



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
3 October 2025

Original: English

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventy-eighth session

### Summary record of the 36th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 10 September 2025, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Saran

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### Consideration of reports (*continued*)

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

*Seventh periodic report of Colombia*

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

**Consideration of reports** *(continued)*

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

*Seventh periodic report of Colombia* ([E/C.12/COL/7](#); [E/C.12/COL/Q/7](#); [E/C.12/COL/RQ/7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Colombia joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Colombia**, introducing his country's seventh periodic report, said that significant advances had been made in the implementation of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The State had put in place a comprehensive system to meet its commitments thereunder, including the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, a missing persons unit and a committee to monitor the follow-up given to recommendations made by the Truth Commission, many of which served to uphold the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the Covenant. The Government had recently earmarked 50.44 billion pesos (Col\$) – 35.9 per cent more than previously – to enhance the State's capacity to fulfil its commitments in that regard. A programme to protect signatories of the Agreement and members of their families had been put in place and key components of the Comprehensive Security System for the Exercise of Politics, such as the National Commission on Security Guarantees, had recently been reactivated. At the international level, his country's desire for peace was reflected in its solidarity with the Palestinian people.
3. Although the Government remained gravely concerned by murders of human rights defenders, particularly environmental activists, it was important to note that agents of the State were no longer involved in such crimes, as they had been in the past. Colombia had taken decisive action to guarantee the right to land, acquiring more than 600,000 hectares for the Land Fund and redistributing nearly 260,000 hectares to 73,463 farming families and families from minority ethnic groups. In addition, the juridical status of 1.7 million hectares had been formally recognized, thereby reinforcing the legal certainty of land tenure. At the same time, action was being taken to promote the agrarian courts and to provide constitutional recognition for rural communities as groups in need of special protection.
4. The National Development Plan for the period 2022–2026 sought to achieve economic transformation by consolidating the presence of the State and addressing the structural causes that impeded the exercise of human rights. The Government was currently pursuing eight juridical and political processes with armed groups. Economic, social and cultural rights lay at the very heart of the National Development Plan, and significant progress had been made in rights related to, inter alia, education, housing, access to water and poverty reduction.
5. Advances had also been made in the area of employment rights, including through amendments to the Procedural Code of Labour, pension reforms and the ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156). The labour reform bill incorporated a gender perspective and sought to combat violence and discrimination against historically vulnerable groups such as women and persons with disabilities. Thanks to such reforms, employment rates among Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquero communities had risen to over 60 per cent and the gender pay gap had fallen from 12.6 per cent in 2019 to 7.9 per cent in 2024.
6. In terms of healthcare, coverage under the General Health and Social Security System had reached 99.3 per cent by June 2025, including more than 1.1 million Venezuelan migrants. A national mental health policy had been rolled out for the period 2025–2034, as had a human rights-based national drugs policy for the period 2023–2033. Public spending on drug-related risk-reduction programmes had tripled, benefiting some 52,000 persons, while 38,000 kits had been distributed to intravenous drug users.
7. Via the general revenue-sharing system, investment in education up to the middle school level had risen from Col\$ 45.3 billion in 2022 to Col\$ 63.1 billion in 2025. At the

same time, investment in the School Meals Programme had increased by 28 per cent, bringing coverage to 83.3 per cent, with more than 2.5 million meals being distributed between 2022 and 2025. Investment in public secondary education had risen from Col\$ 9 billion in 2022 to Col\$ 11.9 billion in 2025, and enrolment was at record levels. In all, 97 per cent of the school-age population benefited from free education. Colombia had achieved a consistent reduction in its multidimensional poverty index, which had fallen from 12.9 per cent in 2022 to 11.5 per cent in 2024. Moreover, its national housing deficit had seen one of the most significant reductions in the region, from 26.8 per cent in 2019 to 22.8 per cent in 2025.

8. Lastly, the Government had taken the decision to invest heavily in cultural rights, concentrating chiefly on areas such as democratization, the decentralization of services and the artistic education of children. It was also in the process of rolling out a five-year cultural plan that would focus on governance, memory and heritage, as well as on the languages, economies and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples.

9. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** (Country Rapporteur) said that, while welcoming the varied composition of the State Party's delegation, he was disappointed to see that it did not include a representative from the Presidential Advisory Office for Human Rights. He wondered whether, before being finalized, the report had been discussed with the Office or with other bodies, including civil society organizations. He wished to know if there existed an overarching interinstitutional mechanism that monitored the implementation of international human rights recommendations. Did the State Party have any short-term plans to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant?

10. He wished to know whether the Government had identified the causes of the difficulties it was facing in implementing the Final Agreement and what action it was taking to re-establish an institutional presence in areas where paramilitary organizations and criminal gangs were active, such as Medellín, Chocó, Urabá and Arauca. The Committee was particularly concerned by the recent resurgence of violence, notably an attack on a military base in Cali and another against a police helicopter, which the authorities had attributed to dissident factions within the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP).

11. The Committee had received reports suggesting that the Special Administrative Unit for Managing the Restitution of Expropriated Lands had rejected more than 65 per cent of applications on grounds of "tacit withdrawal". He hoped the delegation could explain what was meant by "tacit withdrawal" and in what circumstances it was applicable. He also wished to know why more than half of the nearly 34,000 restitution orders issued by the courts remained unenforced. The Committee would be interested to hear about any action taken to make the land restitution process more transparent to the public at large.

12. He wished to know what legal framework – including measures to prevent reprisals, violence, arbitrary detention or unwarranted prosecutions – existed to protect human rights defenders in Colombia, 1,488 of whom had been murdered between 2016 and 2024. It would be interesting to know how many of those cases had come to trial. He looked forward to hearing more details about any training offered to judicial officials regarding economic, social and cultural rights under national law and, specifically, the application of the Covenant and other international instruments. The delegation might explain whether comprehensive anti-discrimination norms existed or were in the process of being drafted. In particular, the Committee wished to know if such norms included a definition of direct and indirect discrimination, envisaged reporting and redress mechanisms or extended anti-discrimination protection to persons with disabilities, migrants, members of ethnic and cultural minorities and LGBTIQ persons.

13. The delegation should indicate what steps the State intended to take to reduce its reliance on value added tax and to move towards a more equitable fiscal system. It would also be interesting to hear about any plans to revise the income tax threshold, which currently stood at around US\$ 1,038, in order to broaden the contributing base without disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income households. Did the Government have any plans to increase inheritance tax? He would be interested to hear more about the two national business and human rights plans which the State had set in train between 2015 and 2022, including whether they envisaged obligations for mining, energy, agriculture and

livestock sectors to exercise due diligence especially when their activities affected Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and other vulnerable groups. He wished to know what steps the State took to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of such communities regarding infrastructure projects that affected them, and what processes obtaining such consent entailed. What penalties were applied if the businesses involved failed to fulfil their obligations? The delegation should also explain how the State safeguarded labour and environmental rights in cases where a company suspended, abandoned or extended its activities, and what mechanisms were in place to prevent forced displacement and loss of livelihood for communities affected by large-scale projects.

14. Lastly, he wished to know what the State was doing to reduce the gender imbalance in the labour force participation rate which, according to reports, stood at 76.4 per cent for men and 52.7 per cent for women. In that regard, it would be interesting to hear about any recruitment policies intended to reduce unemployment among women and whether such policies were intersectional and tailored to meet the needs of rural, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women and female victims of armed conflict.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.*

15. **A representative of Colombia** said that 473 signatories of the Final Agreement had been murdered in the nine years since the signing. That gave some measure of the challenge the Government faced as it sought to consolidate peace and move forward with new dialogues, for the sake of the 10 million victims of decades of tragic conflict. Over 14,000 persons had signed the Agreement and more than 11,100 continued to respect it. Signatories had been offered protection measures, and the State had acted to dismantle criminal and paramilitary groups. Nonetheless, supporters of land restitution and environmental protection were still being threatened. For its part, the Government continued to invest in municipalities running local development programmes and remained fully committed to the reintegration processes envisaged under the Agreement.

16. Responsibility for implementing the Agreement had been transferred to a specially created unit, thereby re-establishing an institutional framework and enabling greater oversight of funds. The unit was working with the Ministry of the Interior to disseminate a culture of peace and overcome stigmatization and hate. She was aware that further efforts needed to be made, particularly regarding the effect of the Agreement on women and on Indigenous, Afrodescendent and Roma communities. Moreover, although the Government remained committed to the Agreement, certain difficulties had arisen in Congress regarding the allocation of funding.

17. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Final Agreement aimed to achieve a structural transformation of rural Colombia. To that end, a national system of agrarian reform and rural development had been put in place to implement the 16 sectoral plans envisaged under the Agreement. One of the main bulwarks of that process was the restitution of land, and the current Government had managed to reverse the previous tendency which had seen most land restitution applications rejected. Currently, 72 per cent of applications were accepted and just 28 per cent rejected. Recognizing that the enforcement of land restitution orders constituted a challenge, the Government had launched the most ambitious agrarian reform policy the country had ever seen, including the creation of 107 Indigenous reserves and the expansion of a further 85. The Government was also running a programme intended to promote access to land for rural women.

18. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government had taken regulatory, institutional and other measures to uphold its national and international commitments with respect to combating violence against environmental and land rights defenders. For example, the country's participation in the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement) had been formalized through Act No. 2273 of 2022 and judgment No. C-359/24 of the Constitutional Court, and an inter-agency commission had been established to coordinate the implementation of that Agreement. The National Development Plan contained an explicit commitment to creating safe conditions for environmental rights defenders. The National Protection Unit, the Ombudsman's Office and the Ministry of the Interior had adopted joint measures to strengthen protection schemes and widen access to

them. The Ombudsman's Office had issued early warnings on specific situations of risk in areas with high levels of environmental conflict, and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development was taking steps to reduce structural risk factors. The Environment Information System facilitated access to information and ensured the production of more accurate data.

19. The national system of safeguards for human rights defenders had been strengthened through the creation of a tripartite mechanism to combat violence. Protection measures had been designed by the regions and departments that were most affected. Since 2022, a number of local prevention and protection bodies had been reactivated and had begun using a gender- and ethnicity-sensitive approach.

20. **A representative of Colombia** said that although the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Human Rights had been involved in the preparation of the report, it had been unable to send a representative to the dialogue owing to a scheduling conflict with hearings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

21. The Intersectoral Commission on Human Rights had been strengthened and its scope expanded through the drafting of new guidelines. A decree was being drawn up with the aim of establishing a National Commission on International Humanitarian Law which would propose guidelines to the Government. Work on a national action plan in the area of human rights, which had been pending since 1996, was being prioritized by the current Administration with the aim of designing a strategic instrument setting out defined actions and indicators for human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.

22. In the area of business and human rights, a road map had been drafted in 2024, and the first related baseline study had now been completed. State entities were working in conjunction with industry representatives to strengthen State action on human rights in business settings.

23. A department had been set up within the Ministry of the Interior to provide support in consultation processes, which were comprised of five stages that were aligned with article 6 of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). If it was determined that a project would have a significant impact, the department launched a process to obtain free, prior and informed consent. In 2025, US\$ 760 million had been allocated to consultation processes. Since 2019, 13,341 Indigenous communities, 619 Afro-Colombian communities and 2 Raizal communities had been consulted through such processes.

24. The Government was making efforts to tackle the rising number of killings of human rights defenders. In 2023, the Constitutional Court had ordered State entities to adopt a plan to safeguard and protect human rights defenders. The plan, which was being designed in coordination with human rights organizations, was centred around prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution and guarantees of non-repetition. Since 2022, the National Committee on Safeguards for Human Rights Defenders had met three times, enabling representatives of the Government and civil society to discuss public policies on human rights defenders. The number of local committees on safeguards had been increased from 14 to 26, and a comprehensive programme had been adopted specifically for female human rights defenders.

25. A bill on the status of human rights defenders was undergoing its second reading, and a public policy on safeguards for human rights defenders was expected to be adopted before the end of 2025. According to the Attorney General's Office, 127 investigations were ongoing into threats against human rights defenders. In addition, 1,505 cases of killings of human rights defenders were being prosecuted, and guilty verdicts had been handed down in 246 such cases.

26. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Ministry of Labour had made strenuous efforts to reform labour regulations and, in particular, to ensure decent and dignified working conditions, including for vulnerable groups. A great deal of work had been done to ensure a tripartite approach to the design of policies intended to give effect to the provisions of the Covenant. New legislation had been adopted, including Act No. 2365, which was focused on preventing harassment and violence in the workplace, and Act No. 2466, which was intended to ensure fair pay without discrimination. Other regulations had been introduced on topics

including a shorter working day, remote working, rural women in the workforce and the incorporation of informal and care workers into the social security system.

27. **A representative of Colombia** said that the right to non-discrimination was set out in the Constitution. Legislation and a public policy had been adopted to protect persons with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity. Pursuant to the National Development Plan, a public policy on eliminating racism and a historical reparations scheme had been developed, and the new Ministry of Equality and Equity had been set up.

28. **A representative of Colombia** said that efforts were being made to ensure the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant at the earliest opportunity. Between 2010 and 2022, previous Governments had refused visits from special procedure mandate holders and other international oversight mechanisms. Conversely, in 2026, the current Government would welcome its tenth such visit.

29. **A representative of Colombia** said that her Government was making every effort to maintain its focus on cultural processes and overcome local tensions to achieve full peace through the comprehensive implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace.

30. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he would like to know about the legal framework that was in place for the establishment of clear and independent mechanisms intended to prevent, investigate and punish cases of corruption and provide compensation where appropriate. He would welcome statistics on the number of corruption cases that had been launched and concluded in the previous five years. It would be useful to know what legal, judicial and administrative measures were being taken to combat corruption.

31. The delegation might comment on the main reasons why only 82 per cent of the social budget had been spent and on the monitoring mechanisms that were in place to ensure that social spending reached the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

32. He wondered whether the State Party had an inter-agency body or mechanism that was tasked with monitoring and following up on the implementation of recommendations made by international human rights bodies.

33. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** said that she would welcome additional information on the main challenges the authorities faced in ensuring the effective functioning of audit, monitoring and accountability mechanisms in the area of business and human rights. She wished to know what concrete measures had been taken to guarantee the broad and meaningful participation of all relevant actors, including vulnerable communities, in the establishment of clear, transparent and accessible accountability procedures in cases of human rights violations committed in the context of business activities.

34. **Ms. Rossi** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the revenue from the new tax on ultraprocessed food and drinks would be used to cover the healthcare costs generated by their consumption. She would also like to know what measures were being taken to address tax avoidance and tax evasion and whether the State Party participated in regional and international cooperation frameworks on tax matters.

35. She wondered whether there were mechanisms in place to redistribute resources between regions and municipalities to reduce the levels of inequality that existed on the basis of gender, ethnicity and geographical location.

36. She wished to know whether steps were being taken to ban so-called conversion therapy aimed at members of the LGBTIQ+ population and what was done to provide support and redress to persons who had been subjected to such practices. The delegation might describe the measures taken to remove barriers that made it difficult for transgender and non-binary persons to make changes to their identity documents, including the removal of fees for such administrative procedures.

37. She would like to know what was being done to generate more data on persons with disabilities in the State Party, with a view to ensuring that public policies on disability were appropriate and effective. She would be grateful for details of the measures in place to make it easier for persons with disabilities, including those living in rural or isolated areas, to obtain

a disability certificate. It would be useful to receive an update on the status of the new public policy on persons with disabilities.

38. **Mr. Windfuhr** (Country Task Force) said that he would be grateful for an update on the outcome of negotiations on the State Party's nationally determined contribution to the global response to climate change.

39. **Ms. Pérez** asked whether the State Party had any plans to strengthen and expand the care system.

40. **A representative of Colombia** said that, under the terms set out in the peace agreements, losses of Col\$ 16 billion associated with income from natural resources had been reported to the relevant oversight bodies. The President and the anti-corruption authorities were working hard to ensure that those losses were investigated. Community organizations, including those representing women or Indigenous communities, that were signatories of the peace agreements were provided with training on the management of public funds.

41. **A representative of Colombia** said that the country's climate change adaptation plan had been drafted in 2012 and updated in 2014. The plan's five main focus areas were awareness-raising, knowledge-sharing on climate risks, land use planning, application of adaptation guidelines and increased response capacity. The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development recognized that climate change had a disproportionate impact on women and that rural, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women had a key role to play in climate action. The authorities planned to develop participatory monitoring mechanisms and coordinate inter-agency follow-up activities with the aim of ensuring that climate action was just and inclusive.

42. The Climate Change Information System brought together policies, regulations and other tools aimed at mitigating the effects of greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change. A financial protection strategy was being designed by the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit to manage risks arising from climate change, disasters, epidemics and pandemics. In 2024, Colombia had hosted the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

43. **A representative of Colombia** said that President Petro Urrego used the international events he attended as an opportunity to encourage the international community to step up its efforts to address climate change, warn of the imminence of a tragedy of incalculable proportions and stress the urgent need to take action to protect the Amazon rainforest. In late 2025, the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva would hold a discussion on climate change and human rights with around 20 countries and 20 non-governmental organizations, with a view to helping expand the efforts of international institutions and the United Nations human rights system in that area.

44. **A representative of Colombia** said that the National Development Plan provided for the establishment of a fund to eliminate inequalities among different population groups and regions. The Ministry of Equality and Equity had made progress in expanding access to care by establishing local care networks in all the country's departments and providing them with resources.

45. The Government recognized the violence inherent to conversion therapy, some of the practices associated with which could amount to torture. It was for that reason that the Government had supported the bill on the prohibition of conversion therapy, which had been shelved by legislators, and was now backing the law aimed at eliminating barriers faced by transgender individuals and facilitating sex reassignment. Decree No. 1227 of 2015 established the right of individuals to change their name and sex, as listed in the civil register, without needing to hire a lawyer. Such changes, for which there was no charge, could be made on a maximum of two occasions, with a minimum of 10 years between each modification. The Ministry of Justice was currently working to update the process so that individuals could register as non-binary or transgender.

46. **A representative of Colombia** said that one of the main challenges in ensuring that businesses were subject to oversight and monitoring and held to account for their actions was the lack of binding mechanisms established to that end, which was a concern shared by the

Government and civil society. Other challenges lay in ensuring citizen participation in the various monitoring mechanisms, facilitating the exchange of information between businesses and the State entities responsible for monitoring respect for human rights in the labour sector, providing those entities with sufficient budgetary and human resources to perform their monitoring duties across the whole country, in particular since the majority of violations were committed in rural areas, and guaranteeing justice for the communities affected.

47. A bill had recently been introduced with the aim of establishing mechanisms to prevent human rights violations by businesses and to guarantee justice and effective redress for the victims. Steps were also being taken to promote recognition of businesses' responsibilities and the regulatory role of the Government in line with international human rights standards. The bill contained provisions on administrative oversight and would introduce administrative measures such as the suspension or revocation of business licences and the termination of contracts where there was clear evidence that a business had supported or been involved in or aware of serious human rights violations. Other possible penalties included fines, disqualification from entering into contracts with the Government for up to 10 years, a temporary ban on the business's activities and the removal of the business's management. The bill would also authorize the courts to issue *ultra petita* and *extra petita* decisions, to award comprehensive reparations in favour of victims and to lift the corporate veil.

48. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government was continuing to work with civil society to develop a national human rights plan that provided for the establishment of an entity responsible for following up on the human rights-related recommendations made by international bodies. During the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review, the delegation of Colombia had reiterated the Government's commitment to creating such an entity, which had not yet proven possible owing to the complexities of the administrative system. All possible steps would be taken to remove the obstacles that persisted.

49. **A representative of Colombia** said that responsibility for carrying out environmental due diligence lay with the National Environmental Licensing Authority and autonomous regional corporations. Their tasks included monitoring businesses' compliance with environmental licensing instruments, environment management plans and offsetting obligations. Efforts to implement the Escazú Agreement were helping to strengthen transparency, access to information and citizen participation, thereby enabling communities and civil society to play a role in monitoring compliance by businesses and government bodies with their human rights and environmental obligations.

50. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would welcome information on the measures being taken to protect workers in regions affected by armed conflicts and illegal economic activities, in particular in extractive industries. The delegation might explain what had been done to ensure the participation of conflict-affected communities in those efforts and describe the impact of the implementation of the decisions of the Constitutional Court on the right to work. He wondered what steps the State Party was planning to take to reduce the level of informal employment and formalize precarious jobs, in particular in sectors such as agriculture, mining and domestic work, and what measures had been introduced to specifically address informal employment among young people, older persons and members of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Information on the outcome of measures to promote employment among Indigenous and rural women would be appreciated, as would details of the steps being taken to mainstream gender and diversity into employment programmes.

51. He would be grateful for a description of what was being done to enhance the investigation and prosecution of trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation, including any measures taken to enforce the relevant laws and guarantee the provision of financial, technical and human resources for national and municipal institutions tasked with addressing forced labour. It would be interesting to learn what steps were being taken to fully demobilize and protect children who had been formally recruited by armed groups and ensure that they were treated as victims. He wondered what was being done to guarantee the safety of accommodation for child victims of trafficking and forced labour, especially those from rural and marginalized communities. The delegation's comments on the action being taken to address the humanitarian protection crisis in La Guajira, in particular any steps to tackle child labour and exploitation, would also be appreciated.



52. He wondered what measurable progress had been made since the adoption of Decree No. 533, one of the aims of which was to promote the inclusion in the labour market of persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas and among marginalized groups such as women with disabilities. Data on the employment outcomes of African, Afro-Colombian and Indigenous Peoples would be welcome, as would information on any steps that would be taken to tackle occupational segregation and promote access for women, including Indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, to a wider range of more highly paid jobs. He was curious to know, too, what measures had been introduced to ensure that Indigenous communities had access to culturally appropriate vocational and employment services.

53. The delegation might describe what would be done to guarantee that institutions had an adequate budget and a sufficient number of well-trained staff to enforce Circular No. 026 of 2023 when handling cases of sexual harassment, and specify how many such cases had been recorded, investigated and resolved since its adoption. He wished to learn what was being done to enforce regulations concerning wages and working hours in the informal sector and to strengthen the relevant inspection mechanisms. He would welcome an explanation regarding the real value of the minimum wage after inflation, what legal options were available for women to claim equal pay or challenge discrimination in the workplace and how many such cases had been filed in recent years. It would be helpful to know what steps were being taken to guarantee payment and the enforcement of work contracts, especially in the informal sector, and what was being done to protect trade union leaders from threats, violence and dismissals and to address the lack of accountability in that area.

54. He wished to know what measures had been introduced to guarantee older persons' access to pension payments and to ensure transparency and accountability in the reform of the pension system. He would also appreciate the delegation's thoughts on which key areas of the State Party's social security policy should be developed further in the coming years.

55. **A representative of Colombia** said that efforts to reform the employment sector were focused on inspection, monitoring and oversight. While such efforts were generally viewed in a positive light, they had led to tension with businesses and armed groups in certain areas. The authorities had stepped up their monitoring and inspection activities in sectors that offered precarious working conditions, such as the mining and hydrocarbon sectors. The President had supported those efforts by ordering the recruitment of 1,000 new labour inspectors. It was essential for inspections to be conducted in rural areas and for steps to be taken to monitor businesses' compliance with basic requirements, such as those relating to working hours. Steps would be taken to align legislation on due diligence with the guidance of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on due diligence for responsible business conduct.

56. The Government remained concerned about the high rates of informal employment and was taking significant steps to address the issue, such as the establishment of formal work contracts for domestic workers. Such contracts would also be granted to women who provided community childcare services or prepared school meals. Young people undertaking apprenticeships through the National Learning Service were given formal fixed-term contracts, thereby enabling them to obtain access to social security. Certain groups of women were entitled to work flexible hours to help them balance their professional and family lives.

57. A protocol on collective bargaining for domestic workers was in the process of being developed. Such workers, most of whom were women, had begun to set up their own associations. A decree had been adopted to regulate the collective bargaining procedure in the public sector, enabling more than 1 million people to participate in that process through joint bargaining committees. Discussions were being held within the Standing Committee on the Coordination of Wages and Employment Policies on the development of a similar decree for the private sector. The work of that body, whose members included representatives of trade unions, had been supported by the International Labour Organization.

58. A system had been set up to help the Office of the Attorney General monitor and evaluate the nationwide implementation of action plans aimed at eradicating child labour. One of the Office's goals was to ensure that each municipality had its own plan to address that issue and end the sexual and commercial exploitation of children and adolescents. The Government recognized that a differentiated approach was required to address workplace

violence against women and members of the LGBTIQ community. The protection of women was one of the focuses of the labour reform process, as part of which discussions had been held with female workers. A decision had been made to establish an inspection unit devoted to monitoring gender-based violence in the workplace, which would be made up of 1,000 staff to be recruited by the end of the first quarter of 2026.

59. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of Forced Recruitment, Sexual Abuse and Violence against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations was made up of representatives from 22 government entities. It was currently dealing with a highly complex situation; various groups in the country had managed to forcibly recruit children by taking them directly from their schools. According to the Ombudsman's Office, in 2025, those groups had recruited 64 children, of whom 28 were girls, 39 came from Indigenous communities and 4 were of African descent. Since 2019, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute had been working on a policy to support and protect children who had left such groups.

60. Various government ministries had been working on policies designed to promote the participation in productive processes of former members of the groups that had signed peace agreements and to support the rehabilitation of those who had been wounded during the fighting by providing them with access to any necessary surgeries or prosthetics. The Government was also working with victims of the conflict and former members of those groups who identified as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community in order to facilitate their reintegration into society.

61. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government recognized peasants as rights holders and ensured that they enjoyed enhanced participation in all bodies in which agrarian reform was discussed and an equal say in related plans and projects. Article 32 of Act No. 2466 of 2025 provided that rural women enjoyed special conditions of access to social security. Women who were not in the contributory pension system had access to a non-contributory scheme based on the care they provided at home and in the community. Act No. 2462 of 2025 provided that all peasant women had an equal say in decisions regarding women in rural communities.

62. The current Government had put in place a framework of laws prohibiting any form of harassment in the workplace and providing for appropriate penalties, including Act No. 2528 of 2025 ratifying the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), which also prohibited discrimination in the workplace.

63. **A representative of Colombia** said the executive, the legislature and the judiciary were united in efforts to achieve agrarian reform, which was essential to ensuring access to justice for all. The Constitutional Court had emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of peasants in its recent finding that the law regulating agrarian reform was constitutional. To implement Legislative Act No. 01 of 2023 recognizing peasants as persons requiring special protection, the Government had to ensure that public policy took into account their specific economic, social, cultural, political and environmental needs, including by ensuring that women enjoyed equal access to justice and were represented in the composition of special agrarian courts and judicial bodies. The establishment of special agrarian courts not only met a commitment stemming from the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace but also responded to a long-standing need in the rural sector. Innovative efforts made to ensure the representation of peasants included the establishment of a joint peasant affairs committee.

64. **A representative of Colombia** said that under a programme set up for members of the artistic community, more than 16,000 benefits had been granted to older persons and 1,200 social security benefits had been granted to working artists. Recent labour reforms had, for the first time, helped address the contractual arrangements to which artists and cultural workers were subject, and matters such as remuneration were currently under consideration. The Government would continue its efforts to address all aspects of the human rights of artists, who were among the few groups capable of bridging divides in conflict.

65. **A representative of Colombia** said that, between 2019 and 2025, the National Family Welfare System had provided support to 8,900 former child recruits of armed groups under special programmes.

66. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he wished to know where the largest gaps in social security coverage remained. He wondered to what extent employers had been cooperative in implementing labour reform; how the State Party was collaborating with employers, particularly in the agricultural sector, to ensure its implementation; how useful the National Business and Human Rights Plan had been in such efforts; and what additional measures, including in relation to international companies, were needed to support the Plan.

67. Given that the State Party continued to be a country of origin, transit and destination for victims of trafficking in persons, including for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, and affecting, in particular, women and girls, Venezuelan migrants and members of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, many of whom were at high risk due to multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities, he would like to know what the impact of the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons had been, what plans were in place for its evaluation and renewal, and how the State Party ensured adequate identification and protection of victims of labour and sexual exploitation, particularly among children and Venezuelan migrants.

68. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he wished to know which components of the comprehensive national crop substitution programme were currently pending implementation; what steps had been taken under the programme to change how land was used with a view to preventing illegal usage; to what extent the support provided had assisted participants in the programme with development; until when support would be provided to them and what plans were in place to prevent them from becoming dependent on that support; and whether a follow-up mechanism had been established to ensure that the objectives of the programme were met.

69. He wondered what steps the State Party was taking to address social and institutional discrimination against sex workers, including measures to raise awareness of their situation among civil servants and ensure that they could access basic services without stigmatization. It would be helpful to hear whether the State Party planned to adopt a normative framework to regulate sex work with a view to reducing sex workers' vulnerability to exploitation of prostitution, violence, economic abuse and precarious labour conditions. He wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that sex workers had access to social security, labour protection and effective reporting channels.

70. **Mr. Bouzid** said that he would be grateful for the delegation's comments on reports that, although nearly 700 trade unions had been set up between 2022 and 2024, an unfavourable regulatory framework and restrictive legal rulings had limited their ability to take collective action. He wondered what action the State Party would take to rectify that situation and ensure that trade unions could do their job legally and safely.

71. **A representative of Colombia** said that the need for a proper labour justice system and justice in pensions, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable, including rural workers, workers in the informal sector and others not covered by the social security pension system, presented a significant challenge for the Government. Pension reforms designed to provide coverage to the 3 million adults who were not currently in the system had gone through the legislative process and, following some modifications requested by the Constitutional Court, would soon be adopted.

72. The Government was currently involved in dialogue with representatives of Indigenous Peoples throughout the country and of ILO to ensure proper implementation of a policy requiring that all labour contracts concluded with members of vulnerable populations provided for proper pay and working conditions and upheld the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to self-determination. Under recent labour reforms, contracts concluded with migrants must provide for their treatment on an equal footing with Colombian nationals, and more agile processes for regularizing their status had been established. The Constitutional Court had advised that sex work should be properly recognized as a form of labour and made subject to oversight processes, and that sex workers should have access to dialogue about specific risks related to sex work, particularly in the digital domain, which

had expanded significantly in the country in recent years. Efforts were being made to ensure that sex work in that domain was subject to proper risk management, contractual rights and taxation arrangements.

73. **A representative of Colombia** said that a key challenge in the development of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace had been enabling persons who grew coca leaf to continue doing so for lawful purposes. The National Development Plan was focused on empowering 100,000 families who, together, possessed 253,000 hectares of that crop. In 2025, the Government had the objective of converting 22,463 hectares of land in 7 departments and 23 municipalities to grow alternative crops. With the support of international partners, particularly the United States of America, large-scale substitution projects had been launched, particularly in the Departments of Cauca, Chocó, Putumayo and Nariño. Given the proximity of Venezuela, the military action taken by that country to prevent coca leaf production was a dangerous development for Colombia, which wished to continue the substitution programme it had begun, and for Latin America as a whole. Cooperation between producer and consumer countries was vital to properly addressing and regulating coca leaf production to achieve the results desired by the international community.

74. **A representative of Colombia** said that national policy on drugs and illegal crops reflected the relationship between that issue and rural underdevelopment, which the Government was committed to addressing through efforts to strengthen agriculture as a driver of economic growth. In 2024, the agricultural sector had grown by 8.1 per cent, outperforming other sectors and making the largest contribution to the national economy. The forestry and seed industries continued to grow. Since 2022, the number of hectares of crops sown had increased steadily and significantly. Under a policy led by the Office of the President, funding for the agriculture and fisheries sectors had been increased by Col\$ 19.5 billion with a view to drawing workers into those industries and away from illegal activities and checking the expansion of illegal crops, which presented a significant challenge.

75. **Ms. Rossi** said that she would appreciate details of strategies adopted by the State Party to reduce poverty and close geographical, gender and ethnic poverty gaps, particularly those affecting victims of armed conflict and persons connected to the cultivation of illegal crops. She wished to hear about mechanisms established in that domain to promote coordination between national and local authorities, social participation and transparent accountability, and about related objectives and the indicators used to measure attainment of them.

76. She wondered whether the State Party would conduct the national nutrition survey that had been delayed since 2020 with a view to addressing current food insecurity. She would welcome information on the outcomes of measures taken to address disparities in that area, which affected households headed by Indigenous persons in rural areas in particular; to promote food sovereignty; and to strengthen agriculture in Indigenous and rural communities to ensure their access to core crops. She wished to know how the State Party ensured the effective and progressive implementation of judgment No. T-302 of 2017 of the Constitutional Court with a view to ensuring the fundamental rights of Wayúu children in particular. Information on measures to discourage the consumption of ultraprocessed food, including the adoption of laws on health taxes, would be welcome.

77. She would appreciate more information on efforts made by the State Party to ensure access to land rights. It would be useful to hear whether the State Party had defined a clear timetable for security and protection measures to prevent violent evictions in particular and ensure that those affected enjoyed an adequate and sustainable standard of living. She wondered what steps had been taken to progressively increase public investment in housing and improve compliance with the implementation framework for the Final Agreement, particularly in rural areas and municipalities with fewer resources, through measures to ensure habitable conditions, access to potable water, essential services, protection against natural hazards, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. She would welcome more information on the outcomes of the National Drinking Water Supply and Basic Sanitation Plan in rural areas, particularly those with ethnic populations, details of community models for water management and measures taken to prioritize human and domestic consumption of

scarce resources. She wished to know what measures the State Party had taken to manage extractive, energy or agricultural projects that could affect sustainable access to water and ensure the effective participation of rural, Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities in that process.

78. She would appreciate an explanation as to why some 12,000 families had reportedly been excluded from the crop substitution process, in a number of cases without explanation or due process. Given reports that many people were unable to access primary healthcare services, she wished to know what measures the State Party was taking to ensure the availability, accessibility, affordability, quality and financial sustainability of such services, particularly for members of Indigenous, Afrodescendent and rural communities and persons with disabilities. She wished to receive more details on the National Plan for Rural Health, particularly regarding how the State Party could prioritize action in areas with low coverage and strengthen oversight mechanisms, including citizens' oversight. She wondered what progress in health reform had been made since the submission of the bill on universal healthcare coverage in September 2024, and what steps had been taken to ensure that migrants in an irregular situation and transgender and non-binary persons could enjoy barrier-free and comprehensive healthcare, including as provided for by judgment No. T-218 of 2002 of the Constitutional Court. It would be useful to hear what steps had been taken to eliminate barriers to abortion, such as delays, lack of staff, lack of appropriate information, conscientious objection and violations of confidentiality, particularly in rural areas. She wished to receive details of sexual and reproductive health programmes, particularly those aimed at children. She wondered how the State Party was ensuring that forced elimination of crops through the use of pesticides was properly managed to minimize its health impacts.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*