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**Economic and Social Council** Distr. GENERAL  
E/C.12/2003/SR.1129  
June 2004  
ENGLISH Original:  
FRENCH

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## COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Thirtieth session

### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,

on Monday, 12 May 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BONOAN-DANDAN

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##### CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (continued)

###### (a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Second periodic report of New Zealand

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

##### CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (continued)

###### (a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (agenda item 6) (continued)

Second periodic report of New Zealand (E/1990/6/Add.33; E/C.12/1993/13; E/C.12/CA/NZL/1; E/C.12/Q/NZE/1; HR/CESCR/NONE/2002/7; HRI/CORE/1/Add.33/Rev.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of New Zealand took places at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRPERSON welcomed the delegation of New Zealand and invited it to make its introductory statement.

3. Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand) presented the new developments since the submission of the second periodic report. At the political level, the centre-left Government led by Ms. Clark had been re-elected in July 2002. On the legislative front there were numerous changes to be mentioned. A statutory paid parental leave scheme, introducing the right to 12 weeks of State paid leave, had been introduced in March 2002. New Zealand had thus been able to withdraw its reservation to article 10.2 of the Covenant. Where employment was concerned, the Employment Relations Act 2000 had replaced the Employment Contracts Act 1991, and was aimed at rebuilding a fair and equitable employment relations system based on empowering unions and promoting collective bargaining. It furthermore laid down the principles of good faith and mutual trust in labour relations. With reference to the rights and role of unions, the New Zealand Ministry of Labour would in the very near future deposit the instrument of ratification of the International Labour Organization Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98).

4. The Human Rights Amendment Act 2001 had amended the Human Rights Act 1993 merging the Race Relations Office and the Human Rights Commission. The latter had begun work on a national plan of action for human rights. With regard to New Zealand's public management system, initiatives had been taken for a better response to users' needs and an assessment of the services provided.

5. The Government had established a comprehensive Maori development programme which promoted development "For Maori, by Maori" by inviting Maori to provide solutions corresponding to their needs. The programme included several initiatives such as the capacity building programme, the Maori Business Facilitation Service, local level solutions and direct resourcing. It also involved strengthening Maori social service provision, improvement of housing through specific relationships between the tribes and the

Government and the implementation of a regional economic development programme. It should contribute to reducing disparities between Maori and the rest of the population and to promoting a distinct Maori culture.

6. The current Government had committed itself to broadening the possibilities offered to Maori in terms of health, culture, education and employment opportunities. More Maori were therefore able to participate in Maori language education from early childhood education through to the tertiary level. In terms of housing, more than 15,000 Maori households lived in State housing and benefited from income-related rents.

7. The Office of Ethnic Affairs had been established in May 2001. The term "ethnic" referred to any segment of the population sharing values, customs, beliefs, languages, traditions and characteristics such as race, national or geographical origins that were different from those of the wider society.

8. The Ministry of Social Development had launched the New Zealand family violence prevention strategy in March 2002, setting out the Government's key objectives, principles to be applied and a five-year implementation plan for maximizing progress with the objective of total freedom from violence within families. In July 2002, the Government had established the Office for Disability Issues, the role of which was to provide policy advice to the Minister for Disability Issues and to conduct, supervise and promote the New Zealand Disability Strategy, launched in 2001.

9. The major restructuring of the health sector had been completed in 2000. Its aim was to decentralize decision-making and to give a more important role to 21 community-focused District Health Boards. It should be mentioned that treatment in public hospitals was provided free of charge and that pregnant women and children under 6 years of age received free health care. The reimbursement of doctors' fees and medicines was linked to the patient's income. The Ministry of Health had implemented a strategy to improve children's health by 2010. With regard to mental health, emphasis was placed on reducing discrimination towards people with mental illness and improving access to mental health services, particularly for Maori.

10. In employment, the Community Employment Group gave priority to communities and groups vulnerable to labour market difficulties, in particular Maori, Pacific peoples, women and the rural and urban disadvantaged.

11. In education, the Ministry of Education had undertaken a range of schemes to improve Maori participation rates in early childhood and university education, to raise the levels of educational achievement and to help retain the Maori language. Maori women were the largest group of participants in tertiary education, with rates exceeding those for men and non-Maori women. The Government had established specific goals in areas such as early childhood services and tertiary education for Pacific Islands peoples. In 2002 it had also adopted a policy particularly aimed at improving the results of pupils with special needs.

12. The cultural recovery package, launched in 2000, had injected 146 million New Zealand dollars into the arts and culture sector. Many regions, professional arts organizations and Maori and Pacific arts associations had benefited and the programme had had a positive impact on New Zealand's economic, cultural and social life.

13. Among the major promotional initiatives for Maori arts and artists, mention should be made of the development of a registered trademark of authenticity and quality indicating that the artist was of Maori descent and produced work of a particular quality. Over the past 10 years, locally produced radio and television programmes had increased in number. In mid-2001, the Government had announced the establishment of a Maori television service, which would provide specialized programmes in Maori and English.

14. Steady progress had been made with Treaty of Waitangi settlements and negotiations continued with claimant groups. To date, 13 settlements had been completed. The Government had increased funding to the Waitangi Tribunal, following its success in implementing a more efficient claim enquiry process.

15. New Zealand's commitment to human rights extended to its activities off-shore. Mention should be made of the establishment of a new semi-autonomous body within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID). The promotion and protection of human rights was one of the principles underpinning New Zealand's new aid programme, as was the elimination of poverty through sustainable and equitable development.

16. The most important occurrence in the non-autonomous territory of Tokelau concerned the development of local institutions of government. A target date of 30 June 2004 had been set for the further devolution of powers to the village councils, the traditional authority in Tokelau. Following its mission to Tokelau in 2002, the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization had issued a very positive report on the situation in the territory and New Zealand's approach to its responsibilities. With reference to the Cook Islands and Niue, as self-governing States in free association with New Zealand, they had absolute capability to implement their obligations under the international instruments to which they were parties in view of their ratification by New Zealand. New Zealand remained involved in discussions with the United Nations Secretariat to determine how best to realize the wishes of the Cook Islands and Niue to be represented before the human rights treaty bodies on their own behalf and stood ready to assist those countries in meeting their human rights reporting obligations.

17. The CHAIRPERSON invited members of the Committee to raise questions about parts I (General Information) and II (Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 115)) of the list of issues.

18. Mr. MALINVERNI noted that the Act of 2001 amending the 1993 Human Rights Act had broadened the responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission and had established the Office for Human Rights Proceedings and the Human Rights Review Tribunal. He asked what the competencies of the new bodies were, particularly with regard to economic, social and cultural rights. He asked whether a private individual who considered that his rights had been infringed should refer his case to an ordinary court or to one of the above-mentioned bodies. He expressed surprise that New Zealand had not ratified several major ILO conventions and asked whether the Government intended to remedy that situation.

19.Ms. IYER asked what concrete results had emerged from the many measures on behalf of the Maori, and particularly the capacity-building programme and the development programme.20.Ms. BARAHONA RIERA welcomed the efforts made by New Zealand to carry out its obligations under articles 2 and 3 of the Covenant and noted that large numbers of bills had been drafted on combating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women. She hoped that the delegation would report on the fate of the bills in question.

21.Ms. BRAS GOMES noted in the written replies to the list of issues that in 2000 the Ministry of Labour had published a study on wage inequalities between men and women showing that between 10 and 50 per cent of wage differentials remained unexplained. She would like to know whether there were obstacles to New Zealand's enacting national legislation to ensure compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work.

22.Mr. RIEDEL said that he would like up-to-date information on the national plan of action for human rights that the Human Rights Commission was responsible for drawing up. With regard to the Institute of Judicial Studies established in 1998 to increase the awareness of members of the judiciary with regard to matters pertaining to equality between the sexes and to the rights of indigenous groups, he regretted that it did not also concern itself with the rights covered by the Covenant. Further, he requested details of the Ankers v. Attorney-General case mentioned in the written replies to the list of issues.

23.Mr. CEAUSU asked whether the Covenant had been ratified by New Zealand on behalf of the Cook Islands and Niue or whether, once autonomous, these two entities had submitted declarations of succession in order to assume their obligations under the Covenant in their own right. He welcomed the fact that the Human Rights Commission had considered some 327 complaints in 1998, but he would like to know what conciliation solutions by category of complaint were generally proposed.

24.Noting that the Waitangi Tribunal had granted hundreds of millions of New Zealand dollars in compensation to certain Maori tribes, he asked how the sums were used and managed by the Maori. He observed that, despite the financial aid, the Maori community was still not fully integrated into New Zealand society and asked why the authorities did not use those funds to raise the level of education and vocational training of the Maori and ensure that they became full citizens.

25.Mr. SADI asked whether the Covenant could be directly invoked before the courts. With reference to the Rahman v. Ministry of Immigration case, mentioned in the written replies to the list of issues, he asked what the impact of the confirmation of the order of expulsion was on the child of the asylum-seeker who apparently held New Zealand citizenship.

26.Mr. TEXIER asked what had happened to the working paper on the two reservations entered by New Zealand regarding the Covenant, to be submitted to the Government early in 2003. He stressed that in legislative terms the conditions that would enable the State party to withdraw its reservations seemed to have been met.

27.Mr. MARCHÁN ROMERO asked about the role of the Office of Ethnic Affairs established in 2001. He would like to know why fewer New Zealanders than before declared themselves to be of European origin and would like to have more information on inter-ethnic relations.

28.Mr. KOLOSOV asked how the sentence, "The Ross Dependency in Antarctica is also part of New Zealand", in paragraph 1 of the core document concerning the Antarctic Treaty signed in Washington in 1959 should be understood.

29.Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand) said that sovereignty in the Antarctic was a delicate matter. New Zealand claimed sovereignty over the Ross Dependency, but its claims were not acknowledged by the other consultative parties. The reservation concerning article 8 of the Covenant was maintained since certain issues concerning the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (No. 87) were still being studied. The instrument of ratification of the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949 (No. 98) would be deposited with ILO in a few weeks' time. Lastly, the Government had just decided to withdraw its reservation concerning article 10.2 of the Covenant. The Cook Islands and Niue had not adopted a declaration of succession, and implemented the Covenant in the context of their own legislation.

30.Ms. BUTLER (New Zealand) said that a new Human Rights Commission with expanded capacities and powers had been established in 2001 in order to facilitate the access of everyone to justice. Private individuals could henceforth file a complaint for discrimination with that body; if it was found admissible, the Commission transmitted it to the Office of Human Rights Proceedings, which subsequently reported to the Human Rights Tribunal. In contrast to the courts, the procedure was free of charge. With regard to the enforceability of the Covenant and the other conventions in general, case law showed that all conventions ratified by New Zealand were complied with in the decisions handed down by the courts and in the interpretation of legislative provisions; the rights set out in the Covenant, however, were not enforceable as such. The Human Rights Commission was currently working on the establishment of a consultative committee of persons involved and experts with the objective of promoting familiarity with human rights.

31.Mr. PAKI (New Zealand) said that the intention of the Maori, as New Zealanders, was to participate in New Zealand's economic life and enjoy good health and an adequate level of living. The Maori, as indigenous people, did not wish to be assimilated or integrated into New Zealand society. They therefore took decisions on their future with assistance from the Government and were consulted about education and social, cultural and political matters. They were fairly represented in Parliament. He nevertheless regretted that a New Zealand opposition party had requested the abolition of their seats in Parliament although the rights of indigenous peoples were now recognized worldwide. Lastly, a recent government report stressed the importance of the Maori contribution to New Zealand's economy.

32.Mr. JUDGE (New Zealand) said that the Office of Ethnic Affairs was in charge of files concerning ethnic groups other than Europeans or Maori and ensured the updating of a list of persons empowered to represent those minorities within public bodies. The Office submitted the candidatures to the different appointment committees. According to the statistics, an increasing number of individuals felt themselves to be of multi-ethnic origin, particularly among the Maori and the Europeans, as a result of the many

interactions between ethnic groups and in particular the birth of children of multi-ethnic origin.<sup>33</sup> Mr. PAKI (New Zealand) said that the integration of the various ethnic groups was a priority in New Zealand society. In that regard, the Government had announced that it was setting up a pilot telephone interpretation service called "Language line" to provide interpretation services in some 30 languages for six ministries for which it was particularly relevant, in order to improve communication with the various ethnic groups.

34. Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand) believed, although could not confirm that high-level training in the rights set out in the Covenant was provided to new judges in New Zealand.

35. Mr. RIEDEL said that he was surprised by the frankness of the New Zealand delegation's reply concerning the non-enforceability of economic, social and cultural rights. He pointed out nevertheless that the State party had a strict obligation to implement the Covenant; he considered that the social and cultural rights it embodied were not given adequate attention. He also wished to know the position of the New Zealand Government on the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

**36. Mr. SADI asked whether the New Zealand delegation could not in future include representatives from the Cook Islands and Niue should those States be unable to submit their own reports to the Committee. He further considered that the refusal of the Maori community to integrate or assimilate ran counter to the realization of the rights set out in the Covenant.**

37. Mr. GRISSA wondered whether separation did not lead to discrimination. He did not see why New Zealand could not submit separate reports on the Cook Islands and Niue, as the United Kingdom did for the British Virgin Islands, for example.

38. Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand) specified that the Cook Islands and Niue were fully autonomous territories with independent legislation. New Zealand's responsibility for foreign affairs and defence was exercised only when invoked by the parties in question. New Zealand would continue to help the islands to perform their obligations in terms of the preparation of reports, but the fact that those States were not Members of the United Nations seemed to pose a problem. With regard to the enforceability of economic, social and cultural rights, although the international instruments were not directly applicable, New Zealand had become a party to the Covenant after ensuring that it could meet its obligations under the Covenant in the context of the legislation and practices in effect in its territory. The authorities were continuing their consideration of the issue of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

39. Mr. PAKI (New Zealand) said that the assimilation and integration policies carried out by previous Government had all failed. The current Government's policy was to assist the Maori in finding solutions to their own problems and to strengthen their capacity to implement comprehensive policies in economic, social and cultural matters. The Maori community had made up its mind to play a role in New Zealand in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi.

40. Mr. CEAUSU said that he understood the policy of the New Zealand authorities and the Maori community but recalled that New Zealand should guarantee equality of rights among all its citizens and apply the principle of non-discrimination, except where positive discrimination was justified, so that the communities could become integrated while maintaining their specific cultural features. The level of economic and social development should be the same for all citizens.

41. Mr. KOLOSOV pointed out that a State could become a party to an international human rights instrument without necessarily being a Member of the United Nations, and could as such submit its own report. That had been the case when the Cook Islands had submitted its report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

42. Mr. CAUGHLEY (New Zealand) accepted Mr. Kolosov's argument that the Cook Islands could submit its own report to the Committee. With regard to the Waitangi Tribunal, he specified that the reparation granted was not uniquely financial and that the goal of the compensation was to give the Maori the opportunity to use the money as they wished. The equality of rights of all New Zealand citizens was guaranteed and measures of positive discrimination were indeed taken on behalf of the Maori community and other minorities. There was no separate development of the communities.

**43. Mr. PAKI (New Zealand) replied that the Government's policy was to strengthen the capacities of the Maori community in the areas of education, health and the economy in order to ensure equality of rights and non-discrimination.**

44. The CHAIRPERSON invited the members of the Committee to submit their questions on part III (Issues relating to specific provisions of the Covenant) of the list of issues.

Articles 6-9 of the Covenant

45. Mr. TEXIER welcomed the progress achieved in the sphere of labour relations since the adoption of the new Act in 2000. With regard to article 6 of the Covenant, he noted that the rate of unemployment, which was fairly low and relatively equally distributed between men and women, nevertheless remained a matter of concern for young people. He asked whether the Government had taken specific measures in that area. Referring to paragraph 97 of the report, he asked whether it was mandatory for dismissal to be notified in writing and what the causes of unfair dismissal were. He also asked whether legislation existed on the minimum age for work. With reference to article 7 of the Covenant, he wished to know whether the minimum wage enabled a worker and his family to have a decent level of living and asked for additional information on wage inequality between men and women and career prospects in the private and public sectors.

46. Mr. ATANGANA enquired about the respective duties of the Employment Court and Employment Tribunal.

**47. Ms. BARAHONA RIERA asked whether appeals had been filed or personal complaints submitted concerning discrimination at work. With regard to parental leave, she would like to**

**know whether the employee concerned was paid by the State or by the private sector.**

48.Ms. BRAS GOMES, quoting paragraph 88 of the report on the employment of disabled persons, asked what measures the State as an employer had taken and whether the Government was contemplating the adoption of provisions to encourage employers to engage disabled persons. With regard to the reform of the social welfare system, the aim of which was to target assistance more tightly to vulnerable groups, and to contain costs (paragraph 185 of the report), she wished to know whether the measures taken had improved assistance to the most vulnerable groups and increased the number of beneficiary individuals and families. In view of the complexity of the various social security entitlements, including discretionary benefits in particular, she asked whether the State party had taken measures to inform the public in general, and vulnerable groups more specifically, of the various criteria and conditions for their award. She asked whether it was possible to appeal in the event of refusal to pay a benefit.

49.Mr. CEAUSU said that he would like to know whether the New Zealand Government had taken steps to guarantee the minimum wage in agriculture. He also asked to what extent work safety and hygiene regulations applied to independent workers. With regard to article 9 of the Covenant, he would like to know whether the Government contemplated taking account in the new legislation of criticisms concerning the maintenance of financial contributions to their rehabilitation treatment by the victims of accidents at work.

50.Mr. JUDGE (New Zealand) said that the unemployment rate for young people, while indeed higher than for the population as a whole, was lower than levels in the majority of countries in the world. Officials of the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education were currently working together to find means of combating unemployment among young people, particularly on the basis of experience acquired in other countries. The results of their work, notably aimed at identifying the best strategies, should be published in the course of 2003, and the measures deriving from them would be financed from the 2004 budget.

51.The Government, which was aware of the need to set an example, ensured that none of its institutions, particularly within the ministries, practised discrimination in recruitment, particularly vis-à-vis disabled persons.

52.The Government had reintroduced income-related rents, the effect of which had been to increase considerably the level of housing assistance and to provide relief to families in State housing. The pensions of persons over 65 years of age had also been raised. The Government was further proceeding to a review of all income support paid out as part of its social policy, particularly family allowances, disability pensions and sickness benefits, but also housing subsidies and discretionary benefits. The aim was that potential beneficiaries should depend less on those benefits that were granted on a case-by-case basis in terms of specific criteria. He acknowledged the complexity of the social benefits system, which could be a source of confusion. For that reason the bodies responsible for providing those services were required to ensure that potential beneficiaries not only were granted all the assistance and benefits that they could claim but that they should also be informed of the existence of the various social benefits. Officials in the various services had therefore been trained to pass the information on to those concerned; 18 months after the introduction of that measure, the results were wholly convincing.

53.He pointed out that the increase in the number of beneficiaries of State assistance did not have repercussions in all areas; New Zealand was particularly pleased with the notable drop in the number of subsidized job-seekers, currently below the 100,000 mark for the first time in 10 years. Although the number of persons receiving the sole parent benefit had tended to remain stable in recent years, that was not the case for sickness benefits and disability pensions, which continued to grow at an annual rate of between 6 and 7 per cent. One of the reasons for the trend was the ageing of the population, which was at the origin of the rise in the number of cases of disability, and another was the increasing cost of treating psychiatric illnesses.

54.Ms. BUTLER (New Zealand) explained that the Employment Tribunal had been replaced by the Employment Relations Authority, a first instance body responsible for acting as mediator in the event of a dispute between employers and employees. If mediation failed, the case was sent to the Employment Court in second instance.

55.Mr. CAUGHEY (New Zealand) said that, under the relevant new provisions adopted in March 2002, women benefited from 12 weeks of State-remunerated parental leave (the State standing in for the employer and being responsible for paying their wages up to an amount of 325 New Zealand dollars gross per week), which could be taken in addition to 52 weeks of leave without pay. He went on to say that the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act provided for a number of safeguards to prevent the employer from terminating the work contract during pregnancy or during maternity leave. He added that the legislation would have to be reviewed so that it could be extended, if resources permitted, to independent workers and persons who had not had an employer for the 12 months preceding the leave, and so that the period of paid parental leave could be extended from 12 to 14 weeks as prescribed by the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (No. 103).

56.Mr. TEXIER asked whether there were grounds for the claim made by the trade union organizations to the effect that the number of labour inspectors was inadequate to ensure proper monitoring of hygiene and safety conditions in businesses.

**Articles 10-12 of the Covenant**

57.Mr. ATANGANA, referring to paragraph 260 of the report, asked whether a marriage dissolution order made by a registrar of the Family Court was administrative or jurisdictional and what remedy was available to the spouse at fault. He was also concerned about the fact that under section 59 of the Crimes Act, parents could use force on their children provided it was “reasonable” and asked who was in a position to assess the “reasonable” nature of the punishment applied.

58. Mr. RIEDEL, referring to table X contained in the written reply to question 17 in the list of issues, asked why annual public expenditure on housing assistance had fallen so drastically since 2000/01, given that New Zealand’s economic situation was prosperous, and what logic underpinned the change of policy. He would also like to know whether the housing inflation mentioned in the same written reply concerned all towns or only Auckland and what steps had been taken to combat the phenomenon.

59. He also welcomed the quality of the information provided on the right to water in the written reply to question 18, which he wished to cite as an example of best practice. He regretted that the pilot programme that brought treated drinking water to some 30 small communities in the Northland had not been implemented on a larger scale and asked what the results had been. Quoting the written reply to question 20 concerning the relatively high percentage of drinking water whose quality was graded only D or E, he pointed out that 10 per cent of the population was not a negligible proportion and asked the Government to provide, when submitting its next periodic report, information on the working party to investigate and report on problems that small water suppliers might face in complying with the new legislative requirements.

60. Lastly, he welcomed the fact that 32 million New Zealand dollars had been allocated for the next three years to encourage recruitment and maintenance in rural areas of primary health-care personnel and asked whether the Government was contemplating taking similar measures for secondary health-care services.

61. Mr. TIRADO MEJÍA asked whether drug addiction was a widespread problem in New Zealand and, if so, whether the delegation could provide statistics broken down by age and ethnic origin.

62. Ms. BRAS GOMES welcomed the fact that the State party was contemplating extending provisions concerning parental leave to independent workers and persons who had had several employers during the 12 months preceding the leave. She did not, however, understand why, in order to take advantage of two weeks of unpaid leave, the child's father had to declare that he would "assume or intend to assume the care of the child" (written reply to question 13 in the list of issues), which seemed self-evident.

63. She also wished to know whether measures had been taken to protect elderly persons against family violence, in view of the fact that it was common for two or more generations to live under the same roof in the State party. She further asked why the Government had chosen not to establish services to take special responsibility for young drug addicts and young alcoholics, in view of the high suicide rates among the population of that age. She asked whether the Government intended to compensate for that lack in the near future.

64. Mr. PILLAY welcomed the quality and the exhaustive nature of the information supplied by the State party concerning State housing, the housing supplement and emergency housing, and wished to know whether there were large numbers of homeless persons in New Zealand. He also wished to know whether it was true that the situation of the Maori in terms of housing was improving as a result of agreement between the Government and the tribes and whether forced evictions concerned certain population groups more than others.

65. Lastly, he asked whether the low number of complaints for non-compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work was due to the fact that the public was not sufficiently informed about its rights in that regard, as was the opinion of ILO, and whether the Government intended to take steps to remedy that situation.

66. Mr. KOLOSOV recalled that children should benefit from special protection measures and asked why health care was free for children only up to the age of 6 and whether the Government was contemplating raising the age. With regard to article 11, he wished to know why the right to decent housing was not guaranteed by law. Lastly, with regard to article 13 of the Covenant, he asked the delegation what the reasons were for the lower life expectancy in the Maori community and whether studies had been conducted to explain the phenomenon.

67. Ms. BARAHONA RIERA asked about the results of the programmes to combat family violence, particularly the Te Rito strategy, which took Maori customary and contemporary practices into account.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.