



SHADOW REPORT

The African Commission on Human and Peoples 'rights ahead of review of Mauritius 11th periodic report on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights and periodic report on the Maputo Protocol on the 87th session of the African commission on human and peoples' rights (ACHPR)

Submitted by

Mauritius Women with Disabilities in collaboration with Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) and African Disability Forum (ADF)

observer status 588

Introduction

1. This shadow report is submitted by Mauritius Women with Disabilities in collaboration with Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) and African Disability Forum (ADF) to contribute to the review of Mauritius 11th periodic report on the African charter on Human and Peoples' rights and periodic report on the Maputo Protocol at the 87th Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).
2. The report provides an intersectional analysis of the human rights situation of women with disabilities, with a particular focus on identifying legal, policy, and implementation gaps in the realization of their rights under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).
3. The development of this report was informed through a consultative and participatory process, involving discussions with women with disabilities. The report draws primarily on collective reflections, lived experiences, and submissions from women with disabilities. This approach ensured that the report captures the real and lived realities of women with disabilities, while also identifying priority issues for advocacy before the Commission.
4. The report also builds on findings from international human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as well as regional evidence on the situation of women with disabilities. It highlights critical gaps in the areas of protection from violence, access to justice, health and sexual and reproductive health rights and economic empowerment.
5. Mauritius Women with disabilities wishes to express sincere appreciation to Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) and the African Disability Forum for their technical and financial support in the development and submission of this report. Their support has also made it possible to facilitate the participation of representatives of women with disabilities in the ACHPR session in Banjul, The Gambia, thereby strengthening direct engagement with the Commission and ensuring that the voices of women with disabilities are heard in this important accountability process.

Preamble and Background

6. According to the state report, Mauritius has made notable progress in advancing human rights through constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination and through legislative and policy reforms, including disability and gender-related frameworks¹. The State is also party to key regional and international human rights instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

¹ The Republic of Mauritius 11th Periodic Report (2019–2024) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (p.10–11). <https://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2024-08/mauritius-11th-periodic-report2019-2024.pdf>

7. These instruments impose binding obligations on the State to ensure equality, non-discrimination, accessibility, and full participation of women with disabilities.
8. Globally, persons with disabilities constitute approximately 15% of the population, with women with disabilities among the most marginalized groups due to intersecting forms of discrimination (World Report on Disability, World Health Organization, 2011)².
9. Despite these commitments, significant legal and policy gaps persist. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius (herein referred as “CRPD Committee recommendations”).³ raised concerns about the absence of a gender perspective in disability legislation and the lack of recognition of intersectional discrimination faced by women with disabilities⁴.
10. On a Similar occasion, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018 (Here in referred to as “CEDAW Committee recommendations”)⁵ noted gaps in the constitutional and legislative framework, including the lack of a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women and insufficient data to inform policy⁶.
11. These gaps demonstrate a failure to fully implement obligations under Articles 2 and 3 of the African Charter, Article 2 of the Maputo Protocol, and Articles 5 and 6 of the CRPD, which require States to eliminate discrimination and address multiple and intersectional forms of inequality.
12. This shadow report finds that, despite progress, women with disabilities remain largely invisible within national frameworks. The absence of an intersectional approach continues to limit their access to justice, protection, health, and economic participation. These findings are further supported by regional evidence, including the Powerful Yet Overlooked: African Women with Disabilities and the Ongoing Struggle for Inclusion report in 2024, which documents widespread exclusion of women with disabilities across Africa including Mauritius⁷.

² World Report on Disability WHO 2011 <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sensory-functions-disability-and-rehabilitation/world-report-on-disability>

³ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

⁴ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

⁵ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018. <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/MUS/FCO/8>

⁶ the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018. <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/MUS/FCO/8>

⁷ Powerful yet overlooked, African women with disabilities and the ongoing struggle for inclusion 30 years after Beijing, 2024 https://www.hi.org/sn_uploads/document/B30-Powerful-yet-overlooked-REPORT-24Oct2024.pdf

Specific Articles, Proposed questions and Key Recommendations

A. Violence Against Women with Disabilities

(ACHPR Articles 4 & 5 and Maputo Protocol Articles 3 & 4)

13. Mauritius 11th Periodic state Report (2019–2024) noted establishment of GBV Observatory Integrated Support Centres⁸. It has adopted legislation such as the Protection from Domestic Violence Act and established institutional mechanisms to address gender-based violence, however, these frameworks reveal significant policy gaps in relation to women with disabilities.
14. The CRPD Committee recommendations has explicitly noted that shelters and services for survivors of violence remain largely inaccessible to persons with disabilities⁹. The CEDAW Committee recommendations has also identified gaps in protection, including low reporting and conviction rates, limited availability of shelters, and lack of monitoring mechanisms for GBV interventions¹⁰.
15. Regional evidence shows that women with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience gender-based violence and face significant barriers in accessing support services¹¹. For women with disabilities, these systemic gaps are compounded by additional barriers, including inaccessible services, lack of communication support such as sign language interpretation, stigma, and dependence on caregivers. As a result, many women with disabilities remain unable to report violence or access support, leading to systemic underreporting and continued exposure to abuse.
16. Women with disabilities in Mauritius who convened on 2nd April 2026 described a situation where women with disabilities are often left in a “waiting game,” with limited access to timely and appropriate support when experiencing violence.
17. A critical concern raised was the lack of accessible information and communication, particularly for women with sensory disabilities. Deaf women, for instance, are often unable to access information or report violence due to the absence of sign language interpretation and accessible communication formats. This significantly limits their ability to seek help, understand their rights, and navigate available services.
18. These findings indicate that Mauritius is not fully meeting its obligations under Article 4 of the African Charter and Article 4 of the Maputo Protocol, which require States to take appropriate measures to prevent and respond to violence against women. The absence of disability-inclusive provisions within GBV frameworks constitutes a policy and implementation gap, resulting in the exclusion of women with disabilities from protection

⁸ The Republic of Mauritius 11th Periodic Report (2019–2024) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (p.26) <https://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2024-08/mauritius-11th-periodic-report2019-2024.pdf>

⁹ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

¹⁰ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018. <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/MUS/FCO/8>

¹¹ Powerful yet overlooked, African women with disabilities and the ongoing struggle for inclusion 30 years after Beijing, 2024. https://www.hi.org/sn_uploads/document/B30-Powerful-yet-overlooked-REPORT-24Oct2024.pdf

systems. Additionally, the lack of disability-disaggregated data on GBV reflects a failure to comply with obligations related to accountability and monitoring.

19. In light of this, it is critical to ask how Mauritius is ensuring that gender-based violence prevention and response systems are inclusive and accessible to women with disabilities including those with sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial impairments?

Proposed questions

20. What measures is the government taking to address gender-based violence against women with disabilities?
21. Can the government provided disaggregated data by gender and disability on gender-based cases recorded, investigated and resolved?

Recommendation:

22. Mauritius should revise GBV laws and policies to explicitly include women with disabilities, ensure accessibility of shelters and services, establish monitoring mechanisms, and collect disability- and gender-disaggregated data on violence.
23. Government must train all stakeholders including staff at the integrated support centers, Police officers, the Judiciary as well as medical staff to provide inclusive services.

B. HEALTH AND SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS (SRHR)

(ACHPR Article 16 and Maputo Protocol Article 14)

24. According to the Mauritius 11th Periodic state Report (2019–2024), Mauritius has made efforts to strengthen health services, including those targeting women and broader gender equality frameworks and Institutions such as the Ministry of Gender play an important role in addressing women's rights and supporting services related to gender-based violence and social protection¹².
25. While these efforts are recognized as important steps toward improving access to services for women, discussions with women with disabilities highlight that these services are not fully inclusive, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). Women with disabilities continue to face barriers in accessing information, services, and support on an equal basis with others.
26. Both the CEDAW Committee recommendations and the CRPD Committee recommendations identified barriers to sexual and reproductive health services, including inaccessible infrastructure and discriminatory attitudes¹³.

¹² The Republic of Mauritius 11th Periodic Report (2019–2024) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (p.77). <https://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2024-08/mauritius-11th-periodic-report2019-2024.pdf>

¹³ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

27. These findings concur with the recent Regional evidence which indicates that over 60% of women with disabilities face barriers in accessing health and social services, reflecting a broader pattern of exclusion¹⁴ confirming UN Women report that says women of reproductive age (15-49 years) often face barriers with respect to their sexual and reproductive health and rights¹⁵.
28. In Mauritius, these barriers include lack of accessible information, absence of communication support, and limited recognition of autonomy and informed consent and inclusion in service design and delivery.
29. For example, women with disabilities may not have access to sign language interpreters, accessible information, or communication support when seeking services. This particularly affects women with sensory disabilities, who are unable to receive critical information related to their health, rights, and available services. One of the women during the discussion, shared that she was only able to access antenatal services because of the available support of her mother at the hospital due to communication barriers.
30. In addition, there is limited assurance that facilities such as shelters, support centres, and health services are physically accessible and responsive to the needs of women with disabilities. The lack of inclusive design and implementation creates barriers to accessing essential services, including those related to reproductive health and protection from violence.
31. Another critical concern is the limited involvement of women with disabilities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of services. This results in services that do not fully reflect their needs, experiences, and priorities.
32. These gaps indicate a failure to fully implement obligations under the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol on the right to health.

Proposed Question

33. How is Mauritius ensuring inclusive access to SRHR services?

Recommendation:

34. Mauritius should integrate disability into health policies, ensure accessible services, and train healthcare providers on disability inclusion and rights.

C. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOODS

(ACHPR Article 15 and Maputo Protocol Article 13)

35. Mauritius 11th Periodic state Report (2019–2024) reveals that Mauritius has established legal and policy frameworks aimed at promoting equality and non-discrimination in employment and economic participation. The State report highlights labour protections,

¹⁴ Powerful yet overlooked, African women with disabilities and the ongoing struggle for inclusion 30 years after Beijing, 2024.
https://www.hi.org/sn_uploads/document/B30-Powerful-yet-overlooked-REPORT-24Oct2024.pdf

¹⁵ <https://data.unwomen.org/country/mauritius>

equal treatment in employment, and ongoing efforts to support the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market through skills development and other initiatives¹⁶.

36. Mauritius has affirmed its commitment to upholding the rights of workers by adhering to fundamental standards of the International Labour Organization, alongside national legislation and regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. As noted in the State's 11th periodic report, this includes measures to promote non-discrimination, equal remuneration, and access to employment. These commitments are further reflected in domestic legislation such as the Employment Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination in employment and guarantees equal pay for work of equal value¹⁷.
37. However, despite this strong normative framework, a significant gap remains between policy commitments and actual implementation. Evidence indicates that persons with disabilities, particularly women, continue to face systemic barriers in accessing employment opportunities. The quota system requiring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce remains weakly enforced, and many employers lack the necessary guidance and support to implement inclusive hiring practices¹⁸.
38. Discussions with women with disabilities who convened on 2nd April 2026 indicated that these frameworks do not adequately address the specific and compounded barriers faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment and economic opportunities.
39. CRPD Committee recommendations highlighted low employment rates among persons with disabilities and weak enforcement of employment measures¹⁹.
40. On the other hand, CEDAW Committee recommendations also noted persistent gender inequalities in employment and lack of disaggregated data²⁰.
41. Across the region, approximately 66% of women with disabilities face barriers in accessing programs and economic opportunities, while many remain excluded from leadership and decision-making spaces. Regional evidence also confirms that women with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the poorest and least economically empowered groups²¹.

¹⁶ Republic of Mauritius, Employment and labour provisions, <https://labour.govmu.org/Documents/Legislations/THE%20WORKERS%20RIGHTS%20Act%202019/A%20Consolidated%20Version%20of%20the%20Workers%27%20Rights%20Act%202019%20as%20at%202%20August%202023.pdf>

¹⁷ Employment Rights Act <https://mauritiuslii.org/akn/mu/act/2008/33/eng@2017-06-30>

¹⁸ Employment Guide of persons with disabilities in Mauritius <https://disability.govmu.org/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/employguide.pdf>

¹⁹ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

²⁰ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018. <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/MUS/FCO/8>

²¹ Powerful yet overlooked, African women with disabilities and the ongoing struggle for inclusion 30 years after Beijing, 2024. https://www.hi.org/sn_uploads/document/B30-Powerful-yet-overlooked-REPORT-24Oct2024.pdf

42. According to the 2011 Population Census, approximately 59,870 persons in Mauritius live with a disability implying that almost 1 in 20 persons in Mauritius has a disability. (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Mauritius '2011 Housing and Population Census: Analytical report'²² of which 51.6% of the population of persons living with disabilities are female with disabilities.
43. In Mauritius women with disabilities continue to experience high levels of economic exclusion, despite the existence of general employment protections. Participants highlighted that economic empowerment initiatives are often gender-neutral and disability-neutral, which results in women with disabilities being left behind.
44. Women with disabilities face barriers in accessing employment due to discrimination, limited access to education and skills training, and the lack of inclusive and accessible workplaces. Even where opportunities exist, they are often not designed to accommodate the needs of women with disabilities, particularly those with mobility, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial disabilities.
45. Furthermore, broader labour market inequalities persist, with women's labour force participation significantly lower than that of men, and women more likely to be economically inactive or engaged in unpaid care work²³.
46. Available national and research data further highlight structural inequalities in labour participation. *According to the Social Protection and Disability in Mauritius study*, female labour force participation stands at approximately 43.6 per cent compared to 72.4 per cent for men, reflecting significant gender disparities in economic participation²⁴.
47. The same study also highlights that poverty remains higher among women and female-headed households, with women more likely to be economically vulnerable and dependent on social protection systems.
48. While Mauritius has established social protection schemes such as the Basic Invalid's Pension and other income support programmes, these systems often function as income replacement mechanisms rather than pathways to economic empowerment. As a result, persons with disabilities, particularly women, remain excluded from the open labour market and confined to dependency on social assistance.
49. In addition, women with disabilities have limited access to financial resources, including credit, entrepreneurship support, and income-generating opportunities compared to other women and men with disabilities. This reinforces cycles of poverty and dependency, increasing vulnerability to other forms of exclusion, including violence and social marginalization.

²² Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Mauritius '2011 Housing and Population Census: Analytical report, <https://rodra.co.za/country-reports-mauritius/23-countries/mauritius/63-mauritius>

²³ Social Protection and Disability in Mauritius <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Social-Protection-and-Disability-in-Mauritius-compressed.pdf>

²⁴ Social Protection and Disability in Mauritius <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Social-Protection-and-Disability-in-Mauritius-compressed.pdf>

50. Although policy frameworks promote the concept of an inclusive labour market, barriers persist in practice, including: lack of accessible workplaces and reasonable accommodation, limited access to vocational training and skills development, persistent stigma and negative employer attitudes and weak enforcement of anti-discrimination provisions.
51. This disconnect between stated commitments and lived realities highlights a critical policy and implementation gap. While Mauritius has aligned itself with international labour standards, the absence of targeted measures addressing the intersection of gender and disability limits the effectiveness of these frameworks. As a result, women with disabilities remain disproportionately excluded from the labour market, undermining the State's obligations under the African Charter, the Maputo Protocol, and international labour standards.

Proposed Questions

52. How is Mauritius ensuring economic inclusion of women with disabilities?
53. How is Mauritius monitoring and enforcing compliance with the employment quota system for persons with disabilities, and what accountability mechanisms are in place for employers who fail to meet these requirements?
54. What targeted measures is Mauritius implementing to address the specific barriers faced by women with disabilities in accessing skills development, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities?

Recommendation:

55. Mauritius should adopt targeted economic empowerment programs, enforce employment inclusion measures, and ensure access to financial services.
56. The State should also collect and use data disaggregated by sex and disability to monitor participation and outcomes, and ensure that women with disabilities are actively included in economic development initiatives.
57. Mauritius should establish clear monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for the employment quota system, including regular reporting by employers, penalties for non-compliance, and public disclosure of progress to ensure accountability.
58. Mauritius should develop and implement targeted programmes to enhance access of women with disabilities to vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and financial services, including accessible training materials, mentorship opportunities, and inclusive financing schemes.

D. ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

(ACHPR Articles 7 & 26)

59. Mauritius 11th Periodic state Report (2019–2024) shows that Mauritius has established legal and institutional frameworks intended to guarantee access to justice for all²⁵. However, significant barriers remain. For women with disabilities, access to justice extends beyond the existence of legal systems to include accessibility, awareness of rights, ability to claim those rights, and participation in advocacy processes.
60. Evidence from the Social Protection and Disability in Mauritius study highlights that access to justice for persons with disabilities is closely linked to broader structural inequalities, including poverty and reliance on social protection systems. The study shows that persons with disabilities, particularly women, are more likely to experience economic vulnerability and dependence on state support, which can limit their ability to pursue legal remedies due to costs, lack of independence, and restricted mobility²⁶.
61. This economic dimension of access to justice is often overlooked in policy frameworks, which tend to focus primarily on formal legal structures without addressing the underlying socio-economic barriers that prevent individuals from seeking justice. Further to this, the study points gaps in institutional coordination and service delivery, which affect access to a range of social services, including legal and administrative processes.
62. Discussions with women with disabilities highlight that access to justice is not only limited by structural barriers within the legal system, but also by low levels of awareness and limited participation in advocacy spaces. Participants emphasized the need to strengthen disability advocacy at both national and global levels to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are aware of their rights and are able to claim them.
63. Women with disabilities often lack information about their legal rights and available remedies, which limits their ability to report violations or seek justice. This gap is further compounded by limited opportunities for meaningful participation in regional and international human rights processes, such as engagement with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
64. In addition, Women with disabilities face significant challenges in reporting cases, navigating police procedures, and participating in court processes. These challenges include physical inaccessibility of court infrastructure, lack of communication support such as sign language interpretation and accessible formats, limited awareness of legal rights, and experiences of secondary victimization. The combination of these factors results in systemic exclusion from legal processes and remedies.
65. The CRPD Committee recommendations highlighted inaccessible court infrastructure, lack of procedural accommodations, and insufficient training of justice actors²⁷.

²⁵ The Republic of Mauritius 11th Periodic Report (2019–2024) on the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (p.10–13) <https://achpr.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2024-08/mauritius-11th-periodic-report2019-2024.pdf>

²⁶ Social Protection and Disability in Mauritius. <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Social-Protection-and-Disability-in-Mauritius-compressed.pdf>

²⁷ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its concluding recommendations on October 2024 on the combined second and third periodic reports of Mauritius. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcmusco2-3-concluding-observations-combined-second-and-third>

66. The CEDAW Committee recommendations also noted that legal complaint mechanisms are complex, that women have limited knowledge of their rights, and that there is a lack of expertise among legal practitioners²⁸.
67. The absence of integrated and accessible support systems means that women with disabilities must navigate complex and fragmented systems without adequate assistance. This reinforces exclusion and limits their effective participation in legal processes.
68. These findings demonstrate that barriers to justice are not only legal or procedural but are also deeply rooted in economic and social inequalities, reflecting a broader policy gap in ensuring holistic access to justice.
69. This situation reflects non-compliance with obligations under the African Charter and the CRPD to ensure effective access to justice.

Proposed Questions

70. What measures is Mauritius taking to ensure accessible and inclusive justice systems?
71. How is Mauritius addressing the economic and social barriers that prevent women with disabilities from accessing justice, including costs, dependency, and lack of support systems?

Recommendations

72. Mauritius should ensure accessibility of courts, simplify complaint mechanisms, provide communication support, and strengthen training of justice actors.
73. Mauritius should adopt a holistic approach to access to justice by integrating legal, social, and economic support systems, including accessible legal aid, social assistance linkages, and support services that enable women with disabilities to effectively pursue justice.

Conclusion

74. Mauritius has made important strides in advancing human rights; however, significant legal and policy gaps remain in ensuring the inclusion of women with disabilities. Evidence from international human rights bodies and regional data demonstrates that women with disabilities continue to face systemic exclusion across key sectors.
75. Without deliberate, targeted, and intersectional measures, these gaps will persist. Addressing these challenges requires alignment of national laws and policies with international obligations, strengthened implementation, and inclusive monitoring systems that center the experiences of women with disabilities.

²⁸ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on its Concluding observations and recommendations on the CEDAW 8th periodic report of Mauritius, 2018. <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/MUS/FCO/8>