarantee women's participation in the design and monitoring of justice and reparation programs, ensure protection during

proceedings, and adopt victim-centered approaches that avoid re-victimization and reparations must transform structural inequalities and meet the specific needs of women.

In its General Comment 28, the Human Rights Committee, the treaty body overseeing the implementation of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, reaffirms that Article 3 implies that all human beings should enjoy the rights provided for in the Covenant, on an equal basis and the full effect of this provision is impaired whenever any person is denied the full and equal enjoyment of any right. Consequently, States are urged to ensure the enjoyment of all rights provided for in the Covenant to men and women equally. The General Comment emphasizes that States must guarantee women equal access to courts and legal procedures and urges the removal of gender based legal or procedural barriers. It also criticizes reliance on customary, religious, or traditional practices that limit women's legal capacity or access to justice.

In its General Comment 16, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the treaty body overseeing the implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urged States to ensure that all individuals, men and women, have access to effective legal or other appropriate remedies when their rights are violated. The Committee stresses that gender equality in the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights must be guaranteed both in law and in practice. This includes ensuring equal participation in public office, decision-making, and development planning. States must provide accessible venues for redress, such as courts and administrative mechanisms, and ensure that these are open to all, including the most marginalized. Remedies should include compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-repetition. States should also monitor the impact of laws and policies to avoid unintended harm to women and girls and adopt long-term strategies, including temporary special measures and gender-sensitive resource allocation, to promote substantive equality.

c. The work of the Human Rights Council Special Procedures

The special procedures of the Human Rights Council are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. With the support of OHCHR, special procedures undertake country visits, act on individual cases of reported violations and concerns of a broader nature by sending communications to States and others and contribute to the development of international human rights standards, and engage in advocacy and provide advice for technical cooperation. Below a couple of examples of the guidance offered by mandate holders.

The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls in its country mission report on Mauritania (A/HRC/56/51/ADD.1) highlighted that women and girls face significant structural and sociocultural barriers in accessing justice, particularly in cases of gender-based violence. The Working Group underscores the urgent need for comprehensive legal reform, including the adoption of specific legislation to combat all forms of gender-based violence, revision of discriminatory legal provisions, and the full operationalization of legal aid frameworks. It further calls for increased representation of women within the justice system,

mandatory gender-sensitive training for all judicial and law enforcement personnel, and the establishment of fully resourced, victim-centred support services.

The Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan in its report A/HRC/59/25 titled “access to justice and protection for women and girls and the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” highlights the severe and institutionalized denial of justice and protection for women and girls in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. He highlights that women and girls face systemic exclusion, with the justice system itself acting as a barrier to their rights and informal dispute mechanisms offering little relief and often reinforcing discrimination. The report stresses the need for a survivor-centered, comprehensive approach to justice that goes beyond legal redress to include access to education, healthcare, and safe living conditions. It calls on states to ensure Afghan women’s participation in political processes, support women-led civil society organizations, fund gender-sensitive humanitarian efforts, and establish accountability mechanisms for international crimes. The report also urges codifying gender apartheid as a crime against humanity.

4. OHCHR’s work

Responsive governance, the rule of law, and accountability are the foundations of effective human rights protection and prevention. Any gap between rights enshrined in law and their practical implementation undermines the credibility of legal frameworks and trust in governance.

To address this issue, OHCHR strengthens the capacity of States to develop laws, policies and mechanisms that comply with human rights norms and principles and enhances the capacity of the public to participate in legislative and public policy development. OHCHR works with administration of justice and law enforcement institutions to increase their capacity to address, prosecute and prevent human rights violations and abuses. We strengthen networks that support and promote effective rights-based justice and law enforcement and develop strategies to protect justice actors who face harassment or criminalization.

Accountability for gender-based violence is one of OHCHR’s priorities and lies at the heart of our office management plan (result A3). Over the last years, we have enhanced our human rights monitoring work in peace-keeping missions and country offices, integrating gender into human rights investigations and documenting conflict related sexual violence and supported investigative mechanisms. Promoting respect for the *Do Not Harm* and the *Victim-Centred Approach* principles is at the basis of our work. We contribute to addressing gender-based violence not in isolation, as an incident of violence, but in the context of prevalent gender inequalities, social and gender norms that constitute the root causes of violence and discrimination.

- ✓ In the Central African Republic, the Women Protection Advisers and the Human Rights Component (OHCHR) supported local authorities to carry out a campaign to sensitize local communities on sexual violence in conflict and harmful traditional practices, including child and forced marriages with armed elements. The main objectives were to counter victims’ stigmatization and exclusion by their families and local communities,

inform potential survivors on available assistance and legal remedies, as well as contribute to preventing child and forced marriages.

- ✓ In Colombia, OHCHR supports the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), addressing gender-based violence committed by members of the Public Forces during the armed conflict and promoting gender-responsive reparations.
- ✓ In Colombia and Guatemala, OHCHR carried out training on gender sensitive and intersectional approaches, developed tools and provided technical assistance for justice sector professionals and supported civil society organizations in strategic litigation, including in cases on access to justice for indigenous women and girls or women and girls with disabilities.
- ✓ In the Democratic Republic of Congo, OHCHR strengthened referral pathways for survivors of sexual violence in conflict particularly in terms of medical care, psychosocial and legal assistance, dignity kits and basic necessities.
- ✓ In Ethiopia, by working closely with local actors and service providers, OHCHR strengthened access to justice, medical and psychosocial services, and community-based protection mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Moreover, the Office reviewed and strengthened a module on gender-based violence investigation of the Ethiopian Police University, mainstreaming human rights-based approaches, including gender responsiveness, into police practices.
- ✓ In Libya, OHCHR and UNSMIL organized workshops and consultations to improve cooperation among justice actors and empower civil society especially women and victims to participate meaningfully in transitional justice and reconciliation processes.
- ✓ In Sudan, OHCHR has supported survivors of gender-based violence in conflict by working closely with women-led organizations and grassroots women's groups. OHCHR has strengthened the capacities of these organizations in monitoring, reporting, claiming their rights and advocacy.

OHCHR has carried out a study on the issue of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities (A/HRC/20/5). The study highlights the persistent barriers to justice faced by women and girls with disabilities, despite the existence of non-discrimination laws in many States. It affirms that these challenges stem from deep-rooted societal attitudes toward both gender and disability, as well as from systemic failures such as the lack of implementation of protective laws. Women and girls with disabilities often encounter structural and procedural obstacles when seeking justice, including being denied recognition as credible witnesses and facing discriminatory legal provisions that fail to criminalize the specific forms of violence they endure. The report notes a lack of disaggregated data and underreporting, which contributes to the invisibility of this violence. It emphasizes that programmes addressing gender-based violence often overlook disability inclusion, while disability rights initiatives tend to neglect gender. To address these gaps, the report calls for a dual-track approach combining inclusive general services with targeted measures for women and girls with disabilities. It recommends comprehensive policy reforms, accessible services, and active involvement of women with disabilities in decision-making. Key proposals include amending legislation to prohibit all forms of violence, ending forced sterilization and treatment, and ensuring accessible shelters and legal processes. The report underscores the need for a holistic and intersectional approach rooted in international human rights standards to ensure access to justice, protection, and support for women and girls with disabilities.

5. States' measures to promote women's access to justice

Around the world, States have adopted measures to tackle the obstacles women face in accessing justice and below is a non-exhaustive list of examples:

- ✓ [Cambodia](#): the creation of victim referral, reintegration services and capacity-building of justice actors, including police, prosecutors and judges to handle cases of gender-based violence with survivor-centered approaches.
- ✓ [CAR](#): the creation of specialized courts and rapid response units for sexual violence.
- ✓ [Colombia](#): the special jurisdiction for peace opened a macro case to investigate gender-based violence and crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity and incorporates a gender perspective in investigations and judicial decisions.
- ✓ [DRC](#): the creation of mobile courts that could reach women in remote and/or conflict affected areas
- ✓ [Guatemala](#): comprehensive care centers for survivors of sexual violence that integrate medical, psychosocial and legal support and facilitate case referrals to prosecutors.
- ✓ [Mexico](#): the 2023 national code of civil and family procedures harmonizes civil/family proceedings nationwide and incorporates gender-responsive provisions improving access to justice for women, including indigenous women and women with disabilities.
- ✓ [Nepal](#): adoption of an integrated legal aid policy, prioritizing women and poor and marginalized groups.
- ✓ [Rwanda](#): nationwide one-stop centres co-locating medical, psychosocial, police and legal aid services for survivors of gender-based violence.
- ✓ [Solomon Islands](#): free State legal aid for women survivors of gender-based violence despite limited resources and operations in 4 of 9 provinces.
- ✓ [South Sudan](#): the creation of specialized gender-based violence and juvenile courts with dedicated procedures and trained personnel.

6. Key recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations detailed above coming from OHCHR, Treaty Bodies' and Special Rapporteurs' work that focus on women's access to justice and provide guidance to address the obstacles women and girls face in access to justice.

• Normative and policy frameworks

- Repeal discriminatory laws and de facto practices and harmonize national laws with international human rights standards
 - Reform laws limiting women's legal capacity, property rights, and nationality
 - Remove all gender-based barriers to access to civil law procedures, such as requiring that women obtain permission from judicial or administrative authorities or family members before beginning legal action and reform all laws and dismantle practices that limit women's legal capacity.
 - Regulate the interaction of plural legal systems, including religious and customary, to guarantee women's right to equality and their access to effective remedy.
 - Put in place a normative and policy framework to prevent and redress all forms of gender-based violence, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child and forced marriage, reproductive violence, marital rape and sexual harassment
 - Reform laws on rape, centering them around consent, removing medical certificate requirements for initiating a case, eliminating the need to prove force or resistance and recognizing coercive dynamics
 - Develop appropriately funded national strategies and action plans to prevent and address gender-based violence
 - Repeal laws that establish amnesty for gender-based violence in conflict, including sexual violence
 - Repeal or eliminate laws, policies and practices that criminalize, obstruct or undermine access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and information
 - Enact laws and policies to ensure access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion care

• Institutional framework

- Reform the justice sector in line with international human rights norms and principles
 - Establish quotas and other measures for women in public and political life to achieve gender parity, including in the judiciary and law enforcement sectors
 - Establish specialized units in law enforcement and specialized courts with trained staff to deal with cases of gender-based violence.

- Adopt a well-funded national legal aid policy that considers women's obstacles to justice, including for women in criminal justice detention and women with disabilities
 - Dismantle gender stereotypes in judiciary and in law enforcement, including by properly training justice professionals on gender equality and women's human rights
 - Ensure access to culturally appropriate, affordable, physically accessible and timely justice services, including in indigenous and minorities' languages
 - Ensure access to civil justice on issues key for gender equality such as alimony, survivor's pension, gender equality in property rights, sexual and reproductive health
 - Use technology for remote hearings to facilitate access to justice for rural women and for women living in conflict affected areas
 - Ensure survivor-centered and gender responsive justice systems, including by establishing trauma-informed protocols and approaches that take like convening hours that would into account women's care responsibilities
 - Protect victims from reprisals and prosecute the intimidation of victims
 - Assess customary courts to identify and address gender bias
 - Ensure family mediation does not undermine access to justice or occur in cases of violence
- **Upholding gender equality**
 - Conduct awareness raising campaigns and education on gender equality and women's rights, dismantling gender stereotypes
 - Challenging gender and social norms that limit women's and girls' autonomy and choices
 - Promote an equal sharing of care and support responsibilities at home between women and men
 - Promote legal literacy and raise awareness on the justiciability of women's rights, including in indigenous and minorities' languages
Establishing education systems and school curricula to include women positive role models and their contributions to society throughout history. This would contribute to tackle gender stereotyping that hinder women's participation, including on their leadership role and capacity, expertise, care responsibilities, and their sexuality and reproductive roles.
 - Take steps towards the full realization of women's economic, social and cultural rights
 - Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and abortion care, that are available, accessible (affordable and physically reachable) , non-discriminatory, and of good quality.

- Ensuring an equal access to secondary and tertiary education of quality, bridging the digital divide, tackling the lack of women students in traditionally male sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and math
 - Promote women’s equal access to the labour market, including through vocational training, and access to resources such as land, including through access to credit.
- **Addressing the challenges of conflict and post-conflict settings**
 - Guarantee women’s and girls’ access to effective remedies and participation in transitional justice processes, by creating an accessible and safe environment for women to engage
 - Ensure prompt, independent, victim-centered investigations into cases of sexual violence in conflict that consider the age and gender of the victim, hold perpetrators accountable and provide victims with justice and reparations.
- **Support for survivors of gender-based violence**
 - Establish well-funded holistic support for survivors of gender-based violence
 - Put in place accessible and fully funded comprehensive care centers for victims of gender-based violence, timely access to shelters offering physical safety, legal advice, medical, psychological and child-care.
- **Data collection**
 - Collect disaggregated data on women’s and girls’ participation in public and political lives, including in the areas of education, work and politics
 - Collect disaggregated data gender-based violence including gender-related killings, establish observatories and ensure findings on accountability, justice and remedies inform legal reforms and protective measures.

Annex: References

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- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, [A/HRC/53/20](#), 2023
- Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, Visit to Mauritania, [A/HRC/56/51/ADD.1](#), 2024
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