



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 June 2017

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Sixty-first session

Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 1 June 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Bras Gomes

Contents

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

- (a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Fifth periodic report of Uruguay (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@unog.ch).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.

GE.17-08982 (E) 120617 130617



* 1 7 0 8 9 8 2 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant *(continued)*

Fifth periodic report of Uruguay (continued) (E/C.12/URY/5; E/C.12/URY/Q/5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Motta** (Uruguay) said that much had been done to improve the accessibility of the country's educational institutions for persons with disabilities. Existing structures had been adapted to improve physical accessibility and a resource centre had been set up to address individual cases of secondary school students with hearing or visual impairments. There was also a unit that developed appropriate solutions for young people on the autistic spectrum to ensure their effective integration into the regular school system; in 2016, it had dealt with 4,000 requests in which the curriculum had been adapted to the needs of the student concerned. There was also provision in special schools for children who could not be accommodated in mainstream schools.

3. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay) said that, although data for the period 2006-2015 showed an increase in women's participation in the labour market, the fact that 57 per cent of women had attended university was not reflected in their salaries, which were less than those of men in all sectors of the economy. Perversely, the gap tended to increase with years of education. Furthermore, while the proportion of those employed in the informal sector had declined overall, 33 per cent of women, compared with 27 per cent of men, still worked outside the formal sector. However, the introduction of the Integrated National Care System had had a direct and positive impact on women's participation in the labour market and on gender equality in general. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which was involved under a tripartite system in labour negotiations, encouraged the inclusion of clauses on gender equality in labour agreements; as a result, the gender pay gap had narrowed steadily between 2007 and 2014, but a change in general employment culture had not yet been achieved.

4. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay), pointing out that Uruguay had a long tradition of State-provided social protection, said that the Government was building up a network that would ensure access to social assistance for those most in need. Coverage of old age and disability pensions was universal and non-contributory. Over 86,000 persons had received pensions in 2016. In 2008-2009, a social dialogue process had led to the provision of assistance for persons aged between 65 and 69 years who were not yet eligible to receive an old-age pension and who were in particularly difficult circumstances. Over 3,000 such persons had received support in 2016. Social assistance to families included payments on a non-contributory basis to poor families, on the condition that their children attended school and received regular medical check-ups. Nearly 400,000 children were benefiting from that programme in 2017. Cash transfers had been introduced through the Social Uruguay Card to provide access to food and basic necessities for the very poorest in society. Nearly 25,000 families had received the standard card and a further 38,000 extremely poor families had been given a "double" card, with double the allowance.

5. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay) said that the problem of inequity in access to education had become increasingly visible over the previous decade. Young people aged 15 to 18 were particularly affected. Measures were being taken to ensure that efforts to promote employment among young people were not in conflict with the educational process and that continued education at that stage was seen as a necessary foundation for subsequent employment.

6. **Ms. Motta** (Uruguay) said that, while the differences in education between the highest and the lowest income quintiles of the population were still a matter of great concern, slow but steady progress had been made between 2010 and 2016 in improving the education levels of the poorest children: only 45 per cent of 18-to-20-year-olds in the

lowest quintile had completed lower secondary education in 2010, but the figure had risen to 52.7 per cent by 2016. The proportion of lowest-quintile 21-to-23-year-olds in education had also risen, from 11.3 per cent to 13.8 per cent over the same period. The Educational Development Protection System had been introduced to monitor students' progression through the education system. It included information not only on their education but also on their social environment. A protocol had been drawn up to help education centres work with other agencies in providing follow-up and support to students both during the education cycle and between cycles. The aim was for all young people to be able to complete their secondary education and, if possible, continue beyond that point. The result had been that in 2016 only 1,600 children had not been enrolled in basic secondary education, and that figure had been halved in 2017.

7. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the country had extensive legislation, including Act No. 19161 on maternity and paternity leave for employees in the private sector, and other provisions aimed at encouraging breastfeeding. Recent collective negotiations in the public sector had extended both maternity and paternity leave rights to State employees as of 2017 and introduced a shorter working day for breastfeeding mothers with babies aged between 6 and 12 months. A bill to be passed shortly would require all companies and organizations that employed more than 20 women or more than 50 workers in total to provide breastfeeding rooms in the workplace. In addition to the 2011 survey on breastfeeding, figures were also available from countrywide surveys conducted in 2013 and 2015 on child nutrition, health and development, and a new survey on breastfeeding was to be conducted in 2017 with the help of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Uruguay Grows with You programme, introduced as part of the National Strategy for Children and Adolescents, had two components, one covering all children and the other focusing on children in particularly vulnerable families. Since 2012, mothers in all maternity units, both public and private, had been given an information kit to encourage breastfeeding, and lactation consultants provided individual assistance through the Uruguay Grows with You programme.

8. **Ms. Goyeneche** (Uruguay) said that the Ministry of Public Health had issued an ordinance in January 2017 promoting exclusive breastfeeding for all babies up to the age of 6 months and the subsequent use of appropriate complementary feeding up to the age of 2 years. The provisions complied with the World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and applied to all products that could be marketed or used as replacements for breast milk. A public awareness campaign explained the health risks posed by such substitutes, as well as their financial implications, offering clear and coherent data and advice. Authorization for the marketing of new products and proper labelling was addressed by the Ministry's children and adolescents and nutrition departments. A bill was currently being drafted to integrate the Code into the country's laws.

9. As part of its work to address the problem of non-communicable diseases, the Ministry of Public Health was running a public information campaign on the health risks of sodium consumption, which included efforts to highlight the "hidden salt" in foods. A decree adopted by the Montevideo departmental authorities banned salt on tables in restaurants and a government task force was considering the best ways of ensuring that salt and fat content were clearly indicated on product labels.

10. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay) said that the Human Rights Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic was drafting an agreement on human rights and the environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and the Environment and was also working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries on areas of shared concern. Fertilizers and pesticides were a major source of pollution of water sources. In the Santa Lucía basin, which provided drinking water for most of the population, a number of environmental improvement programmes had been launched to address the problems posed by agriculture, domestic sources of pollution and soil contamination. A ban had been introduced on the construction of any new facilities that might increase water pollution, treatment of effluent was compulsory, and livestock were not allowed to have direct access to water courses. A protected zone, where the use of agrichemicals was banned, was being established, and extraction of both surface water and groundwater was regulated.

11. **Ms. Goyeneche** (Uruguay) said that relocation of families from informal settlements was never imposed as a forced measure. Relocations took place under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and local authorities and with the participation of the persons concerned. Families were identified for relocation with the help of social workers and were provided with information before the relocation and support afterwards, to help them adapt to their new situation. Forced evictions occurred only in the case of illegal occupation of property, and specific procedures were followed, depending on whether the property was publicly or privately owned.

12. **Mr. Tovagliari** (Uruguay) said that evictions were never carried out in the case of peaceful occupation of buildings where tolerated by the owner. In such cases, an eviction could be authorized only by the civil courts, and due process requirements must be met. Evictions were enforced only after a period of time to allow the occupants to leave on their own, and extensions could be granted in cases of ill health or the presence of minors in the dwelling.

13. Article 368 of the Criminal Code classified the unauthorized occupation of public spaces as an infraction, not a serious criminal offence punishable by imprisonment. Such cases were examined by justices of the peace rather than criminal court judges. Persons accused of living or spending the night in public spaces on a permanent basis could be sentenced to community service. The authorities were obligated to issue two warnings before taking action, and the persons involved had to be referred to the Ministry of Social Development, which must provide them with an alternative living arrangement.

14. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that it was too early to draw conclusions regarding the implementation and social impact of Act No. 19172 legalizing marijuana, as the full range of options for accessing marijuana had not yet been rolled out. As of 29 May 2017, 57 cannabis clubs, 6,734 growers and 3,629 persons who wished to buy marijuana from pharmacies had been registered. A campaign had simultaneously been launched to educate the public regarding the responsible use of marijuana. It was important to note that more than 12,000 individuals were now accessing cannabis through legal means, rather than contributing to the illegal drug trade.

15. **Mr. González Arenas** (Uruguay) said that he wished to clarify that the marijuana market in Uruguay was fully regulated. With regard to abortions, the right to health was sometimes undermined by doctors who chose to exercise their right to conscientious objection, as provided for in article 11 of Act No. 18987 on Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy. In one region in particular, almost all doctors had exercised that right. The authorities had introduced a contingency plan to ensure that no woman was denied the right to an abortion. An appeal had been filed with the Administrative Court, which had suspended the application of certain articles of the regulatory decree regarding the right to conscientious objection. That decree provided that women were to be referred to another doctor who would perform the procedure. Where the pregnancy posed a serious risk to the woman's health, doctors could not exercise their right to conscientious objection and were obligated to perform the abortion. *A procedural manual had been developed which set out the conditions for the exercise of the right to conscientious objection.

16. Uruguay had been a world leader in implementing the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Its victory in the legal case brought against it by a multinational tobacco company demonstrated that commercial interests could not prevail over sovereign health policies. The case had set an important precedent for any future attempts by tobacco companies to thwart countries' tobacco control efforts.

17. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that Act No. 9581 on psychopaths, which dated back to 1936, was still in effect in Uruguay, although it was recognized that it did not meet international human rights standards. Draft legislation to replace it had been drawn up by the Ministry of Public Health following consultations with civil society and relevant stakeholders. The bill had been passed by the Chamber of Senators and was under review by the Chamber of Representatives. The new law would establish a national commission on mental health, a decentralized body whose members would include government officials, academics, mental health system users and their families, and social actors. The commission would be responsible for monitoring the provision of all mental health services.

Although other measures were also needed, enactment of the law would be a fundamental step towards establishing a framework for reforming the existing mental health care model.

18. **Mr. Sadi** said that he wished to know what the cancer rate was in Uruguay, whether it was increasing and whether it was linked to the presence of contaminants such as pesticides and hormones in foodstuffs. He would also like to know whether sanitation services in rural areas were properly regulated and upgraded. In addition, he would be interested in hearing about the Government's policy regarding climate control, the extent of its commitment to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and how sustainable energy sources were used to support the objectives of the Agreement. Specifically, he wished to know what energy sources were being used to meet electricity needs.

19. **Mr. De Schutter** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate clarification as to whether article 368 of the Criminal Code applied to homeless persons living or sleeping in public spaces and whether in other parts of the country there were any regulations similar to the decree adopted by the Montevideo departmental authorities banning salt on tables in restaurants.

20. **Mr. Uprimny** said that he wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that Act No. 18651 on Comprehensive Protection for Persons with Disabilities was enforced and that the quotas for persons with disabilities in public posts set out therein were met. It would also be useful to hear what measures had been taken to ensure that the bill on gender-based violence was approved. He would appreciate a comment from the delegation on reports that socioeconomically disadvantaged persons had been denied access to expensive medicines and that persons were prosecuted for possessing drugs other than marijuana in excess of the amount deemed reasonable for personal use.

21. **Mr. Mancisidor de la Fuente** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would like to know how the Government determined that the minimum wage was sufficient to provide workers with a decent living for themselves and their families. The Committee had been informed that homeless persons had been removed from public parks and not offered any alternative accommodation. Was that the case? If so, what measures would be taken to rectify the situation and what guarantees were in place to ensure that persons accused of unlawfully occupying public spaces were, in practice, referred to social services? Lastly, it would be interesting to know what measures were being taken to prevent teenage pregnancy and to maintain high vaccination rates in the face of anti-vaccination campaigns.

22. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay) said that most cases of cancer in Uruguay were related to tobacco use and diet. A study was being conducted, however, on the potential link between pesticides and other carcinogenic substances and cancer. Specific legislation had been introduced to prevent further contamination of the Santa Lucía basin, and it was clear that sanctions needed to be enforced. Cultural change was also required to ensure that businesses, consumers, citizens and farmers complied with existing regulations. Near total sanitation coverage had been achieved in urban areas and efforts were under way to improve sanitation and prevent groundwater contamination in rural areas.

23. Uruguay was committed to addressing climate change in a holistic manner and had already begun to implement the Paris Agreement. Over the previous five years, the Government had created a network of wind farms across the country, as a result of which, at certain times during the year, the country's entire energy needs were met by renewable energy sources. Although fossil fuels continued to be used, the Government placed priority on promoting alternative energy sources and on implementing the relevant agreements.

24. **Mr. Tovagliari** (Uruguay) said that, under article 368 of the Criminal Code, the unauthorized occupation of a public space was a petty offence that was punishable in respect of people who slept on the streets. Offenders received two warnings to desist from such behaviour and those who failed to comply were taken to an office of the Ministry of Social Development in order to find an appropriate housing solution.

25. **Ms. Goyeneche** (Uruguay) said that while most measures to combat obesity and excessive salt consumption had been taken in Montevideo, the Ministry of Public Health was promoting similar measures in the rest of the country. Related initiatives included Act

No. 19140 on healthy eating in schools, agreements with bakeries to reduce salt content and a nationwide campaign to promote reduced salt consumption.

26. **Ms. Motta** (Uruguay) said that the Government was working extensively in the area of food and nutrition. Some 270,000 schoolchildren participated in food programmes for which the Government had calculated the calorie intake provided by each food option and also monitored the carbohydrate, protein, fat, iron, zinc and calcium content of the food provided. Act No. 19140 aimed to protect the health of children and adolescents in both State and private schools by promoting healthy eating habits and thus helping to address risk factors for overweight and obesity, hypertension and chronic non-communicable diseases. However, the Government recognized the need for further action to make all schools aware of the requirements for healthy eating and the control of salt. In that context, the National Public Education Administration, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and other organizations, had recently approved an assessment of nutritional status and the impact of food programmes and measures.

27. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay), responding to the question on access to work for persons with disabilities, said that legislation and instruments must be accompanied by a cultural change towards greater equity and inclusion in order to ensure that the rules put in place were followed. The National Civil Service Office and the Human Rights Secretariat had discussed the issue with various ministries and bodies and had established framework agreements for the practical implementation of the 4 per cent quota for the employment of persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, government departments often continued to view the incorporation of persons with disabilities — and the infrastructure adjustments required — as a difficulty rather than an opportunity. The Human Rights Secretariat and the National Civil Service Office had established a follow-up mechanism so that departments were obliged to provide data and take responsibility for meeting the quota.

28. Access to expensive medicines was a multi-faceted issue in which a conflict had arisen between the right to health and the interests of the pharmaceutical industry. The Government was aware of the need to safeguard the right to health, but was wary of falling prey to the commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies, which often manipulated demand for costly medicines. The Ministry of Public Health and the Integrated Health System had submitted a bill aimed at ensuring sustainable access to medicines.

29. **Ms. Goyeneche** (Uruguay) said that, as the government body responsible for gender equality, the National Institute for Women was closely following the passage through parliament of the comprehensive bill on gender-based violence. The Institute was cooperating with other State bodies in efforts to combat gender violence and to prepare for the eventual implementation of the new law. Steps were also being taken to ensure that all executive bodies had a unit responsible for implementing gender equality policies, with a budget commensurate with that task.

30. With regard to the removal of homeless persons from Parque Guaraní, the Montevideo city government regretted what had taken place but considered that it had been a *sui generis* case in which a contradiction had emerged between the right to housing, the right to ownership and the Government's obligation to protect public spaces and the environment for the population as a whole. The case had arisen in 2015 after a complaint from a district community centre concerning a squatter settlement on a piece of land that was part privately and part publicly owned. While there had been some dialogue between public officials and the occupants of the settlement, ultimately an eviction order had been issued and the public portion of the land had been cleared. An attempt to delay the eviction from the private land had been rejected by the judiciary. The Government had taken no pleasure in that outcome and was aware that people's rights had not been fully taken into account. Nevertheless, lessons had been learned and the Government had begun to carry out social interventions from the outset of legal proceedings concerning the occupation of public and private spaces.

31. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay), responding to the question on referrals to social services for alternative housing, said that the Petty Offences Act (Act No. 19120) had authorized the Ministry of Social Development to expand its coverage by contracting out services. In 2016 some 3,600 persons had been helped to find alternatives to street living. Force was never

used to enforce the Act, and persons infringing the law were not taken to the offices of the Ministry against their will.

32. The State had recently developed a national intersectoral strategy for the prevention of unintentional pregnancies among adolescents, which was being implemented by the Ministry of Public Health in coordination with other ministries and government bodies and with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). More information about the strategy would be made available to the Committee in due course.

33. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay), in reply to the question about the minimum wage, said that it should be borne in mind that education and health care were provided free of charge, which helped to ensure that families enjoyed an adequate standard of living. Although the minimum wage had already seen historic increases, the Government continued to work to increase the wages of the lowest income earners.

34. On the question of vaccinations, an effective policy was in place whereby citizens were required to provide a health card showing that they had been vaccinated in order to access education or employment. Furthermore, information and education campaigns had been conducted in order to increase public acceptance of vaccination and counter erroneous information dispensed by the anti-vaccination movement about the harmful effects of vaccines.

35. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that drug use was not criminalized in Uruguay; however, civil society had reported that the absence of a legal limit on the amount permitted for personal use had led to individuals being prosecuted and to differing judicial interpretations of what was excessive. The amendment of the Code of Civil Procedure would afford an opportunity to establish clear criteria in that regard. The Government considered that it would be premature to begin drafting regulations on the use of substances other than marijuana, as it had not yet evaluated the impact of the marijuana law.

36. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** (Country Task Force), recalling that in its previous concluding observations (E/C.12/URY/CO/3-4) the Committee had expressed concern about the numbers of people living on the streets, said that she would welcome updated official statistics on the number of individuals, including children, who were still in that situation. She would also like to know what plans and programmes had been designed and implemented by the Institute for Children and Adolescents to improve children's access to education. She was concerned that children and adolescents from the lowest income quintiles continued to be affected by educational inequity, as there continued to be wide discrepancies between poorer and richer students in secondary school completion rates. She had been interested to read about the Gurí Platform that automatically pre-enrolled all pupils in secondary school, and she wondered what effect that initiative might have on the dropout rate and what measures were taken to deal with situations in which children were automatically enrolled but did not attend their assigned secondary school. She also wished to know whether any special measures had been designed to reduce school dropout among rural children, children of African descent, children with disabilities and children from low-income households. In addition, she would appreciate information on whether sexual and reproductive health formed part of the school curriculum and, if so, at what level of education.

37. It would be useful to know how the school curriculum dealt with the issue of cultural diversity and how many hours were allocated to teaching the history of the country's Afro-descendent and indigenous populations. She would also like to learn how the State party promoted awareness of the cultural heritage of indigenous people and people of African descent and how it allocated funds to such initiatives. The State party's replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/URY/Q/5/Add.1) mentioned a series of activities aimed at protecting cultural diversity and spreading awareness of local identities; she wondered whether the delegation could provide disaggregated data on the groups involved in those activities and explain whether they had been consulted on the activities in question. Lastly, she understood that rates of participation in cultural outings, such as visits to museums, theatres, galleries, festivals and historical monuments, tended to be higher among middle- and high-income groups and among residents of Montevideo and would be interested in

hearing how the State party promoted equal access to cultural infrastructure throughout the country and among different social and economic groups.

38. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the Government would provide the Committee with census data on persons living on the street. The most recent census had not found any cases of children in that situation, although some children lived in shelters, typically those belonging to families affected by gender-based violence. There were also specific centres providing care for children and adolescents whose family ties had broken down for various reasons; those centres also protected children's right to housing by taking in families who had become homeless.

39. In relation to the cultural rights of minority groups, the State had legally recognized events such as the Day of the Charrúa Nation and the National Day of Candombe, Afro-Uruguayan Culture and Racial Equity. Since 2006, the Government had pursued a decentralization policy in which the Ministry of Education and Culture operated more than 125 centres throughout the country to promote access to culture. In July 2016, the Ministry of Social Development had launched the celebration of African Descent Month as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent. Support had been provided for a number of community-based sociocultural projects to promote awareness of cultural diversity. The Ministry of Social Development had been working with various other institutions, notably in the area of education, and had helped draft a teacher's guide for instruction on the history of the population of African descent, which had been praised by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Lastly, in 2016 the Government had established 26 educational centres for the promotion of rights as part of a strategy that addressed several thematic areas, including racial equity, sexual diversity and disability rights. It hoped to increase the number of centres to 100 in 2017.

40. **Ms. Motta** (Uruguay) said that Uruguay had made clear progress with regard to equity, although some inequalities remained, notably in the area of education. In terms of access and coverage, the State had undertaken significant efforts so that all children and young adults could exercise their right to education. It recognized the importance of preschool education for children's later schooling and for their overall intellectual and emotional development. For that reason, schooling had been made compulsory from the age of 4 years. The targets established for preschool education had been exceeded and high levels of coverage had been achieved for children aged 3 to 5 years. Inequity in access to preschool education between the top and bottom income quintiles had narrowed considerably since 2010. Preschool attendance rates had improved, too.

41. In primary education, Uruguay had achieved near-universal coverage: 99.5 per cent of children aged 6 to 11 years were currently enrolled in school. The State was focusing its efforts on reducing school abandonment in the most vulnerable sectors of society, for example by creating special schools with extended hours. School attendance rates at the primary level had increased, while the repetition rate had decreased, which was important, as children who had to repeat grades were less likely to go on to secondary school. The Government had launched various initiatives to identify and address problems that could lead to repetition, including a programme to teach reading and writing in Spanish, which established a reference framework and provided support materials for teachers, children and families with a view to improving school performance. A similar programme in mathematics would be rolled out in 2017.

42. The secondary school pre-registration programme had been introduced with the aim of reducing the numbers of pupils who completed primary education but did not commence secondary education. Under that programme, families were required to confirm the child's automatic enrolment in secondary school. The decentralization of the education system had made it easier to identify children whose enrolment had not been confirmed and subsequently ensure their attendance.

43. The Government took pride in its programme for sexual and reproductive health education, which had been in place for 10 years and had been used as a model by other countries. Instruction on sexual and reproductive health was offered at all levels of the education system and had also been incorporated into teacher training programmes. Nevertheless, a recent assessment had highlighted some shortcomings, which the

Government was determined to address in order to strengthen the programme, which would undoubtedly have an impact on teenage pregnancy figures. In her view, however, the country's relatively high rates of teenage pregnancy reflected not just lack of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health but also cultural and social attitudes relating to the role of women and their life expectations.

44. In the past, education had been used to foster a certain homogeneity, which had been needed during the nation-building process. Now, however, an effort was needed to promote greater appreciation of diversity and ensure that minority groups were taken into consideration in the educational process. Among other initiatives, the Government was working to foster appreciation of the country's linguistic diversity, including through official recognition of sign language and intercultural and bilingual education for deaf persons.

45. **Mr. Villarreal** (Uruguay) said that, for 10 years, the Basic Computer Educational Connectivity for Online Learning (CEIBAL) Plan had provided laptop computers for children in keeping with a policy to close the digital gap for children who otherwise would not have had access to a computer. The lessons learned from that initiative could be applied to surmount challenges in other areas, such as participation in cultural life and access to education.

46. **Mr. Mancisidor de la Fuente** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee was grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the State party's achievements and the challenges it faced. The Committee would endeavour to tailor its recommendations to the country's situation and needs. He was confident the State party would give the recommendations due consideration and he hoped it would also disseminate them in society.

47. **Mr. González Arenas** (Uruguay) said that the interactive dialogue would help the State party move forward in improving its human rights policies and mechanisms. The Government was committed to following up on the Committee's recommendations and it undertook to disseminate them, as it had done after its previous dialogue with the Committee.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.