

Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report

Universal Periodic Review:

2nd Cycle, 26th Session

ZIMBABWE

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Zimbabwe acceded to the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol* (hereinafter jointly referred to as the *1951 Convention*) in 1981. However, it has entered reservations to Article 17 (wage-earning employment), Article 23 (public relief), Article 24 (social security) and Article 26 (freedom of movement). Additionally, Zimbabwe ratified the *1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa* (the *1969 OAU Convention*) in 1985. Zimbabwe deposited the instrument of accession to the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* (the *1954 Convention*) in 1998, but it has not yet acceded to the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* (the *1961 Convention*). During the first cycle of the UPR in 2011, Zimbabwe accepted a recommendation to accede to the *1961 Convention*.¹

Refugee protection in Zimbabwe is governed by the *Zimbabwe Refugee Act*, which incorporates both the *1951* and the *1969 Conventions*. The Zimbabwe Refugee Committee (ZRC) is the national eligibility commission mandated under the *Refugee Act* to conduct refugee status determination (RSD). UNHCR sits in the sessions as an observer.

At the end of 2015, Zimbabwe hosted 10,593 refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern. Among these, 6,950 are refugees and 2,435 finally rejected asylum applicants from areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the UNHCR non-return policy applies. Refugees and asylum-seekers in Zimbabwe are predominantly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (79 per cent), mainly originating from the eastern part of the country and fleeing conflict, sexual violence and indiscriminate attacks. The remainder of the refugees and asylum-seekers in Zimbabwe originate from Burundi (8 per cent) and Rwanda (9 per cent), with the remaining four per cent of the population comprised of individuals from Angola, Côte D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Lebanon, Malawi, Mali, the Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Syria, Tanzania, and Uganda.

¹ "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Zimbabwe" (19 December 2011), para. 94.9, recommended by Slovakia, [A/HRC/19/14](#).

The legal framework on nationality in Zimbabwe consists of Chapter 3 of the *2013 Constitution* and the *Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act No. 23 of 1984* (as amended by *Act No. 7 of 1990*, *Act No. 12 of 2001*, *Act No. 22 of 2001*, *Act No. 23 of 2001*, *Act No. 1 of 2002* and *Act No. 12 of 2003*). It contains some important safeguards against statelessness, however, gaps remain, including the granting of nationality for children born to stateless parents.

Statelessness has been identified as a concern to UNHCR mainly regarding the migrant population that came into Zimbabwe from neighbouring countries (Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia) as farm and mine workers during the colonial period. This population group was negatively affected by multiple changes in nationality laws in Zimbabwe, especially in the period between 1963 and 2003. It is estimated that, at the height of agricultural expansion, between 20 and 30 per cent of up to 2.5 million farm workers in Zimbabwe were of foreign ancestry. Based on these numbers, and taking into account that some of these persons have already resolved their nationality issues, UNHCR estimates that 300,000 persons may be at risk of statelessness. Despite the gravity of the situation, the Government lacks information on the scope of the problem and offers limited protection to the affected persons.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Positive developments linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendations

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 93.10: “Ensure Zimbabwe’s Human Rights Commission has the resources and independence to carry out its mandate in accordance with Paris Principles (Australia)” **and no. 93.19:** “Enact as soon as possible the statute of the Human Rights Commission to make it operational (Switzerland).”

In the last cycle, Government of Zimbabwe agreed to provide the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission with adequate financial and technical capacity and to take concrete steps to ensure its independence, transparency and impartiality, and to enact as soon as possible the statute of the human rights commission to make it operational.

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission was established in 2010 and amplified by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission Act Chapter 10:30 (2/2012). The Commission is mandated to, inter alia, promote, monitor and protect human rights. Since the last reporting cycle, the Commission has become fully operational and is carrying out key areas of its mandate. In order to address the issue of statelessness in Zimbabwe, UNHCR partnered with the Commission to carry out a qualitative and quantitative study on nationality and statelessness.

Additional achievements and positive developments

In March 2013, a national referendum approved a new *Constitution*, which contains provisions that could provide the basis to prevent and reduce statelessness in Zimbabwe. For instance, Article 39 (3), which deals with revocation of citizenship, establishes that “Zimbabwean citizenship must not be revoked under this section if the person would be rendered stateless.” Article 43 of the Constitution is equally important, since it opens the door to citizenship for persons born in Zimbabwe before the *Constitution* entered into force where at least one of his or her parents were citizens of a country from the Southern African

Development Community (SADC). This provision could potentially resolve the nationality situation of the vast majority of former farm or mine workers in the country.

Since 2012 the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Office of the Registrar General, has been carrying out occasional missions to the Tongogara Refugee Camp to issue birth certificates to refugee children. In 2015, the Government issued birth certificates to 147 refugee children. A total of 556 males and 438 females received new identity cards and an additional 92 males and 47 females renewed their ID cards.

In 2013, the Government of Zimbabwe acceded to the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*, which supplements the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* of 15 November 2000 (the *Palermo Convention*). Zimbabwe enacted the enabling municipal law, the *Trafficking in Persons Act Chapter 10:20*, in 2014 through a Presidential proclamation published in the Statutory Instrument number 4 of 2014. The enactment deals with the prohibition, prevention and prosecution of crimes of trafficking and protection of victims.

III. KEY PROTECTION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges linked to outstanding 1st cycle UPR recommendations

Issue 1: Birth registration

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 94.30: “Amend expeditiously the Births and Deaths Registration Act to ensure that all children born in Zimbabwe, regardless of their parents’ origin, are issued with birth certificates (Slovakia)”.

Birth registration is critical to prevent statelessness, since it establishes a legal record of where a child was born and who his or her parents are. In addition, it represents a significant proof of whether a person has acquired nationality by birth or by descent.

While the Government of Zimbabwe has taken some positive steps, as presented in the Second Periodic Report, to ensure birth registration for children, the overall birth registration situation in the country needs an improvement. In 2008, the birth registration rate for Zimbabwe was only 42 per cent (56 per cent in urban areas and 35 per cent for rural areas).²³ In fact, a comparison of the 2005-06 Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey (ZDHS) with the 2010-11 ZDHS revealed that the percentage of children under the age of 5 whose births were registered had dropped sharply from 74 per cent to 49 per cent.⁴ More recently, the 2014 Zimbabwe Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicated that only 32.3% children under the age of 5 were reported as being registered. Significant measures are therefore needed to attain universal birth registration in Zimbabwe.

² President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) *et al* Strategic Analysis in Civil Registration in the Context of HIV and AIDS, 2008, p24.

³ JIMAT Development Consultants Programme of Support for the National Plan for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children: Outcome Assessment Final Report, 19 May 2010, p23-4.

⁴Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, Harare and ICF International Inc., Maryland USA Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey 2010 – 2011, available at: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/78907455/2010-11%20Zimbabwe%20DHS%20Final%20Report.pdf>; see also, Research & Advocacy Unit, *A Right or a Privilege? Access to Identity and Citizenship in Zimbabwe*, November 2008, p6, which estimates that “nearly a third of all children do not possess a birth certificate”.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe:

- a. Continue to take measures to ensure that all children born in Zimbabwe, including refugee children, have access to registration immediately after birth regardless of their parents' citizenship status and/ or country of origin;
- b. Ensure that the Registrar General implements the *Birth and Death Registration Act* in a manner that promotes the best interests of the child, including enhancing mobile birth registration in remote areas; and
- c. Invest in an awareness-raising campaigns on the importance and process of birth registration in the country.

Issue 2: Prevention and reduction of statelessness and protection of stateless persons

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 94.9: “Ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Slovakia)”.

Although the new *Constitution* provides wider protections for persons at risk of statelessness, gaps remain when considering the protections advanced by the *1961 Convention*, to which the country has not acceded. For instance, while section 38 provides that persons continually residing Zimbabwe for at least 10 years and satisfying certain conditions are entitled to apply for citizenship, the law does not entirely protect persons that are stateless or at risk of statelessness. Additionally, while the constitution provides for the right of citizenship through a person's mother or father, the NGO Lawyers for Human Rights reports that, in practice, a single mother registering a child in accordance to the law may at times face challenges due to patriarchal attitudes that persist. Further, the Constitution does not guarantee that a person living abroad for extended periods of time or those who failing to register can retain their nationality. Additionally, there is also no guarantee that a person shall not lose nationality if that loss would render the person stateless. In order to alleviate these gaps, UNHCR will continue to advocate for accession to the *1961 Convention* which establishes an international framework to ensure the right of every person to a nationality by establishing safeguards to prevent statelessness at birth and later in life.

The 1984 *Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act* (as amended in 1990) provides the process through which one may register as a citizen of Zimbabwe. This is a restrictive piece of legislation, especially when looked at in light of the new Constitution. It provides, *inter alia*, that non-Zimbabwean children should have their parents registered before they can themselves be registered as citizens of Zimbabwe. The *Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act* does not contain safeguards with respect to loss of citizenship. It both appears to allow renunciation without the possession of or a guarantee to acquire another nationality. It also provides for the loss of nationality for those who reside abroad for more than seven years. As such, this Act needs to be amended and aligned with the new Constitution.

While negotiations have continued towards accession to the *Convention*, certain forces in the Government have discouraged the accession arguing, *inter alia*, that Zimbabwe does not have a statelessness problem.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe:

- a. Accede to the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*; and

- b. Amend the *Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act No. 23* to reflect and implement enhanced safeguards contained in the *2013 Constitution* and the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.

Issue 3: Child protection

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendation no. 93.1: “Continue its efforts to combat trafficking in persons and consider the possibility to accede to the Optional Protocol to the CRC relating to sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Belarus)”

Zimbabwe is regarded as a source, transit, and destination country for persons trafficked for the purposes of forced labour and domestic service in rural areas (either in the agricultural or mining sectors) and sexual exploitation in urban areas. UNHCR is aware that family members in Zimbabwe sometimes recruit children and other relatives from rural areas for work in cities where they are subjected to domestic servitude or other forms of forced labour. Orphans, in particular, are vulnerable to trafficking as they are promised education or adoption but are forced to work or to carry out illegal activities.

Zimbabwe enacted the *Trafficking in Persons Act* in February 2014 through a Presidential proclamation published in Statutory Instrument number 4 of 2014. The law deals with the prohibition, prevention and prosecution of crimes of trafficking as well as the protection of victims. In the past, incidents of trafficking in the country, including the trafficking of children, were dealt with under the *Children's Act*, the *Sexual Offences Act*, the *Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act* and the *Anti-Money Laundering Act*.

The Government of Zimbabwe has not actively promoted the best interests of the child principle outside of the family law context. Consultations with refugees have revealed that child protection remains a major challenge in refugee camps, with significant school drop-out rates, early marriages and pregnancies, transactional sex, complaints about foster care afforded to unaccompanied and separated children, and child labour. In addition, impacts of internal displacements in the past, either due to floods or associated with clearing of slums continue to affect children.

In May 2005, the Government of Zimbabwe launched Operation Murambatsvina. It was a programme to enforce by-laws in order to stop all forms of illegal activities such as vending, illegal structures, and illegal cultivation in the cities. According to estimates by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Human Settlement, the operation resulted in an estimated 700,000 people losing their homes and/or livelihoods, with a further 2.4 million people indirectly affected by the Operation. As a consequence of the operation, children became more vulnerable to abuse. Many children dropped out of school and young girls turned to prostitution as a way of fending for themselves.

In addition to operation Murambatsvina, in 2014, more than 3,000 families were displaced in Chingwizi area in South-Eastern Masvingo Province after flooding in the area. The Government was accused of forcibly resettling them in small plots of undeveloped land where they were facing hardships including a lack of adequate food, shelter, health and education facilities. The poor learning conditions and poverty affecting the camp meant that many children did not attend school. This was also high incidence of teenage pregnancy.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe:

- a. Enhance efforts to prosecute trafficking offenses and define procedures for identifying victims and implement a national action plan to combat trafficking;
- b. Consider the possibility to accede to the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*;
- c. Incorporate the principle of the best interests of the child in all laws, particularly regarding criminal legislation, nationality and citizenship laws, as well as in the practices and procedures of state institutions in discharging their duties; and
- d. Take steps to address the residual impact of Operation Murambatsvina (2005) and the Chingwizi resettlement/relocation in Masvingo Province (2014) on children, including fulfilling the rights to shelter, education and social security for families that are still affected.

Issue 4: Violence against women

Linked to 1st cycle UPR recommendations no. 93.39: “Strengthen protection mechanisms against gender-based violence (Angola);” and 93.40: “Consolidate the mechanisms to protect women against all forms of violence (Morocco);”

In 2007 the Government of Zimbabwe passed the *Domestic Violence Act* to allow maximum protection for survivors of domestic violence, provide relief to survivors and long term measures for the prevention of domestic violence.

The Zimbabwe Constitutional Court has ruled that, with effect from 20 January 2016, no person, male or female may enter into any marriage, including an unregistered customary law union or any other union including one arising out of religious rite, before attaining the age of 18 years. Section 78(1) of the Constitution sets 18 years as the minimum age of marriage and that any law to the contrary would be unconstitutional.

The *2012 Protocol on Multi Sectoral Management of Sexual abuse and Violence in Zimbabwe* was enacted to strengthen protection mechanisms for survivors in relation to welfare and justice systems. The Victim Friendly system seeks to deliver comprehensive, specialized psychosocial care and medical, legal and referral services to survivors of sexual abuse through Victim Friendly Police Units (VFU), Courts and Clinics. However, it is important to note that all units involved in the protection mechanisms for survivors of sexual and gender-based (SGBV) have recently experienced an unprecedented loss of qualified and experienced personnel to neighbouring countries and beyond, which has severely eroded the capacity of public services.

Media reports indicate that the actual levels of occurrence of different types of SGBV cases is high. However, only a few cases are reported. SGBV cases are often unreported, reported late, or do not receive sufficient follow up from the existing systems and survivors to enable successful prosecution of cases. The primary reasons for non-reporting identified includes fear, especially pressure from family members and safety concerns when the abuser is a husband or family member but also low confidence in the legal system and lack of accountability of perpetrators.

Among the main concerns associated with the limited reporting is the lack of effective victim friendly law enforcement and judicial institutions. Deteriorating and under resourced medical services with shortages in health personnel and important medicine are among other concerns associated with the response to SGBV cases.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe:

- a. Strengthen protection mechanisms and responses to gender-based violence, including by ensuring victims have access to social and legal support and by ensuring that cases of SGBV are promptly and effectively prosecuted and resolved by the courts; and Address the continued high prevalence of violence against women and girls, including by strengthening training for the judiciary and law enforcement personnel to enhance their capacity to respond effectively to cases of violence against women and girls.

Additional protection challenges

Issue 5: Access of refugees to fundamental human rights

Lack of formal access to wage-earning employment

Refugees do not have formal access to the labour market and are therefore compelled to work in the informal sector, often working under duress, or in jobs presenting special hazards and risks. In order to reside in urban areas, refugees have to demonstrate that they have the wherewithal to fend for themselves, yet they are not allowed to seek formal wage earning employment. Nonetheless, refugees with resources to run private businesses are authorized to do so, and those who are qualified in professions with limited human resources, such as health services, may be allowed to work.

Lack of freedom of movement

Zimbabwe has an encampment policy requiring all refugees to stay at Tongogara Refugee Camp. Detention is used for migration-related offences, including unlawful entry, employment without an official permission to work and exiting the refugee camp without authorization. Notwithstanding the use of detention in these cases, about 14% of refugees and asylum-seekers live in urban areas. As of 1 January 2015, there were 100 known registered refugees and asylum-seekers who had been detained throughout 2014 across the country for migration-related offenses and were eventually released through UNHCR's intervention.

Recommendations:

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe:

- a. Withdraw its reservations to Article 17 (wage-earning employment) and Article 26 (freedom of movement) of the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*;
- b. Allow refugees to have access to the formal labour market and to enjoy the right to freedom of movement.

**Human Rights Liaison Unit
Division of International Protection
UNHCR**

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ANNEX

**Excerpts⁵ of Concluding Observations from the 1st cycle Universal Periodic Review, Concluding Observations from UN Treaty Bodies and Recommendations of Special Procedure mandate holders
ZIMBABWE**

We would like to bring your attention to the following excerpts from the 1st cycle UPR recommendations, UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies' Concluding Observations and recommendations from UN Special Procedures mandate holders' reports relating to issues of interest and persons of concern to UNHCR with regards to Zimbabwe.

I. Universal Periodic Review

Recommendation⁶	Recommending State/s	Position⁷
Birth registration		
94.30. Amend expeditiously the Births and Deaths Registration Act to ensure that all children born in Zimbabwe, regardless of their parents' origin, are issued with birth certificates	Slovakia	To be examined
Ratification of the CAT and of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness		
94.1. Ratify the CAT	United Kingdom	To be examined
94.2. Become a party to the CAT	New Zealand	To be examined
94.6. Ratify the CAT	Chad	To be examined
94.7. Ratify and incorporate into domestic legislation the core human rights treaties, including CAT and CRC	Poland	To be examined
94.9. Ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	Slovakia	To be examined
94.14. Ratify the CAT and its Optional Protocol	Switzerland	To be examined
94.15. Sign and ratify the CAT, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Spain	To be examined
95.2. Ratify the CAT, the second Optional Protocol to ICCPR and withdraw its reservations to the 1951 Refugee Convention	Czech Republic	Noted
95.3. Ratify the CAT, implement its standards into national law and take immediate and concrete actions against the practice of torture by State officials	Germany	Noted
95.5. Ratify the CAT, clearly criminalize torture and ban all kinds of	Portugal	Noted

⁵These excerpts have been provided by the Human Rights Liaison Unit as an attachment with the call for input and can be included in the submission as an annex.

⁶All recommendations made to Zimbabwe during its 1st cycle UPR can be found in: "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Zimbabwe" (19 December 2011) [A/HRC/19/14](#).

⁷As of 10 October 2015, no Addendum has been made available for Zimbabwe's 1st cycle UPR review.

corporal punishment		
Trafficking in persons		
93.1. Continue its efforts to combat trafficking in persons and consider the possibility to accede to the Optional Protocol to the CRC relating to sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children	Belarus	Supported
Violence against Women		
93.39.Strengthen protection mechanisms against gender-based violence	Angola	Supported
93.40.Consolidate the mechanisms to protect women against all forms of violence	Morocco	Supported

II. Treaty Bodies

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding Observations,51st session (23 March 2012) [CEDAW/C/ZWE/CO/2-5](#)

Violence against women

23. While noting the adoption of the new Domestic Violence Act in 2006, the Committee expresses its concern at the high prevalence of violence against women in the State party, in particular domestic and sexual violence, which remains, in many cases, underreported, as well as at the lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex, and also at the absence of an expressed political will to give high priority to eliminating violence against women. While welcoming the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act in 2003, which recognizes marital rape as an offence, the Committee is deeply concerned that despite the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in 2006 and the establishment of an Anti-Domestic Violence Council, responsible for the implementation of the Act, its effectiveness has been hampered, as the State party has not allocated the required monetary and human resources thereto. The Committee is further concerned at the State party's failure to address politically motivated violence against women. The Committee is again concerned that there is only one State-established shelter for women victims of violence (the two other shelters were established by NGOs), and that it is not exclusively for women victims of domestic violence. The Committee is also concerned about acts of violence perpetrated by State and non-State actors, against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.

24. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Put in place comprehensive measures to prevent and address violence against women and girls, recognizing that such violence is a form of discrimination against women and constitutes a violation of their human rights under the Convention, and ensure that women and girls who are victims of violence have access to immediate means of redress and protection and that**

- perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation No. 19;
- (b) Provide mandatory training for judges and prosecutors on the strict application of legal provisions dealing with violence against women and train police officers on procedures to deal with women victims of violence;
 - (c) Encourage women to report incidents of domestic and sexual violence, by destigmatizing victims and raising awareness about the criminal nature of such acts;
 - (d) Put in place measures to prevent and address politically motivated violence against women;
 - (e) Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, by strengthening the capacity of existing shelters and establishing more shelters, especially in rural and remote areas, and enhancing cooperation with NGOs providing shelter and rehabilitation to victims;
 - (f) Provide effective protection against violence and discrimination against all groups of women, including lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, in particular through the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes the prohibition of multiple forms of discrimination and through the launching of a sensitization campaign aimed at the general public, as well as providing appropriate training to law enforcement officials; and
 - (g) Collect statistical data on domestic and sexual violence disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and relationship between the victim and perpetrator.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. The Committee remains concerned at the continuing prevalence of trafficking in women and girls in the country, at the lack of statistical data sex disaggregated, as well as at the low reporting rate. The Committee is also concerned at the State party's failure to address the root causes of trafficking and prostitution, including poverty, which impede the State party's efforts to address these issues in a serious way. While noting the existence of the reception and support centres at Beitbridge and Plumtree border posts which receive returnees and deportees from neighbouring countries, the Committee is concerned at the lack of shelters and counselling services in the State party for victims of trafficking and prostitution, as well as at the lack of information on the existence and implementation of regional and bilateral memoranda of understanding and/or agreements with other countries on trafficking.

26. The Committee calls upon the State party to fully implement article 6 of the Convention, including through:

- (a) Addressing root causes of trafficking and prostitution, including poverty, in order to eliminate vulnerability of girls and women to sexual exploitation and trafficking, and undertaking efforts for the recovery and social integration of the victims;
- (b) Providing training on how to identify and deal with victims of trafficking and on the provisions of the anti-trafficking legislation to the judiciary, law enforcement officials, border guards and social workers in all parts of the country, especially in rural and remote areas;
- (c) Ensuring a systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation, including the collection and analysis of data on trafficking and exploitation of women in prostitution, and to include such data in its next periodic report;

- (d) Increasing efforts for international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination in order to prevent trafficking through information exchange and to harmonize legal procedures aiming at the prosecution of traffickers;**
- (e) Taking necessary steps to ensure that trafficked women and girls have access to quality medical care, counselling, financial support, adequate housing and training opportunities, as well as access to free legal services;**
- (f) Ratifying the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.**