



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### Fifty-first session

#### Summary record partial\* of the 42nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 12 November 2013, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Kedzia

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### Consideration of reports

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

*Combined initial and second periodic reports of Djibouti (continued)*

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Consideration of reports**

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

*Combined initial and second periodic reports of Djibouti* (continued) (E/C.12/DJI/1-2; E/C.12/WG/DJI/Q/1-2; E/C.12/DJI/Q/1-2/Add.1; HRI/CORE/DJI/2010)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Djibouti took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Kayad** (Djibouti) said that the Constitution guaranteed press freedom and citizens could access any news source. The Internet was freely available and downloads were not restricted.
3. To improve education for nomads, schools had been moved closer to rural communities. There were currently more than 90 rural schools and the Government had endeavoured to reduce the time children spent travelling to school to less than one hour. Nomadic children also received free school supplies. Various incentives encouraged nomadic families to send girls to school and the Ministry of Education provided separate latrines for boys and girls and was increasing the number of separate dormitories in boarding schools, which had been a major obstacle to girls' attendance. The Ministry regularly inspected all schools. Despite the construction of new schools, infrastructure remained inadequate. New schools were mostly built by the State, which attempted to use resources rationally, for example by building schools to be shared by several communities.
4. While previously only a minority of rural children had enrolled in school, recurrent droughts had prompted families to plan alternative sources of future income, resulting in increased numbers of rural children attending school. The Ministry planned to pilot a mobile school that would follow nomadic communities. Owing to climate problems, nomads were becoming semi-sedentary, with the result that providing services to them was becoming easier. Rural children could attend secondary schools in larger towns and stay in dormitories; their families were discouraged from following them in order to avoid a rural exodus.
5. Dropping out was not a serious problem in Djibouti. Schooling was obligatory up to age 16; the State provided both traditional and vocational education, or parents could provide alternative education. Given the success of efforts to improve attendance, the focus was shifting to improving the quality of education. A teacher training centre had been established, the practice of splitting the school day between two groups of students was discouraged and the quality of teaching and curricula was monitored. Textbooks were produced by a body that also broadcast educational radio programmes, and an educational television channel was planned. Private schools were mostly French- or Arabic-speaking. They were monitored and authorized by the Ministry of Education, had to respect various regulations and were subject to the same inspections as State schools. However, the majority of families were unable to afford their fees.
6. Violence in schools was uncommon. The Criminal Code severely punished sexual harassment and aggression towards children; being a teacher was an aggravating circumstance in such practices. Schools had parent-teacher committees that could immediately bring cases to the Ministry's attention. There was a system addressing the needs of young persons with disabilities, 11 of whom currently attended the University of Djibouti.

7. The concept of indigenous people did not exist in Djibouti; there were no minorities and ethnic origin was not recorded in the civil registry. Therefore, ratification of the International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) was unnecessary.
8. Nomads were not required to settle in one place, but were increasingly adopting a more urban lifestyle. The Government was seeking to stabilize those communities and slow the rural exodus to the capital. Djiboutian culture was promoted through cultural forums and television and radio broadcasts.
9. Although the Somali and Afar languages were not yet taught in schools, their increasing visibility through the work of writers' associations meant that they were likely to be added to curricula eventually.
10. **Mr. Abdou** (Djibouti), President of the National Human Rights Commission, said that human rights education was a priority for the Commission and the Government. Human rights awareness programmes had been established in schools and curricula included human rights and civic education. The Commission planned to establish a partnership with the Ministry of Education to increase human rights teaching in State and private schools, and future legislation would have a human rights approach. In order to disseminate international conventions and human rights principles to the public, human rights education should start at an early age, and the Commission encouraged the Government to take further steps in that regard.
11. **Ms. Kayad** (Djibouti) said that the Internet was widely available and the cost of access had been reduced significantly, especially for students. Educational establishments benefited from wireless Internet access and students could purchase discounted computers. Additionally, information and communications technology (ICT) would be taught to children from their last year at primary school. Local Community Development Centres provided Internet access to children and mobile Internet access was available. The Internet was reaching rural and marginal areas via State facilities such as schools and leisure centres and a project was being developed to equip regional council facilities with computers and provide ICT training to young people.
12. The Government would take due note of the Committee's comments and concluding observations. It was committed to meeting all its international obligations and heeding the advice of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
13. **Mr. Kerdoun** (Country Rapporteur) said that Djibouti had made good progress in guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights, despite some problems concerning compliance with certain provisions of the Covenant and its location in a region that was vulnerable to phenomena such as droughts.
14. **The Chairperson** said that the plans of the National Human Rights Commission to apply for "A" status with the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles were appreciated. In future, however, the Commission's representatives should not form part of the delegation, but attend a separate meeting to provide a briefing on its work and on economic, social and cultural rights in the State party; independence was crucial to the mandate of national human rights institutions.

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 3.50 p.m.*