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Summary record of the 45th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 September 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Saran

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Consideration of reports *(continued)*

(a) Reports submitted by States Parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant
(continued)

Second periodic report of Zimbabwe (continued) (E/C.12/ZWE/2; E/C.12/ZWE/Q/2; E/C.12/ZWE/RQ/2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Zimbabwe joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation to resume replying to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting.
3. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission was not part of the executive branch but was one of the commissions established under chapter 12 of the Constitution to support democracy. The Commission was independent and enjoyed operational, decisional and financial autonomy. It was fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and had achieved A status accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in 2016.
4. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that contrary to reports submitted to the Committee, the incidence of abortion in the country was low. The Ministry of Health and Childcare carried out programmes to increase access to post-abortion care and reduce maternal deaths from unsafe abortions. It provided essential services, medical equipment and medicines and covered costs associated with transportation and treatment. It also conducted awareness-raising campaigns to address negative social attitudes towards reproductive health services and had established information centres at which citizens could receive such services, including family planning.
5. The Ministry promoted reproductive health rights through multisectoral programmes aiming to expand access to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for adolescents, addressing teenage pregnancy and integrating gender sensitivity and comprehensive sexuality education into national programmes. In addition, it cooperated with the United Nations Population Fund and AfricAid on initiatives such as youth-led outreach programmes, virtual case management and training in humanitarian settings on the minimum initial package for sexual and reproductive health services in crisis situations.
6. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, according to official statistics from August 2025, month-on-month inflation in Zimbabwe gold (ZiG) stood at only 0.4 per cent and year-on-year inflation at 93.8 per cent, while month-on-month inflation in the United States dollar was 0 per cent and year-on-year inflation was 14.2 per cent.
7. The domestic economy was estimated to have grown by 1.7 per cent in 2024 and was projected to grow by 6 per cent in 2025. Growth in 2024 had been driven by the mining and electricity sectors, while agriculture and construction were also expected to be among the main contributors in 2025.
8. The Government did not recognize the claim that a third of girls were married before reaching adulthood. According to the national census conducted in 2022, only 1 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 years had been in a union before the age of 15. The proportion had been 1.6 per cent in rural areas and 0.5 per cent in urban areas.
9. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission had been allocated ZiG 117,758,000 in 2024 and ZiG 176,291,000 in 2025, representing a 4.5 per cent increase.
10. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Disabled Persons Act had been repealed and replaced with a bill that took a human rights-based approach to disability, providing for inclusive education, equal employment opportunities and access to political participation through initiatives involving the use of Braille. The scope of the definition of disability would be expanded to include previously excluded categories such as albinism, epilepsy and psychosocial disabilities. The bill further provided for reasonable accommodation in infrastructure, health and employment. In addition, it established a disabilities fund to finance

entrepreneurship among persons with disabilities and introduced enforcement mechanisms. Persons with disabilities had been elected to the Senate, a stand-alone government department for disability affairs had been created and a disabilities policy had been launched in 2021.

11. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the country was making significant strides in curbing drug and substance abuse by, on the one hand, suppressing the trafficking of illegal drugs and substances and, on the other, promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of drug and substance abuse. Vocational training and drug rehabilitation programmes had been set up to support recovery. The State had established 18 drug rehabilitation centres to which drug users were referred for rehabilitation, vocational training and reintegration without facing any criminal charges. In addition, the bill on the establishment of the National Drug and Substance Control Agency aimed to establish a coordination mechanism for access to support services.

12. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Government had taken deliberate measures to supplement the National AIDS Trust Fund through increased domestic budget allocations to the health sector, with a particular focus on sustaining HIV programmes. That reflected the recognition that the fight against HIV/AIDS was a matter of national pride that could not rely solely on donor support. The national AIDS levy, a 3 per cent tax on personal and corporate income, remained a cornerstone of domestic financing. Since its inception, it had mobilized over US\$ 100 million, directly funding antiretroviral therapy, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and community outreach programmes.

13. To reinforce those mechanisms, efforts were under way to strengthen collective systems, broaden treatment coverage and ensure that every financial contribution raised was channelled towards high-impact interventions. Those combined efforts had yielded results, including a reduction in prevalence from a peak of over 25 per cent in the late 1990s to 11.3 per cent currently, with more than 1.3 million people now on lifelong antiretroviral therapy. Mother-to-child transmission rates had declined to below 8 per cent, compared to over 30 per cent two decades earlier, and AIDS-related deaths had dropped by more than 60 per cent in the past decade.

14. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that gross domestic product (GDP) had suffered sharp economic contraction between 2000, when sanctions had first been imposed, and 2008 – negative growth rates had been recorded during that period. Key sectors such as agriculture, mining and manufacturing had been severely affected by the downturn. Between 2000 and 2017, the country had lost approximately US\$ 21 billion in potential GDP. In all, it had lost over US\$ 42 billion in revenue, US\$ 4.5 billion annually in bilateral donor support since 2001, US\$ 12 billion in loans from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the African Development Bank and US\$ 18 billion in international commercial loans.

15. Inflows from foreign direct investment had dropped drastically, falling from an annual average of US\$ 95 million in the 1990s to just US\$ 20 million after 2000. Trade volumes had also suffered. The loss of access to markets in the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union had led to a collapse in export competitiveness. That situation had been exacerbated by the country's exclusion from initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which could have promoted exports to the United States. Exports had shrunk from US\$ 2.4 billion in 1996 to US\$ 1.5 billion after 2000.

16. Capacity utilization had also experienced a steep decline, falling from above 70 per cent before the imposition of sanctions to a record low of 10 per cent at their peak. Currency fluctuations had been high in the period from 2005 to 2009, when the Zimbabwean dollar had almost collapsed. The report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights on her visit to Zimbabwe ([A/HRC/51/33/Add.2](#)) clearly showed how those unjustified measures affected the economies of targeted countries and the human rights agenda.

17. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that there were three main categories of workplace inspectors. First, the Ministry of Mines had 66 inspectors who oversaw mines and other metallurgical complexes. Second, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Development had 249 inspectors, including designated agents who were employees of national employment agencies and formed part of the wider inspectorate system. Third, the

National Social Security Authority also conducted inspections across both public and private workplaces, employing 161 inspectors.

18. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that section 5 of the Labour Act had been amended in 2023 to align with section 65 (6) of the Constitution, which provided for equal pay for men and women for work of similar value. The Labour Act now required every employer to pay equal remuneration to male and female employees, without discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender. There were therefore no gender pay gaps in Zimbabwe.

19. The minimum age for admission to employment or apprenticeships in Zimbabwe was 16 years. The Labour Act prohibited persons under 18 from engaging in work hazardous to their health, safety or morals. Children were thus required to complete basic education at the age of 16 before entering the labour market.

20. Section 65 (3) of the Constitution granted workers the right to resort to collective action. Statutory Instrument No. 137 of 2003 set out the categories of work classified as essential services. The Tripartite Negotiating Forum, which brought together the Government and representatives of business and labour, was consulted before such statutory instruments were enacted.

21. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, with reference to the Government's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, the country had met the World Health Organization 95-95-95 targets as of 1 December 2023, meaning that 95 per cent of persons living with HIV knew their status, 95 per cent of those who knew their status were on antiretroviral therapy and 95 per cent of those on therapy had achieved viral suppression. It had now set targets of 98-98-98.

22. **Mr. Nonthasoot** (Country Task Force) said that, given the considerable GDP growth projected for 2025, as reported by the delegation, he wished to know what measures the State Party intended to take to ensure an equitable distribution of resources across the country, including in rural areas, in order to combat multidimensional poverty. He would also appreciate clarification regarding the persistence of child marriage, which – by the delegation's own admission – continued in rural communities. Concerns had also been raised about the continued occurrence of illegal child labour, and he would appreciate additional statistical data on that issue.

23. In the light of reports that recovering drug users, under threat of criminal prosecution, had been involuntarily placed in psychiatric wards rather than rehabilitation centres, he wondered whether those affected had the option of voluntary admission to rehabilitation facilities or whether their choices were restricted in certain circumstances. He also sought information on measures to ensure that working mothers in all sectors, including the civil service and the informal economy, could exercise their right to maternity leave, and whether statutory paternity leave was available in Zimbabwe.

24. It would furthermore be useful to learn whether the Covenant had ever been invoked or directly applied before domestic courts; whether a comprehensive anti-discrimination law existed prohibiting all forms of discrimination on all prohibited grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity; and what measures the Government had taken to combat discrimination and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and persons living with HIV/AIDS, including discriminatory practices such as forced evictions, school bullying and denial of healthcare and other services.

25. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on the reportedly high incidences of stunting and wasting among children in the State Party. It would also be useful to learn when the State Party had started implementing its current support programmes for farmers, what results were expected and whether additional measures were envisaged to make further progress in that regard. He would also be interested to learn about the State Party's overall assessment of the fast-track land reform programme, which had been introduced 25 years prior, particularly in the light of international criticism that while distribution had reached millions of farmers, access had not been equal for all.

26. **Ms. Pérez** said that, according to reports, almost 70 per cent of the State Party's population had faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023. In view of that situation, and the difficulties caused by the economic sanctions imposed on the State Party, she

wondered whether mitigation programmes for food-insecure households were sustainable or whether other mechanisms should be established to support them.

27. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Government had established a programme under which rural households were given packages to enable them to grow their own food. When the country had been hit by drought, as in the 2023/24 season, measures had been taken to increase the volume of wheat produced. In the African continent, only Ethiopia currently produced more wheat than Zimbabwe. Historically, silos for storing grain had mainly been concentrated in grain-growing regions, which had sometimes given rise to distribution problems. Silos were now being built in every region in the country so that grain could be stored close to where people lived.

28. He would be grateful for the Committee's views on what could be done to eliminate child marriage, aside from campaigning against the practice, banning it in law and establishing agencies to enforce that law.

29. Drug users who required rehabilitation were not prosecuted or held in psychiatric units but placed in rehabilitation centres. Vocational training centres and facilities formerly used as quarantine centres during the COVID-19 pandemic were being converted into rehabilitation centres.

30. Awareness of the right to maternity leave was high among both public and private sector employees. The Government had not received any reports of women being denied paid maternity leave by a private sector employer. The notion of paternity leave was not in keeping with the culture of Zimbabwe. Men whose partners had given birth preferred to go out to work than to stay at home with the baby. The people of Zimbabwe should not be forced to adhere to cultural norms that did not appeal to them.

31. Jobseekers were not asked about their sexual orientation when they applied for a job. Although people were free to do as they wished behind closed doors, same-sex marriage was prohibited as it was not in keeping with the culture of Zimbabwe. The Committee should be helping the people of Zimbabwe to preserve their cultural values rather than seeking to impose other values on them.

32. The land reform launched 25 years previously had been a huge success. Statistics showed that tobacco and grain production were both at record levels. Bank loans were allocated to farmers to enable them to irrigate their land and increase their productivity. As a result of the reform, Zimbabwe no longer needed to import wheat from other countries.

33. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, in agricultural seasons not affected by drought, Zimbabwe was self-sufficient in food. During the 2023/24 season, when a severe drought had hit the country, food assistance had been provided to over 6 million people. In providing such assistance, the first step had been to identify vulnerable groups who were most in need, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, and women and children in both rural and urban areas.

34. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the methods used to calculate poverty levels in Zimbabwe were no different from those used in other countries and took account of household income and expenditure levels, among other factors. Data on poverty were disaggregated by region, gender, age, social group and other characteristics. Average poverty levels varied from year to year depending on fluctuating unemployment levels and seasonal factors such as drought. Despite the impact of economic sanctions, targeted social welfare programmes and economic reforms had brought about significant reductions in poverty levels in recent years. No one in Zimbabwe had died as a result of starvation.

35. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that a dualist approach to international law was taken in Zimbabwe. Chapter 4 of the Constitution adopted in 2013 provided for a broad range of economic, social and cultural rights that had not been provided for in the country's previous Constitution. Any person whose constitutional rights had been violated could bring a complaint before the Constitutional Court. Where necessary, the Constitution or other pieces of legislation were amended to give legal force to international human rights treaties. Section 46 (1) (3) of chapter 4 of the Constitution established that, when interpreting the chapter, courts, tribunals, forums and other bodies must take into account international law and all treaties and conventions to which Zimbabwe was a party.

36. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the distribution of income in Zimbabwe was recognized as being relatively equitable within the region. In 2011, the Gini coefficient had been recorded at 43.2 per cent, after taxes and transfers, indicating a moderate level of inequality. The Gini coefficient had fluctuated over time, reaching 50.3 per cent in recent years. It should be considered in the light of ongoing efforts to promote social equity and economic development.

37. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission had not received any reports of homosexuals being subjected to harassment. Homosexuals were able to form associations but they did not have the legal right to marry a person of the same sex.

38. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that all forms of harassment were prohibited under the Constitution, which enshrined the right to personal security. The law enforcement agencies would act on any complaints of harassment that they received.

39. **Mr. Palmisano** (Country Task Force) said that the school dropout rate was worryingly high at the upper secondary level, particularly among poor children and girls living in rural areas. Barriers that prevented children from completing their education included the cost of school fees, children's lack of registration documents, early marriage and teenage pregnancy. In view of that situation, he wished to know what measures would be taken to reduce the school dropout rate, to provide free upper secondary education and to prevent the stigmatization of pregnant girls and adolescent mothers in the school system.

40. He would welcome information on how the National Non-Formal Education Policy was implemented and whether it had been successful in promoting quality and inclusive education and equipping adult learners, young persons and out-of-school children with functional skills. He would appreciate details of any efforts made to raise awareness of non-formal education programmes, including the "Learning Passport" platform and other digital platforms, and to popularize them among potential learners, especially those living in remote and marginalized rural areas, as well as of any measures that had been taken to ensure that schools were equipped and teachers were trained to deliver non-formal education.

41. It would be useful to know the proportion of the national budget allocated to education and whether any plans were in place to increase the funding of education in order to improve school infrastructure and pay teachers a decent salary. He would like to know what mechanisms were in place, aside from the Basic Education Assistance Module, to promote access to education for vulnerable children, including orphans and children from indigent families. Given that the Module did not cover all the needs of vulnerable children, he was curious to know how needs not covered were met.

42. He would like to know what measures, including the introduction of policies, regulations or training programmes, had been taken to prevent the use of schools for military or political purposes and to set up systems for monitoring and investigating allegations of attacks on educational institutions.

43. He would welcome further details on the outcomes of the power granted to the Minister for Sport, Arts and Recreation under the Education Act to authorize the teaching of Indigenous languages, in addition to Shona, Ndebele and English, and the progress made on the teaching of Indigenous languages in schools. He wondered whether his understanding was correct that the Government did not officially recognize any specific group as Indigenous, including the Tshwa San and Doma, who self-identified as Indigenous Peoples. If so, he would be interested to hear more about the measures taken to protect the cultural rights of such Indigenous Peoples and other minority groups and to enable them to maintain their culture and way of life and sustain their traditional livelihoods.

44. Regarding the benefits of scientific progress and its application, available data and reliable research showed that many people, particularly in rural areas and in low-income households, lacked the digital skills needed to fully benefit from information and communication technology. He would like to know whether the Government was taking any steps to address that problem, which exacerbated the digital divide and limited access to essential services and economic opportunities.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

45. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, in Zimbabwe, students must meet certain academic criteria to progress from lower to upper secondary school. Many students, particularly those from low-income households, chose to work instead of pursuing an upper secondary education, while others lacked the academic preparation required to continue. That accounted for the lower enrolment rates at the upper secondary level. Section 75 of the Constitution stated that every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe had a right to basic State-funded education, which included the early childhood development programme, primary education and lower secondary education. However, the Government could not extend free education to the upper secondary level owing to limited resources. Section 68 of the Education Act, as amended, prohibited the exclusion of pregnant pupils. Schools were required to allow them to continue their education during pregnancy and after childbirth. The recently promulgated Education (General) Regulations, 2025, provided detailed guidelines on the care of pregnant girls in school.

46. The Government was implementing the Basic Education Assistance Module and the Grant-in-Aid of Tuition programme to support disadvantaged students, reduce dropout rates and promote inclusive equitable education in remote and rural areas. The new School Financing Policy, which aimed to operationalize the aforementioned constitutional provision on basic education, was expected to be finalized soon.

47. Zimbabwe had introduced a heritage-based curriculum that included all 16 official languages, from the early childhood development programme to upper secondary education. Syllabuses for Indigenous language instruction had been developed and translated into the official languages, including sign language. The curriculum provided for language instruction in Shona, Ndebele, Kalanga, Tonga, Venda, Sotho, Shangani, Chewa, Chibarwe, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, sign language, Tswana and English. The School Examinations Council, which operated under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, currently conducted assessments of several of those languages, with plans in place to expand those assessments to all official languages.

48. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, although minority groups and Indigenous Peoples were not officially recognized as such, steps had been taken to preserve their cultural heritage, including oral interviews with elders to document traditions, the establishment of community archives at the grass-roots level and the digitalization of endangered cultural collections to preserve them and reduce physical handling. The national broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), currently disseminated information in 14 of the 16 official languages and planned to expand to all 16, and National FM and community radio stations tailored their broadcasts to the communities they served.

49. **A representative of Zimbabwe** added that the country held an annual Culture Month, launched by the President, to celebrate and showcase the country's diverse cultures, which covered not just languages, but also entire ways of life.

50. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the country had a non-formal education programme that supported lifelong learning and second-chance education. The programme targeted out-of-school youth and adults, offering numeracy and vocational skills training. It also supported learners who had dropped out of formal education and wished to re-enter the system. The programme was supported by education partners and targeted remote and underserved communities.

51. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the Government enlisted the help of politicians, local councillors and community leaders to raise awareness of the programme and encourage participation at local schools. The President had supported digital learning by distributing computers and providing Internet facilities to schools to help learners acquire digital skills.

52. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the ministry responsible for information communication technology had established community communication centres in rural districts, equipped with Internet access and digital tools. Those centres were open to the public, including students who could use them for schoolwork and research. In remote areas without Internet connectivity, the Ministry was installing Starlink kits to provide Internet access directly to schools.

53. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, as of April 2025, 31 per cent of schools in Zimbabwe had Internet access. To help bridge the digital divide, especially in rural areas, the Government was also promoting the use of solar energy and offline e-learning platforms.

54. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that section 295 of the Constitution protected the right of Indigenous People to own, develop, control and use their communal lands. While no group was officially classified as Indigenous, the San in the Tsholotsho and Bulilima districts and the Doma in the Mbire and Guruve districts received special recognition. The Government had taken steps to support their well-being, including establishing a new chieftainship for the San to help them manage their own affairs; promoting early childhood education in the Tshwa San language; partnering with the Tsorowo San Development Trust to construct a clinic; and conducting quarterly visits by district development coordinators to assess challenges in both the San and Doma communities.

55. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that a concern had been raised about reported attacks on education in Zimbabwe, including the use of schools by armed forces and non-State actors. Most schools in Zimbabwe were built by the Government and local authorities, with strong community involvement. The military contributed to school construction and repairs during peacetime, especially during commemorations of the country's national heroes. Political leaders also supported school infrastructure development. Schools often served as multi-use community spaces, such as for church services or gatherings on weekends.

56. **Mr. Bouzid** (Country Task Force) said that the term "further education" mentioned in article 75 of the Constitution required clarification. He wondered whether further education was related to the "second chance learning initiative" referred to in paragraph 267 of the State Party report (E/C.12/ZWE/2). As there was a lack of information in the report about higher education, he would appreciate details about university education in Zimbabwe, student enrolment, tuition fees, the number of government-sponsored students studying abroad and the countries in which they studied.

57. **Mr. Palmisano** said that he wished to know what proportion of the national budget was allocated to education and whether it was sufficient to improve the school system. He would be interested in hearing about the concrete measures taken to support inclusive education for children with disabilities. He would like to know what steps had been taken to address discrimination and stigma faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in schools owing to their sexual orientation or gender identity and what reporting mechanisms existed for violations of their right to education. What actions was the Government taking, beyond the introduction of a music strategy, to implement the National Cultural Policy and promote cultural expression among diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious groups?

58. **Mr. Nonthasoot**, noting that the Committee's work complemented that of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, said that article 3 of the Covenant espoused the concept of equality between men and women and article 10 stated that the widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family. That was why the Committee wished to ascertain whether paternity leave was available and established in the law. In addition to existing laws, he wished to know what additional measures were being taken to prevent child marriage and promote awareness of the issue, especially through schools and religious leaders. Lastly, he would appreciate information on whether Zimbabwe had adopted or had plans to adopt comprehensive legislation to combat all forms of discrimination, including but not limited to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

59. **Ms. Chen** said that she wished to know whether the introduction of the Basic Education Assistance Module had helped to reduce school dropout rates and increase graduation rates, what those rates currently were and whether targets relating to them had been included in the country's Vision 2030. She wondered whether the Government's non-formal education programmes prepared participants for the labour market and how many participants they currently had.

60. **Ms. Pérez** said that she wished to know whether the State Party was considering making any improvements to the educational services that it provided to the public and how much it spent on education when considered as a percentage of GDP.

61. **Ms. El Yedri Afailal** asked whether child marriage was prohibited by law.
62. **Mr. Windfuhr** asked whether there had been any restrictions on eligibility for participation in the country's agrarian reform programme.
63. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** said that she wished to know whether the work done by the State Party with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the Sustainability Starts with Teachers programme had resulted in the inclusion of sustainable development in school curricula in the State Party.
64. **Ms. Rossi** said that she wished to know how the Government's total expenditure on social protection and education in 2025 compared to the total amount that it was spending on debt servicing that year. If available, the relevant figures under the 2026 budget would also be helpful.
65. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, under the Education Act, "further education" was defined as education at the advanced level and above. It included vocational training and degree and diploma programmes across all subject areas.
66. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that while the country's laws required the Government to promote higher education, there was no requirement that that education must be free. There was a State university in each of the country's 10 provinces. Private universities, several of which were affiliated with religious denominations, also operated in the country. Memorandums of understanding regarding study abroad opportunities were in place with a number of countries. Zimbabwean students studied in countries such as Zambia, South Africa, Algeria, India and China.
67. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, in recent years, while the country had been experiencing economic hardships, between 13 and 16 per cent of the national budget had been allocated to education. In 2025, however, the education budget made up 20.2 per cent of the total national budget. In addition, several initiatives implemented by the Government to support education, including the Basic Education Assistance Module, received funding from sources other than the national budget. The Global Partnership for Education had allocated US\$ 40 million to Zimbabwe for the period 2023–2026, the Education Transition Fund supplied teaching and learning materials and provided social protection to vulnerable students, and the youth-led non-profit organization Start Up for Rural Gen provided scholarships and support to rural students. There was a high-level policy dialogue on education financing that brought together key stakeholders, including government officials, donors and partners. The 2026 budget had not yet been approved.
68. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that all children from indigent families, including those with disabilities, were eligible for assistance under the Basic Education Assistance Module, which covered not only school and examination fees, but also the costs of uniforms and books. A policy was in place stating that children enrolled in the Module must not be expelled from school.
69. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, in 2024, the Basic Education Assistance Module had supported 31,234 boys and 31,615 girls in the early childhood development programme, 341,848 boys and 353,848 girls in primary schools, and 154,426 boys and 152,116 girls in secondary schools. Without that assistance, those children would not have been in school.
70. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that discussion of issues concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons was not encouraged in Zimbabwean society, and even less so in schools. Schoolchildren received sex education so that they would be aware of reproductive health issues, but they were not taught about sexual orientation. The Committee's questions on such matters were not culturally relevant to Zimbabwe.
71. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that Zimbabwe practiced pre-censorship to protect society from undesirable information and promote the country's cultural attributes. Inspections were conducted in the film and music production industries with the aim of preventing the country's cultural attributes from being polluted and ensuring that output released into society was consistent with the country's cultural values.

72. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that, with respect to the issue of paternity leave, there was no disagreement between the Committee and the delegation as to equality between men and women. However, in Zimbabwean culture, when women gave birth, men were expected to provide for them. A man who stayed at home at that time would be considered to be weak and to have failed to fulfil his duty.

73. There was a need to address child marriage through educational programmes involving religious and other leaders, as suggested by the Committee. Marriages involving persons under the age of 18 years were banned by law.

74. Under the agrarian reform, all Zimbabweans had been given access to land, irrespective of their ancestry. The ownership of farming land by foreigners had, however, been restricted. Answers to the remaining questions would be provided in writing.

75. **Mr. Abashidze** (Country Rapporteur) said that economic, social and cultural rights had been well incorporated into the Constitution of 2013. The State Party's main task now was to adopt the necessary laws, plans and strategies to make the constitutional guarantees effective.

76. **A representative of Zimbabwe** said that the dialogue with the Committee had been insightful and helpful. The delegation would reflect on the Committee's questions with a view to ensuring an improvement in how the country protected the rights enshrined in the Covenant ahead of its next appearance before the Committee. He hoped that, at that dialogue, there would be a greater recognition of the diversity of cultures around the world.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.