



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/HRC/WG.6/2/BEN/1
9 April 2008

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Second session
Geneva, 5-16 May 2008

**NATIONAL REPORT SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 15(A)
OF THE ANNEX TO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 5/1***

Benin

* The present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

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Introduction

1. This report has been submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007 established pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006. Under the terms of that instrument, the Human Rights Council is instructed to undertake a universal periodic review of the fulfilment by the 192 Member States of the United Nations Organization of their human rights obligations and commitments.
2. According to the calendar adopted by the Human Rights Council at its sixth session on 21 September 2007, Benin will be considered at the second session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. The first draft of Benin's national report was prepared by a consultant appointed for that purpose. The report was based on a document search carried out to establish a list of the national and international legal human rights instruments to which Benin is a party, and a field survey designed to assess achievements in terms of the fulfilment of international obligations. The report was then submitted to the members of the National monitoring committee on the implementation of international instruments, which had been extended to include representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the National Advisory Council on Human Rights and resource persons from civil society, for completion.
3. The National monitoring committee on the implementation of international human rights instruments is made up of representatives of State bodies and resource persons. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation of human rights conventions.
4. The National Advisory Council on Human Rights is a forum for consultation between public authorities and NGOs working in the field of human rights. It is chaired by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, with an NGO representative elected for two years by the NGOs as vice-chair. The permanent secretary is the human rights director, whose deputy is elected by the same procedure as the vice-chair.
5. All civil society components contributed to the preparation of this report, in accordance with the guidelines in Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007.
6. The Republic of Benin acquired international sovereignty on 1 August 1960.
7. Following a series of coups d'état during the post-independence period, the military took power on 26 October 1972. As a result of their flawed interpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideology, a reign of terror was then instituted, with a monolithic government, a denial of fundamental freedoms, a collapse of the banking system and paralysis of the administration through a national strike. The country was on the brink of the abyss and national reconciliation was imperative.
8. The choice of a Republic eventually prevailed and the Conference of Active Forces of the Nation (*Conférence des Forces Vives*) was held from 19 to 28 February 1990. Thanks to these efforts, the people of the Republic of Benin regained confidence and an era of democratization was ushered in, based on full multi-partyism.

9. This new choice of government led to the development of a legal, political and institutional framework conducive to the establishment of the rule of law and pluralist democracy, in which fundamental human rights, freedoms, human dignity and justice are guaranteed, protected and promoted.

10. Benin adopted the Constitution of 11 December 1990 and, over time, has become party to the majority of international and regional human rights instruments:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 12 March 1992
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 12 March 1992, and first Optional Protocol
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 12 March 1992
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 12 March 1992
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 20 September 2006
- International Labour Organization Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment
- ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

In order to give effect to these international commitments and obligations, Benin has:

- Taken steps to strengthen its legal and institutional framework for the exercise of human rights
- Set up mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights
- Taken steps to ensure that all human rights are promoted and protected in the field.

11. In the light of this review, the efforts, progress and constraints required in the field of human rights and the challenges that need to be taken up in order to improve the situation of human rights in the field have been identified.

12. Proposals have now been made for the effective and efficient implementation of all human rights.

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXERCISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A. The Constitution of 11 December 1990

13. Act No. 90-32 establishing the Constitution of the Republic of Benin sets out the general framework of the major principles that govern all human rights, including first, second and third generation rights. The rights and duties of the individual are thereby incorporated into the domestic legal system. This is done in three ways: firstly, through the affirmation in the preamble to the Constitution of the commitment of the Beninese people to the principles of democracy and human rights as defined in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights adopted in 1981 by the Organization of African Unity. This affirmation indicates the Beninese people's opposition to any political regime founded on arbitrariness, dictatorship, injustice, corruption, misappropriation of public funds, regionalism, nepotism, abuse of authority and personal power.

14. A second expression of the incorporation of human rights in the domestic legal system appears in article 147 of the Constitution, which states that "duly ratified international treaties and agreements shall, upon publication, take precedence over domestic legislation, provided that those treaties and agreements are reciprocally applied".

15. Further to these two methods of incorporation, the Constitution devotes an entire Title to the rights and duties of the individual. Given the link it establishes between rights and obligations, the Constitution remains true to the principle according to which the freedom of one person stops where that of another person begins, as understood in the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

16. The African Charter of Human and People's Rights, which is a regional instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights, is also recognized as an integral part of the Constitution according to article 7. National human rights protection bodies are also referred to and their mandates clearly laid down in the Constitution, in order to ensure effective respect for human rights. Thus, in addition to some prerogatives, Title II of the Constitution of 11 December, and the first and second chapters of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights deal with the promotion and protection of human rights in Benin.

B. Domestic legislation

17. The different international human rights agreements and treaties to which Benin is a party have been enshrined in the domestic legal system by means of laws and regulations, including the following:

- Act No. 86-013 of 26 February 1986 on State Agents (General Regulations)
- Decision-Act No. 89-006 of 12 April 1989 amending and supplementing Act No. 86-013 of 26 February 1986 on State Agents (General Regulations)
- Act No. 2004-27 of 31 January 2004 amending and supplementing article 2 of Act No. 86-014 of 26 February 1986 establishing the Code of civil and military retirement pensions
- Decree No. 94-11 of 26 January 1994 establishing the obligations of members of the Constitutional Court
- Act No. 2004-07 of 24 August 2004 establishing the Personal and Family Code
- Act No. 98-030 of 12 February 1999 establishing the framework Environment Act
- Act No. 98-004 of 27 January 1998 establishing the Labour Code
- Act No. 2001-31 of 27 August 2002 on the organization of the judiciary in the Republic of Benin
- Act No. 2001-35 of 21 February 2003 on the status of the judiciary in the Republic of Benin
- Act No. 2003-03 of 3 March 2003 on the prohibition of the practice of female genital mutilation in the Republic of Benin
- Act No. 2003-04 of 3 March 2003 on sexual and reproductive health
- Act No. 2006-04 of 5 April 2006 setting out conditions for the displacement of minors and the suppression of trafficking in children in Benin
- Act No. 2006-31 of 5 April 2006 on prevention, care and support for HIV/AIDS
- Inter-ministerial order No. 16/MEPS/METFP/CAB/DC/SGM/SA of 1 October 2003 on sanctions for perpetrators of sexual abuse in public or private, general, technical or vocational secondary schools or educational establishments
- Act No. 2003-17 of 11 November 2003 on national education policy in the Republic of Benin.

18. In addition to this non-exhaustive list of laws and regulations, bills are currently being tabled before and adopted by the National Assembly.

19. These include the draft penal code, the draft penal procedure code and the draft law on the freedom of the press. The latter is an important development, insofar as it decriminalizes press offences.

20. Also the bill on money laundering and illicit enrichment.

C. Jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court

21. The decisions of principle handed down by the Constitutional Court have contributed to respect for and promotion of human rights. This is notably the case with the decision affirming the right to compensation for victims of human rights violations.
22. In order to support this legislation, general policy measures have been adopted and various mechanisms developed to guarantee the promotion and protection of human rights.

II. MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A. General policy measures

23. These measures target civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and all other human rights, including the right to development.
24. Free pre-school and primary education was introduced by the Beninese Government in the academic year 2006/07 in order to guarantee the right to education of all children of school age. It has led to an exponential increase in the school registration rate throughout the country, while it has improved standards in pre-school and primary education thanks to the major refurbishment and building of classrooms. Health care is also free for children up to the age of 5 and there has been an extensive campaign to distribute insect-repellent mosquito nets to pregnant women and wet nurses. People infected with AIDS also receive free health care. By facilitating access to health care this policy promotes enjoyment of the right to health.
25. The micro-credit programme for the poorest people, which amounted to some 10 billion CFA francs at 31 December 2007, allocates individual grants of 30,000 CFA francs to the poorest women to help them set up income-generating activities. The long-term aim of the programme is to reduce poverty. The Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of Justice is in charge of disseminating human rights through training seminars and workshops, including training workshops on capacity-building in human rights for:

- Trade union leaders in December 2005
- Local politicians in northern Benin in April 2005 and those in Mono-Couffo, Zou and Collines in June 2005
- Philosophy teachers from 2003 to 2005
- Specialist police units in March 2005
- Magistrates in May 2005
- Non-governmental organizations in September 2005
- Health workers in contact with patients in December 2005
- Journalists in December 2005.

26. During the unrest in Togo, visits were paid to refugee sites as well as regular visits to places of detention with a view to improving respect for persons in custody and detainees.

27. In addition, in order to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, a national protection and integration policy for persons with disabilities in Benin is being developed by the Ministry of Family Affairs, as well as a bill in favour of persons with disabilities. In that area, government bodies, non-State organizations and Church organizations have joined forces on activities such as:

- Publishing and distributing free information leaflets on human rights
- Setting-up vocational training centres for disabled persons in Akassato (Abomey-Calavi) and Péporiyakou (Natitingou)
- Setting-up welfare centres for visually-impaired and amblyopic persons (CPSAA) at Sègbèya (Cotonou)
- Developing and launching the community-based reintegration programme (RBC)
- Launching the Beninese school for the deaf at Vêdoko (Cotonou)
- Establishing centres for the deaf at Sènadè (Cotonou) and Parakou, and conducting trials on the education, training and integration of deaf persons
- Setting-up the Parakou centre for the blind
- Opening the “SILOE” centre for the blind in Djanganmé (Mono); and
- Starting up two special classes for mentally retarded children at “Les Nîmes” school in Cotonou.

28. Orthopaedic equipment and functional rehabilitation centres have been opened.

29. Additional measures are planned in order to improve respect for human rights in prisons. One of these, aimed at alleviating prison overcrowding, has consisted in building a new prison with a capacity for 1,000 inmates in Akpo-Missereté, which was opened in November 2007.

B. Jurisdictional mechanisms

30. These mechanisms are derived from decisions that are binding both on the authorities and on the public.

31. They consist of the final judgements of courts and tribunals and the decisions of the Constitutional Court.

1. Judicial mechanisms

32. According to article 125 of Title VI of the Constitution of 11 December 1990 concerning the judiciary, “the judiciary shall be independent of the legislature and the executive”.

33. Judicial power is exercised by the Supreme Court, and the courts and tribunals established in accordance with the law.

34. Article 26 of the Constitution enshrines the principle of the independence of the judiciary, which is repeated in article 4 of Act No. 2001-35 of 21 February 2003 on the status of the Beninese judiciary.

35. Under the terms of article 1 of Act No. 2001-37 of 27 August 2002, “the purpose of the judiciary is to ensure strict, rigorous and uniform compliance with laws and regulations ... and with all decisions handed down in contentious and non-contentious matters”. It ensures observance of all fundamental human rights.

2. The Constitutional Court

36. According to article 116 of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court is “the highest court in the land in constitutional matters. The Court rules on the constitutionality of laws and guarantees fundamental human rights and civil liberties. It is responsible for regulating the functioning of institutions and the activities of the public authorities”.

3. The High Court of Justice

37. The High Court of Justice has the authority to try the President of the Republic and members of the Government for high treason and offences committed in the exercise or the course of their duties. It also has the authority to try their accomplices in cases of treasonable conspiracy (Constitution, art. 136).

C. Non-jurisdictional mechanisms

38. These are implemented by human rights institutions and ensure the promotion and dissemination of human rights.

1. State institutions

39. These include the following:

- Ministry of Justice, Legislation and Human Rights
- Audio-Visual and Communication Authority
- Economic and Social Council
- Human Rights Directorate (Decree No. 97-30 of 29 January 1997)
- National Advisory Council on Human Rights (CNCDH)
- Benin Committee for Human Rights (CBDH)
- Monitoring committee on implementation of international human rights instruments

- National Commission on the Rights of the Child (CNDE)
- Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM) (Decree No. 90-186 of 20 August 1990)
- National child protection surveillance and coordination unit
- Presidential mediation body.

2. Non-State institutions

40. In Benin, most civil society organizations working in the field of human rights focus on civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. They include the Association of Women Lawyers of Benin (AFJB), the Association for the Struggle against Regionalism, Ethnocentrism and Racism (ALCRER), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), Transparency International, Amnesty International, and Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT/Benin).

41. In Benin, trade unions also play an important role in upholding economic, social and cultural rights. They embody the right to freedom of association and the right to organize enshrined in articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution.

42. The liberalization of the audiovisual media in Benin has encouraged the freedom of the press, opinion and expression, rights which are enshrined in article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Benin.

3. Scope of international obligations

43. In accordance with article 147 of the Constitution, “duly ratified treaties and agreements shall, upon publication, take precedence over domestic legislation, provided that such treaties and agreements are reciprocally applied”.

44. In compliance with that provision, the Government:

- On 5 September, published the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the official gazette
- Incorporated most international instruments in domestic legislation, through the Children’s Code, the Personal and Family Code, and several laws on sexual violence and female genital mutilation
- Proceeded to incorporate the provisions of international agreements on terrorism in the draft penal code and the draft penal procedure code through the National Assembly, and to prepare a bill to establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture.

III. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: OBSERVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

A. Principle of non-discrimination and equality of all before the law enshrined in the Constitution of 11 December 1990

45. This right was implemented through the adoption of the Personal and Family Code, which establishes inter alia parental authority and the equality of all children (legitimate, natural or born of adulterous relationships) with respect to inheritance.

B. The right to life, liberty, security and physical integrity

46. Article 6 of the Constitution of 11 December 1990 enshrines the right to life. Although the death penalty has not yet been abolished in domestic legislation, Benin, like many other countries, is moving towards a moratorium.

47. The abolition of the death penalty has been a matter of debate: a multidisciplinary committee is in charge of considering the issue and proposing measures that will confirm Benin's respect for its international obligations. All violations of the physical integrity of the person are punishable under several legislative texts, notably the children's code, the penal code, the law on female genital mutilation and other statutory instruments.

C. The right to a fair trial

48. The Constitution of 11 December enshrines the right to equal access to justice. Article 6 of Act No. 2001-37 of 27 August 2002 on the organization of the judiciary in the Republic of Benin stipulates that "justice shall be free of charge, subject to statutory provisions and regulations concerning legal costs, stamp duties and registration fees".

49. The State ensures that justice is free of charge and independent. These principles are guaranteed by the law on the organization of the judiciary (arts. 2, 3 and 5), the Constitution (art. 125) and Act No. 2001-35 of 21 February 2003 on the status of the judiciary (arts. 4, 23 and 24).

50. New courts have been set up in order to facilitate access to justice. Under article 36 of the above-mentioned law on the organization of the judiciary, a court of first instance (class 1) has been established in every commune with special status (Cotonou, Porto-Novo and Parakou) and 25 courts of first instance (class 2) in other communes. Only eight of these courts are currently operational.

51. Three Courts of Appeal are already operational (Cotonou, Abomey and Parakou).

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

52. This principle is enshrined in articles 18 and 19 of the Constitution and in domestic legislation. It is further implemented in the case law of the courts and tribunals and the Constitutional Court.

53. Any officers of the criminal police found guilty of acts of torture are subjected to both penal and disciplinary sanctions. Most victims of acts of torture perpetrated under the regime of the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin (PRPB) have received compensation. Steps have been taken to improve conditions of detention.

54. Alternative measures to imprisonment are under consideration and the judiciary have been asked to cooperate. NGOs also support the Government's efforts and report cases of torture in prisons.

E. The right to freedom of the press, expression and association

55. Benin runs several private television channels and community radio stations, as well as some 50 or so press publications.

F. The right to a decent standard of living

56. Benin has adopted several strategies and programmes aimed at combating poverty. One of these is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which aims to contribute to wealth creation.

57. These papers reflect the Government's policy, which is centred on strengthening the macroeconomic framework, good governance and the ability of the poor to take part in the decision-making and production processes.

58. The poverty reduction strategy has been used as a basis for discussions between the Government and donors, thanks to which Benin has become eligible for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

59. Benin also has a Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) for 2007-2009, which focuses on: the acceleration of growth, the development of infrastructures, the strengthening of human capital, the promotion of good governance and the balanced and lasting development of the country. This strategy is due to be revised in June 2008 in the light of human rights requirements, as in other countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. In this regard a consultation meeting initiated and supported by UNESCO was held first in Cotonou and later in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso.

G. The right to work, to social security and to organize

60. These rights are guaranteed under articles 30 and 31 of the Constitution. Further relevant laws and regulations include:

- Act No. 98-004 of 27 January 1998 on the Labour Code of the Republic of Benin
- ILO Conventions No. 155 (Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment) and No. 164 (Health Protection and Medical Care for Seafarers)
- Act No. 98-019 of 21 March 2003 on the Social Security Code of the Republic of Benin (arts. 93, 94 and 95 amended)

- Various statutes and collective agreements.

H. The right to education and culture

61. The right to education is guaranteed by the State. Education is compulsory in Benin. Pre-school and primary education have been free of charge since the beginning of the school year in October 2006.
62. In February 2005, Benin approved an educational policy paper approving the goal of education for all by 2015 for the country's education system in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.
63. The resources allocated to education rose substantially in 2005. The education budget amounts to 86.511 billion CFA francs, i.e. 22.55 per cent of the total State budget.
64. Both government bodies and NGOs are active in the field trying to enrol more girls in school. Literacy courses are also offered to elderly persons. A Ministry of Literacy and Promotion of National Languages has been established.

I. The right to health

65. This right is guaranteed under the Constitution. Primary health care, extended vaccination programmes and mother and child health care are provided by the public health services.
66. Under Act No. 2003-04 of 3 March 2003 on sexual and reproductive health, women and young persons are entitled to reproductive health care, sex education, contraceptives and family planning services.
67. The right to reproductive health services is also guaranteed under this Act.

J. The right to housing

68. Several measures have been taken by the Government in this area, covering housing security, the construction of low-cost housing and the preparation of a national housing policy.

K. The rights of women, children, the elderly, the disabled and protection of the family

69. A Ministry of Family, Women's and Children's Affairs has been established to guarantee these rights, which are enshrined in the Constitution. NGOs and government bodies are also active in the field to ensure that the Personal and Family Code is observed by all actors and sectors of society.

L. The rights of refugees

70. In Benin refugees enjoy the same rights as nationals. Their rights are protected and their return to their countries of origin is facilitated by UNHCR, the Department of Prevention and Civil Protection (DPPC) of the Ministry of the Interior and other bodies concerned.

M. The right to a healthy environment

71. Observance of this right, which is guaranteed under articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Constitution and the framework Law on the Environment, is monitored by the Government and the municipalities.

N. The right to development

72. This right is protected by cooperation agreements with the various development partners.

IV. PROGRESS AND OBSTACLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Progress and best practices

73. Benin has made great strides in the implementation of human rights. A number of institutions have been established for the promotion and protection of human rights. So far these institutions have been working quite satisfactorily. Another positive aspect has been allowing more democratic access to the Constitutional Court, which is the highest court of law for constitutional matters and which also monitors fundamental human rights and public liberties. Proceedings may now be brought directly before the Court by any citizen on simple request.

74. Training sessions, workshops and seminars are held regularly right across the country for different target groups (including magistrates, law enforcement officers, trade unionists, town councillors, civil society organizations and journalists), in order to improve their capacities in terms of human rights.

75. A further positive development has been the introduction of human rights in philosophy courses in general and technical secondary education.

76. With this innovation learners are initiated to the basic notions of human rights. The effect is to popularize human rights in practice through the younger generations, who will eventually be called upon to assume responsibilities.

77. A number of projects, programmes and laws have also been prepared or implemented to protect certain particularly vulnerable categories, such as women, children and disabled persons.

78. In the case of women, different influences are reflected in the laws protecting them against discrimination in the workplace and in society.

79. The Government has also launched the Civil Status Census (RAVEC) project to issue civil status certificates free of charge to thousands of Beninese citizens who have none, in a move to implement the right of every citizen to a civil status.

80. In order to promote press freedom, the Government has also increased the subsidies it pays to private press agencies.

B. Obstacles to the efficient implementation of international commitments

81. A great many obstacles still remain, however. Problems include the distance that needs to be covered to gain access to courts, the shortage of premises, the lack of basic documentation, obsolete office equipment, the degree of corruption in the judiciary that is prejudicial to public trust in the institution, and interference in judicial matters by the executive branch.

82. To those problems may be added those faced by civil society organizations.

83. These are related mainly to their finances, the way they are organized and their efficiency. The organizations are unable to meet the cost of their activities on their own. From the point of view of organization, they suffer shortcomings due to undemocratic structures. Lastly illiteracy continues to hamper the appreciation of human rights principles by the public at large.

V. MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE FIELD

A. Measures taken by the Government

84. The Government has introduced a number of measures to overcome many of the obstacles facing the public. With regard to the judicial sector, in order to alleviate the distance problem, two more courts of appeal have been set up and opened, one in Abomey and the other in Parakou in the north. A programme has also been launched to increase the number of magistrates by recruiting 40 new magistrates every 2 years.

85. The Government has also made clear its intention to combat illiteracy in the country by setting up a ministry in charge of literacy matters.

86. A number of economic measures have been taken in support of growth and poverty reduction strategies.

87. The Government is committed to a growth policy in order to protect the social, economic and cultural rights of the population thanks to the implementation of a series of appropriate measures (such as microcredit for deprived sectors, financial assistance for young entrepreneurs and wage rises for civil servants).

88. The Government has also given priority to the educational sector, to which it has devoted substantial funds with the help of partners.

89. The right to education is a government priority, like the right to health.

90. In the latter sector the Government has set aside substantial funds for improvements to the country's largest university hospital centre.

91. A further goal pursued by the Government is the strengthening of democratic institutions as a guarantee of fundamental freedoms.

B. Challenges to be met

92. To strengthen democracy by giving it an economic content in order to ensure for all citizens the full enjoyment of human rights.

- To improve prison conditions for detainees
- To eradicate discrimination against women
- To ensure the protection of persons suffering from disabilities
- To promote respect for the rights of children and young people
- To continue to justify the grant of technical, material and financial aid by development partners in order better to protect human rights
- To promote the autonomy of women and of the most deprived sectors
- To make pre-school and primary education free of charge
- To make secondary and technical education free of charge as well
- To provide a decent standard of living for all Beninese citizens without exception
- To establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture in order to eradicate the practice once and for all.

VI. PROSPECTS

93. The Republic of Benin has made praiseworthy efforts since the 1990s to ratify and implement the main human rights instruments. Its firm commitment to the current universal periodic review process fits in with this policy. Its situation as a poor country, however, is a limiting factor.

94. This is why Benin appeals for international cooperation to help it to build the capacities of people who are able to assist the implementation of its policies, and to establish minimum standards in order to ensure effective and universal respect for human rights in accordance with the new mechanism of the universal periodic review.
