



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3179th meeting

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Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic reports of New Zealand
([CERD/C/NZL/23-24](#); [CERD/C/NZL/Q/23-24](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of New Zealand joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of New Zealand**, introducing his country's combined twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic reports (CERD/C/NZL/23-24), said that New Zealand was a diverse, egalitarian and proudly multicultural Pacific nation with more than 200 ethnic groups. As of 2023, about 68% of the population identified as European, about 18% as Māori – the Indigenous People of New Zealand – and about 9% as Pacific peoples. New Zealand had ratified the Convention in 1972, with no reservations, and democratic government formed the core of its strong human rights framework. The two main pieces of legislation that promoted and protected human rights were the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993, which outlawed discrimination on a range of grounds and was applicable to State action and in areas such as housing and education.
3. As New Zealand did not have a codified constitution, human rights legislation was not supreme law, meaning that the courts did not have the power to strike down acts of parliament that were inconsistent with the Bill of Rights. However, since 2019, the courts could declare laws to be inconsistent with the Bill of Rights as a form of redress. In 2022, the House of Representatives had passed legislation requiring the Government and parliament to formally respond to such declarations of inconsistency. The constitutional system of New Zealand was unique, having dual foundations in the Westminster common law tradition inherited from the United Kingdom and in the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, which established the relationship between Māori and the Crown.
4. In November 2023, following a general election, a new Government, formed of three parties, had taken office. Its priority was to improve the lives of all New Zealanders, irrespective of their background, by delivering the benefits of a strong economy. It would continue to honour the Treaty of Waitangi.
5. New Zealand had a well-established process to settle grievances caused by historic acts and omissions by the Crown that breached the Treaty. Through settlements, the Crown sought to address the wrongs of the past by focusing on the future and delivering better outcomes for Māori and their communities. Significant areas of Crown land had been returned to Māori tribes as cultural redress, together with financial, commercial and historical redress, including acknowledgement and apology. Since 2022, five Treaty settlements had been completed, with total financial and commercial redress in the amount of 138 million dollars (\$NZ).
6. Māori continued to experience poorer outcomes across most socioeconomic indicators and were therefore more likely to benefit from government investment in law and order, housing, education and health. Recent data showed that the Government's approach was succeeding: for example, Māori adult victimization rates had decreased in 2024, while recently introduced testing of early literacy showed improvement for all children, including Māori. In some cases, specific approaches to delivering services for Māori were required. For example, under the Whanau Ora programme, Māori were provided with funding to design and deliver services for their communities in the areas of housing, health, criminal justice and employment.
7. New Zealand recognized and celebrated the important contributions of many different ethnicities. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities, established in 2021, focused on economic growth, security and resilience, and social cohesion and well-being for ethnic communities. It administered an annual fund to foster ethnic communities' sense of belonging and help them to build their capacity and express their cultural identity.
8. Māori were disproportionately represented among perpetrators and victims of violent crime. The Government was currently pursuing a criminal justice reform that aimed to reduce the number of victims of violent crime by 20,000 by 2029. According to the latest data, as of

August 2025, there had been 38,000 fewer victims than the baseline set in October 2023, meaning that the Government was on track to meet its target.

9. **A representative of the Human Rights Commission** said that the Commission was the national human rights institution; it had A status accreditation. The domestic context in New Zealand had shifted significantly since the consideration of the previous periodic report in 2017. The past eight years had been marked by major human rights issues, including the Christchurch mosque terror attacks, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate-related disasters, economic insecurity, the establishment of a royal commission of inquiry into the abuse of children in State and faith-based care and a series of reforms undermining the rights of Māori.

10. Some progress had been made since the previous review, but more remained to be done. In terms of the protection of the rights of Māori, the Treaty of Waitangi, despite being the founding document of New Zealand, enjoyed minimal constitutional or legal protection – an issue repeatedly highlighted by human rights bodies – with the result that successive Governments had been able to override Māori rights upheld by the courts and the Waitangi Tribunal. Moreover, a recent wave of reforms, advanced without genuine engagement with Māori or their free, prior and informed consent, had reversed decades of progress on Indigenous rights. It was time for the Government to take action to promote an informed and participatory national conversation on the Treaty of Waitangi, in order to provide certainty for Treaty partners and all other communities and a pathway to strengthening social cohesion.

11. The country's increasing diversity required action on social cohesion. Ethnic minority communities made valuable contributions to New Zealand and many had strong relationships with Māori and respect for the Treaty of Waitangi. Nevertheless, they experienced persistent racism and racial discrimination in health, justice, education, housing and employment. Migrant exploitation and modern slavery remained significant issues, while global anti-migrant discourse was slowly being imported online, in public spaces and in political rhetoric. The Government should prioritize the implementation of the Social Cohesion Framework, invest in community initiatives and ensure that government structures and processes reflected the country's changing demographics.

12. Furthermore, given that persons who experienced racism and racial discrimination had limited access to remedies, and that the Human Rights Commission was the primary mechanism for seeking remedy, it was necessary that the Commission should be adequately resourced to fulfil its statutory functions. The Commission called on the Government to take the Committee's recommendations seriously and to make genuine progress towards implementing them.

13. **Ms. Stavrinaki** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee would be glad to receive up-to-date information on the incorporation of the Convention into the domestic legal order. In particular, it would be interested to know how the Convention was applied by the courts and other authorities and to receive examples of judicial decisions in which Convention provisions had been invoked. The Committee would like to know why descent was not among the prohibited grounds of discrimination set forth under the Human Rights Act and whether the State Party intended to bring its legislation into full conformity with article 1 of the Convention.

14. She would be interested to know the extent to which measures to improve the police response to hate crimes, such as the establishment of the Te Raranga (The Weave) programme and the introduction of training, had contributed to increased reporting by hate crime victims. She would also be glad to receive recent statistics on hate crimes and hate speech incidents, including on investigations, prosecutions and sanctions, as well as qualitative information on cases, trends, characteristics of victims and perpetrators and types of offences. It would be useful to know whether identified trends informed policies and measures to prevent and combat hate crimes.

15. Building social cohesion and combating hate speech were among the key recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques of 15 March 2019. However, hate speech legislation had not been amended to fully comply with article 4 of the Convention, while the review of hate speech legislation had been repeatedly delayed and ultimately withdrawn by the Minister of Justice,

despite concerns among Māori and ethnic and religious minority communities about rising racist, xenophobic and religiously motivated hate speech. She therefore wished to know whether the Government intended to broaden the definition of “objectionable” content to include racial hatred and notions of racial superiority. She wondered what measures had been taken to address and remove online hate speech, and how many investigations had been conducted, prosecutions brought and convictions secured in hate speech cases. She would be interested to hear about the Government’s plans to expand protections for religious groups, restart efforts to foster public dialogue on social cohesion and the value of diversity, and revisit the regulatory framework on harmful online content.

16. Following the adoption of the Gangs Act 2024, it had been reported that Māori were more likely to be identified as gang members, while it was uncertain that members of white supremacist and other racist groups would be similarly captured. She wondered what steps had been taken to ensure that the State Party’s legislation did not conflict with the State Party’s obligations under article 4 of the Convention.

17. In the light of reports that real remuneration for legal aid providers had significantly declined over the previous 15 years, she would appreciate information on measures to ensure the sustainability of the legal aid system, on the review undertaken on the legal aid system for Māori, Pacific peoples, asylum-seekers and migrant workers, and on any consultations conducted with those groups to improve their access to justice.

18. The Committee took note of the statistics provided by the State Party on racial harassment complaints made to the Human Rights Commission. It would be grateful if the delegation could provide an update on the number of complaints of racial harassment that had been lodged, mediated and resolved, disaggregated by year, type of violation and the victim’s age, gender, national or ethnic origin or other status, as well as describing trends, the outcomes of cases and any remedies awarded by the Human Rights Review Tribunal. It would be interested to know how many cases had come before the Tribunal in which Māori, Pacific peoples and other ethnic groups had received free legal representation. As the Labour Inspectorate did not collect disaggregated data, the Committee would like to know how the State Party monitored and assessed access to justice for victims of discrimination in employment.

19. Māori and Pacific peoples were overrepresented among adult victims of crime, while increased retail crime affecting Indian and Chinese small business owners was a particular concern. She wished to know what steps were being taken to address the victimization of Māori, Pacific and ethnic minority communities and to improve data collection, reporting and targeted interventions to ensure their safety and access to justice.

20. Furthermore, she would like to know whether the State Party had taken any measures or allocated any resources to facilitate women’s access to justice, given that ethnic and migrant women who experienced violence faced heightened risks due to cultural and language barriers, social isolation and immigration status, all of which affected their ability to seek support or report abuse.

21. Although it had apologized for the disproportionate scrutiny of Muslim communities and the neglect of far-right extremism, the Government had reportedly ended its coordinated cross-agency programme to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques, raising concerns about its support for victims and survivors and its long-term commitment to justice. She would therefore like to know the extent to which the Government had evaluated the implementation of all 44 recommendations in consultation with survivors, victims’ families and Muslim communities.

22. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care had found that up to 200,000 people had suffered severe physical, psychological and sexual abuse in State and faith-based care between 1950 and 1999, with many experiences amounting to torture and marked by systemic racism and ableism. Māori and Pacific peoples, particularly children, had been disproportionately affected. The Committee welcomed the public apology issued by the Government in 2024, but was concerned that the Government had not fully accepted the Commission’s recommendations. She wondered whether the State Party would change its approach so as to fully implement all the recommendations, engage in meaningful

consultation with survivors and establish an independent redress mechanism in line with international human rights standards. She also wished to know whether the State Party would take steps, in partnership with Māori survivors and affected communities, to reform the alternative care system. Following the recent reintroduction of boot camps in youth justice facilities, she wondered what measures had been taken to prevent disproportionate harm to Māori youth.

23. An independent multi-year research programme commissioned by New Zealand Police, *Understanding Policing Delivery*, had found systemic bias in policing practices, with Māori and other ethnic groups facing a higher likelihood of prosecution and of being subjected to excessive use of force and warrantless searches. Despite those findings, the police had begun to implement only 8 out of 50 recommendations, raising concerns about the adequacy, transparency and pace of reform. The Committee wished to know whether the State Party intended to implement all of the recommendations to ensure that policing policies and practices complied with human rights obligations, including through meaningful engagement with Māori, Pacific peoples and ethnic communities.

24. Māori and Pacific peoples had been overrepresented in the New Zealand prison population for decades; however, instead of addressing the root causes of their disproportionate incarceration, the Government had recently adopted reforms that reinstated the “three strikes” regime, removed funding for cultural reports and abolished prisoner reduction targets. She therefore asked whether the State Party intended to reorient its current policy approach in order to invest in community-driven, culturally grounded rehabilitation and diversion programmes aimed at reducing recidivism. What steps had been taken to increase the representation of Māori, Pacific peoples and other minority groups as decision makers, including as prosecutors and judges, in the criminal justice system? Did the State Party envisage any training or awareness-raising for investigating officers on how their perceptions and organizational culture affected prosecution outcomes?

25. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Human Rights Act prohibited discrimination on grounds including colour, race, ethnic or national origin, religious belief and family status, including being a relative of a particular person. Persons could apply for judicial review if they wished to challenge how a legal power was used, not used or planned to be used by any individual or statutory authority. Where applicable, the courts would have regard to the Convention when interpreting statutes. Since 2021, New Zealand courts and tribunals had heard 23 cases related to claims of racial discrimination. The most significant had been brought by the charitable organization *Te Puna Ora o Mataatua*, in which the claimants were seeking a declaration that the *Pai Ora (Disestablishment of Māori Health Authority) Amendment Act 2024* was inconsistent with the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act* because it indirectly discriminated on the basis of race.

26. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, under New Zealand criminal law, any element of hatred in the commission of an offence would be considered an aggravating factor. Following the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques, the Government had asked the Law Commission to consider whether the current provisions on aggravating circumstances were sufficient or whether a further legislative response was necessary. The Government was still awaiting the report of the Law Commission and would consider its recommendations in due course.

27. The Government had decided not to expand the country’s already significant legislation on hate speech. The Human Rights Act currently prohibited speech that incited racial disharmony against a person because of an aspect of his or her identity, such as race or ethnicity, and provided for penalties. Moreover, the Government was concerned that broadening the definition of hate speech to cover, for example, satire and ridicule, would have an impact on freedom of speech. Speech expressing opposing views should be countered with more speech and more conversation, rather than attempts to silence it.

28. The Government’s justice policy was focused on reducing the number of victims of crime. Such efforts started with putting an end to the cycle in which a small number of repeat offenders created multiple victims. Although less than 0.25% of adult New Zealanders were gang members, those members were associated with up to a quarter of violent crime. The

Government made no apologies for adopting a firm stance against gangs, including by banning gang insignia.

29. The Government's desire to reduce the national debt and return to a budget surplus meant that all spending was closely monitored. Legal aid nonetheless continued to receive significant investment, with an additional \$NZ 148 million allocated over four years from 2022/23. A review of legal aid arrangements was under way, and officials had been instructed to focus resources on areas in which they could be used most effectively.

30. **A representative of New Zealand** said that duty lawyers provided free legal aid to persons appearing before the courts. In recent years, Community Law Centres had focused specifically on services for Māori, leading to a 30% increase in Māori clients.

31. **A representative of New Zealand** said that 9,633 complaints of unlawful discrimination, of which 2,682 related to race, had been made to the Human Rights Commission between 2016 and May 2025. During the same period, 316 complaints concerning racial disharmony under section 61 of the Human Rights Act, and 411 complaints of racial harassment under section 63, had been lodged with the Commission. None of the complaints on racial disharmony had been resolved through mediation services, and neither the courts nor the Human Rights Review Tribunal had awarded redress in any cases.

32. New Zealand was home to Indian and Chinese communities who were particularly active in the retail sector. Concerns about retail crime and violence directed at shopkeepers and store owners had led to the appointment of a ministerial advisory group tasked with engaging with communities and finding ways to reduce such crime. The group had produced strong recommendations for a tougher response, particularly targeting youth offenders. In response to calls for real consequences for criminal offending, the Sentencing Act had been amended to limit the discounts that judges could grant during sentencing. The changes had elicited a mix of views, including among Māori, many of whom encouraged a tougher stance on crime. Among other measures to reduce youth offending, the Government had set a target of reducing serious and persistent child and youth offending by 15% by 2030 – a goal that had already been achieved. Part of the Government's approach was to address the root causes and underlying drivers of youth crime, such as truancy and poor school attendance.

33. **A representative of New Zealand** said that crime and its impact on different ethnicities was monitored through the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey, whose findings, originally reported on an annual basis, were now updated quarterly. The proportion of Māori and Pasifika judges in the criminal justice system had increased significantly in recent years: at present, 24% of District Court judges had Māori ancestry. Figures on the ethnicity of senior court judges were unavailable; however, the Chief Justice had begun to record that information.

34. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Government's increased focus on hate crime was matched by increased reporting and public confidence. According to official data, the number of offences flagged for perceived hate had doubled from just over 3,000 in 2020/21 to more than 6,400 in 2024/25. Proceedings had been brought against 839 offenders in connection with flagged offences in 2024/25. In the same year, the police had recorded 11 offences of inciting racial disharmony under the Human Rights Act, several of which had led to court action.

35. In September 2025, the New Zealand Police executive had considered all 51 recommendations from the Understanding Policing Delivery research programme and had decided to accept 15 and keep 29 under consideration. One recommendation had been to periodically review prosecution data in order to monitor differential prosecution rates. Two accepted recommendations related to training for front-line police officers on their behaviours, culture and commitment to Māori and the Treaty, and training on cultural competency and diversity for all staff.

36. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Government had responded promptly and comprehensively to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques. It had drawn up and adopted the Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Strategy, and assumed an international leadership role with the Christchurch Call to Action to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online.

It had paid particular attention to gun control, establishing the Firearm Safety Authority and embarking on pragmatic reforms to improve gun safety.

37. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would be grateful for information on how the State Party planned to meet the challenge of racist hate speech online, including on social media. She encouraged the State Party to consider the Committee's general recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech, which underscored that the protection of persons from racist hate speech was not simply a matter of opposition between the right to freedom of expression and its restriction for the benefit of protected groups, and that racist hate speech potentially silenced the free speech of its victims.

38. Similarly, she wondered whether the State Party had considered the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials. In that regard, she wished to know whether the State Party had adopted any specific guidelines to address racial profiling.

39. **Mr. Kut** (Country Task Force) said that the argument that hate speech could be countered by more speech struck him as hollow. There was no such thing as the right to offend. It was up to the Government to show political will to address hatred, all the more so in New Zealand, given the extremes it had reached with the Christchurch tragedy.

40. **Ms. McDougall** said she had been pleased to hear that democratic government was at the heart of the country's human rights framework, but she wondered why the Government had reportedly taken steps under the Electoral Amendment Act 2025 that could reduce voter participation and disenfranchise certain population groups. Furthermore, she was concerned that the Government had taken measures that could undermine Māori rights under the Treaty of Waitangi, and would welcome an explanation of how such measures were compatible with the State Party's commitment to human rights and democracy.

41. **Mr. Diaby** said that the Committee would like to know how many civil society organizations were working on racial discrimination issues in New Zealand, how many had been consulted on the report, and whether their views had been taken into account. In the light of the United Nations' zero-tolerance policy on reprisals, he would be grateful if the delegation could comment on allegations that Māori chiefs who engaged with the Committee had been subjected to threats, intimidation and reprisals.

42. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur) said that the State Party had submitted a follow-up report (CERD/C/NZL/CO/21-22/Add.1) in August 2018. The Committee had subsequently requested the State Party to provide further information, in its next periodic report, on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 15, 17 and 34 of the previous concluding observations. The State Party had duly provided some information on its implementation of the recommendations under paragraph 34, which related to the empowerment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, reparation and redress for victims, and the number of Māori and Pasifika children in State care. In that regard, she wished to know why redress processes had not worked for many survivors, as stated in paragraph 98 (c) of the State Party's combined periodic reports. In the light of the information that Māori accounted for 81% of children abused in care, she wondered what had been done to reduce that figure. She would be grateful if the delegation could indicate which agencies had mechanisms for making a complaint or a claim for compensation of support. Lastly, she would welcome an update on the redress report of the Royal Commission.

43. **A representative of New Zealand** said that more than 200 recommendations had been issued by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care. The Government had accepted, partially accepted or accepted the intent of 85 of those recommendations thus far and would publish annual reports outlining the work done to give effect to them. Action taken had included the acknowledgment by the Government of the torture that had occurred at the child and adolescent unit of the Lake Alice Psychiatric Hospital, the provision of end-of-life payments of \$NZ 20,000 to the victims and the implementation of measures to address inequities in the reimbursement of legal fees. A sum of \$NZ 32 million had been invested to increase the processing capacity of the redress and claims system, and a fund worth \$NZ 2 million had been established to support survivors of abuse in care. On 12 November 2025, a national day of reflection had been held to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the issuance of public apologies to those survivors. Significant funds had been earmarked

in the 2025 budget to improve redress measures and the safety of children, young people and vulnerable groups. The overrepresentation of Māori children in State care was an issue that successive Governments had sought to address, and every effort continued to be made to resolve it.

44. One of the reasons behind the three-week wait for the final result of the most recent election had been the significant increase in the number of “special votes”, many of which had been cast by individuals who had not registered to vote until a late stage in the electoral process. In order to ensure that the final results of future elections were delivered more promptly, the Government had introduced a bill that would establish the requirement for voters to register at least 13 days before an election. Similar requirements were already in place in other States, and many activities would be organized to encourage individuals to register before elections were called.

45. Legislation criminalizing stalking had recently been passed by the parliament. Another law had been adopted to ensure that orders to permanently prohibit the publication of the name of adult sex offenders could not be issued without the agreement of their victim.

46. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Government had developed its national strategy to tackle family and sexual violence on the basis that those issues disproportionately affected Māori women and women from ethnic minorities. The first action plan associated with the strategy had focused on risk assessment frameworks, training standards and the provision of resources to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enable them to more effectively engage with the communities they served. The second action plan, which was still being implemented, was geared towards ensuring that NGOs and government bodies were able to join forces to deliver effective interventions in the community. Work was also being conducted with the perpetrators of family violence. Reports on the overall impact of the strategy and its effectiveness in addressing the family and sexual violence faced by ethnic minorities, LGBT+ communities and other specific groups were regularly published.

47. When preparing the periodic report, the Government had held a number of meetings with civil society organizations and had given the general public the opportunity to provide feedback online or in writing. Additional meetings with 40 individuals and organizations had been held in August and September 2025 in preparation for the current review. He was very surprised to learn that certain individuals had allegedly faced reprisals for communicating with the Committee and would welcome further information in that regard.

48. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would be interested to hear what was being done to facilitate access to justice for Māori and Pacific women and women from migrant communities, taking into account the cultural, linguistic and other barriers they faced.

49. **Mr Amir** said that the State Party had a duty to support the members of the Māori community who had been abused as children. He hoped that an invitation to visit that community would be extended to a member of the Committee.

50. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would welcome more detailed information on the legal provisions that established hate as an aggravating circumstance and wished to know what other legal measures the Government was envisaging to address crimes that had a hate element.

51. **Mr. Diaby**, speaking as the focal point for reprisals, said that his duty was to remind States Parties that the Committee would not tolerate the intimidation of individuals or groups who cooperated with it during and after the dialogue.

The meeting was suspended at 4.50 p.m. and resumed at 5 p.m.

52. **Mr. Kut** (Country Task Force) said that he would welcome the delegation’s further comments on the statement contained in paragraph 186 of the State Party’s combined reports concerning the need to capture more robust ethnic data and the steps being taken to that end. In its next periodic report, it would be helpful for the State Party to provide up-to-date statistical data that would enable the Committee to fully assess the extent to which the State Party’s obligations under the Convention were being met.

53. He wished to know what policies were currently in place to tackle racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance. He would welcome an update on the status of the draft national action plan against racism and wondered whether that plan would set out specific measures to address racism and racial discrimination against the Māori community, what resources would be allocated for its implementation and what would be done to assess its effectiveness. The delegation might comment on the disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority, which, according to reports, represented a significant rollback of the State Party's commitments in the area of health equity, and describe what steps were being taken to mitigate the negative consequences of that decision. It would be helpful to receive up-to-date information on the mandate, powers and resources of the government bodies responsible for implementing the Convention, which included the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Ministry of Māori Development.

54. He wished to know what measures were being taken to promote social cohesion and guarantee respect for cultural diversity, whether the State Party intended to revise educational materials to help counter racial stereotypes and what policies had been adopted to raise awareness of the cultural heritage, linguistic identity and history of ethnic minorities and Indigenous Peoples. He would be interested to hear whether the Ministry of Social Development, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Justice had begun the work outlined in paragraph 114 of the combined periodic reports to develop a strategic framework on social cohesion. The delegation might also explain the comment made in paragraph 116 of the reports that, according to public submissions, social cohesion efforts should target New Zealanders of European descent rather than Māori or other ethnic communities. He wondered what specific measures were being taken to ensure that the diversity of the population was duly taken into account in the planning and delivery of services and the allocation of funding and what was being done to create opportunities for new migrants, in particular former refugees, to learn about and make connections with other communities. Updated information on the steps taken to increase the representation of ethnic minorities among educational staff would be welcome, as would a description of the specific measures adopted to address race- and religion-based bullying and harassment in schools.

55. **A representative of New Zealand** said that all statistics collected through the national census were made publicly available, and the delegation would provide the Committee with a written summary of the statistics pertaining to each ethnic group.

56. The decision to dissolve the Māori Health Authority in no way represented a rollback of the Government's commitment to health equity. The current administration had made the decision in view of the lack of evidence that the existence of a separate body for the Māori community had led to better health outcomes. It was of the opinion that those outcomes could be more effectively improved by focusing efforts on addressing the key health-related challenges affecting the Māori community, such as the significant decline in immunization rates that had been observed since 2017.

57. The challenging fiscal environment meant that investment in the arts and the cultural sector had recently been limited. In the last two years, there had, however, been an increase of \$NZ 48 million in the funds allocated to support Māori performative arts, which reflected the Government's acknowledgement of the power of the arts to bring communities together and deepen understanding of the country's diverse cultures. New Zealand had a very long tradition of investing in Māori and Pacific cultural activities and recognized that its unique culture and society were of interest to the rest of the world.

58. **A representative of New Zealand** said that more than \$NZ 1 billion had been earmarked for the delivery of appropriate and effective health services for the Māori community. The Ministry of Health continued to develop Māori health policy and monitor the effectiveness of the health system in meeting that community's needs. Such efforts were supported by a dedicated committee that was responsible for advising the Minister of Health and the board of Health New Zealand. The committee also worked closely with the 15 Iwi Māori Partnership Boards to monitor health services and strengthen engagement with Māori communities across the country. The Māori health strategy was in the process of being finalized and would be geared towards addressing the health needs of the Māori community and ensuring that members of that community had access to effective services.

59. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the Ministry for Ethnic Communities had been established to ensure that the voices of different ethnic groups were heard and understood. In 2024, the Ministry had introduced a framework designed to improve the collection of data with a view to gaining more insight from those groups. Steps were being taken to replace the national census with a system based on the collection of administrative data, which would be overseen by the national statistics agency and would enable population statistics to be updated more regularly.

60. The Social Cohesion Framework had been developed in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques. It was focused on tackling discrimination, fostering opportunities for positive interactions among different groups, supporting participation in society, improving well-being, promoting inclusiveness and shared values and protecting society and the environment for future generations. A number of indicators had been developed to measure the progress made in those areas, and the relevant reports were made public.

61. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, while the Government acknowledged that the completion of the draft national action plan against racism was taking longer than expected, its priorities in the justice sector were to reduce the number of victims of crime and the number of repeat youth offenders and address the long delays in court proceedings. Work on the draft national action plan would nonetheless continue alongside those efforts, reflecting the fact that no form of racism was tolerated in New Zealand.

62. **A representative of New Zealand** said that New Zealand was among the countries that hosted the highest number of refugees per capita. Refugees and other new migrants were granted immediate access to key services including education and healthcare.

63. **Mr. Kut** said that he wished to know whether any steps had been taken to mitigate the negative effects of the application of the requirement for individuals wishing to migrate to the State Party to prove that they had an acceptable standard of health, which had reportedly led to a number of families being separated. It would be helpful to learn whether safeguards would be introduced to ensure that the transition to the administrative data collection system did not have an adverse impact on the representation of the Māori community in the parliament. He would welcome an update on any work done to strengthen the New Zealand Human Rights Commission in line with the recommendations issued in 2022 by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, which concerned matters such as the presentation of the Commission's annual report and its access to detention facilities, and would be interested to hear whether the Commission had been allocated sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil its statutory functions.

64. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that it was important to bear in mind that democracies such as the State Party tended to be governed by members of the majority group, who were not the ones in need of protection from racial discrimination.

65. **Ms. Tlakula** asked what proportion of children currently in State care belonged to the Māori community.

66. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would appreciate an explanation of the reasons behind the overrepresentation of Māori individuals among the prison population and information on the steps being taken to address that situation.

67. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the introduction of the administrative data collection system was not expected to have an impact on the number of parliamentary seats allocated to the Māori community. Individuals belonging to that community were free to choose whether to register for the Māori electoral roll or the general one and could switch between the rolls if they so wished.

68. New Zealand was a modern liberal democracy in which the strong rule of law and adherence to the principle of equality before the law were essential bulwarks that protected minority groups from discrimination. The key strength of the country's democracy was the fact that the Government was accountable to the people and could be voted out after three years if New Zealanders were unhappy with its conduct. The democratic system was further strengthened by the existence of a free press and the enjoyment by all citizens of the right to criticize the Government without fear of retribution.

69. **A representative of New Zealand** said that it was a statutory requirement for the Government to formulate specific health strategies for groups such as the Māori and Pacific communities, women and persons with disabilities. Such strategies also took intersectionality into account. Individuals responsible for developing and delivering health services were obliged to ensure that those services were safe, effective and culturally appropriate. Compliance with the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights was monitored by the Health and Disability Commissioner.

70. According to the 2024 report of the Health Quality and Safety Commission, 88.3% of patients interviewed by the Commission felt that their cultural needs had been met when receiving health services, and 80% considered that hospital staff had made sure that they were safe and had included their immediate family and whanau (extended family) in decision-making processes.

71. **A representative of New Zealand** said that, in 2024, children belonging to the Māori community had accounted for 69% of those in State care. With regard to the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, he would be happy to consider giving effect to the recommendation made by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions that the Commission's annual report should be submitted directly to the parliament without needing to be approved by the executive branch beforehand. While the budget allocated to the Commission had been reduced from \$NZ 13.8 million to \$NZ 12.5 million, the Government remained fully committed to ensuring that it had sufficient resources to discharge its duties.

72. **A representative of New Zealand** said that the New Zealand Human Rights Commission was the coordinator of the multi-body national preventive mechanism. All the bodies that comprised the mechanism had full access to prisons and centres for young offenders and produced independent reports on their work. The Government had supported the efforts of the District Court to modify its protocols to ensure that it was able to more effectively engage with and meet the needs of different groups. Steps were also being taken to improve court interpretation services.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.