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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**Fifty-sixth session****Summary record of the 71st meeting**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 6 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Sadi**Contents**

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports

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

Second periodic report of Greece (continued) (E/C.12/GRC/2; E/C.12/GRC/Q/2 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Greece took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Katrougalos** (Greece) said that his Government was committed to honouring its international human rights treaty obligations and to placing all rights, including social, economic and cultural rights, at the heart of both its national and international policies. Such an approach was particularly important at a time when the social protection system that had been built up in Greece over many decades was threatened by the austerity programmes that had been imposed on the country in recent years. The Government was therefore working hard to ensure that the austerity measures provided for in the agreement that it had recently concluded with its partners were counterbalanced with alternative development options and policies that would neutralize the potential adverse impact of such measures on the social protection system. It was also committed to working very closely with the various United Nations human rights bodies and was, in particular, looking forward to cooperating with the Committee in the area of the protection of social, economic and cultural rights.

3. **Ms. Toura** (Greece), replying to a question raised at the previous meeting, said that the Ministry of Education had taken a number of steps to ensure that migrant and refugee children enjoyed the same right of access to education as nationals. For instance, administrative measures had been taken to make it easier for foreign students who lacked the necessary official documents to enrol in school and to receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the school year that would allow them to progress to the next grade. In the light of the growing number of students with diverse social, cultural and religious backgrounds, the Ministry had developed new policies to meet the evolving needs of the education system. Migrant children in mainstream schools were able to benefit from additional educational support at the preschool, primary and secondary levels, while teachers received special training in intercultural education and the teaching of Greek as a second or foreign language. Furthermore, as part of the efforts being made to prevent migrant children from dropping out of school, a new law had been introduced which made school attendance a basic requisite for migrant children wishing to acquire Greek citizenship.

4. **Mr. Katrougalos** (Greece), replying to questions that had been posed concerning article 9 of the Covenant, said that he could not deny the fact that, in recent years, the State party had failed to fulfil some of its international and national social rights obligations. With regard to pension rights, for example, the Supreme Administrative Court had ruled that recent pension cuts had been in breach of the Constitution. The Government was therefore intending to institute a number of structural reforms aimed at moving from the current fragmented and unfair pension system, which left many social strata without protection, towards a sustainable model that would eliminate the privileges enjoyed by certain categories and ensure protection for all workers through the application of uniform rules. It was planning, for instance, to introduce a flat-rate, tax-funded national pension for everyone that would be sufficient to provide protection from poverty and an additional pension that would be linked to individual

contributions. As part of the reform process, wide-ranging consultations would be held in order to canvass the views of interested groups and the general public.

5. **Ms. Charokopou** (Greece), in response to a question asked by Mr. Ribeiro Leão at the previous meeting, said that the First Reception Service was responsible for ensuring the orderly and humane management of migration. All unaccompanied minors who arrived at the centres operated by the Service were immediately informed of their rights and provided with health-care treatment and psychosocial support, as appropriate. Their cases were then referred to a prosecutor, who arranged for the appointment of a legal guardian and for the minor's placement in an accommodation facility. In view of the recent delays in that process as a result of the large influx of unaccompanied minors arriving in the country, an interministerial working group had been set up, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Ombudsman and other stakeholders, in order to review the existing legal framework and to recommend changes. The National Centre for Social Solidarity was the body responsible for processing accommodation requests for unaccompanied minors and arranging for the transfer of those minors to accommodation facilities. In the period from 2012 to 2014, the number of such requests had risen from 800 to 2,400; some 400 requests were still pending at the end of 2014 owing to a lack of available facilities. The average length of stay in such centres had ranged from 49 days in 2012 to 60 days in 2013. New accommodation facilities were being built thanks to State funding, European Economic Area grants and support from the European Refugee Fund.

6. **Ms. Ververidou** (Greece) said that the Office of the National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, which was charged with coordinating anti-trafficking efforts, gave particular priority to combating the trafficking and exploitation of unaccompanied minors. To that end, a national referral mechanism had recently been established to provide a permanent forum for consultations with civil society organizations with a view to improved coordination of the services that they provided for victims and potential victims of child trafficking. In that connection and within the framework of the Victor Project, which was funded by the European Union and aimed at establishing a strong partnership among a broad range of public and non-governmental actors working in the field of child trafficking in the region of Southeast Europe, an NGO partner of the Office had organized a widely attended training seminar in Athens in April 2014 on the identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking. Another partner, working in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Hellenic Police, operated a centre for child victims of abuse and sexual exploitation which was equipped with child-friendly video recording facilities for taping testimony. Those facilities made it possible to avoid inflicting any further trauma on victims who might otherwise be required to repeat their testimony during criminal proceedings.

7. **Ms. Papageorgiou**, replying to a question from Ms. Shin, said that the National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women covered all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment and trafficking in women.

8. The Programme included training modules and operational protocols for counselling services, shelters and help lines, and gender-sensitive methodologies were specified for use by lawyers, social workers and psychologists. It also provided guidance on how to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace and information on basic approaches for the provision of psychosocial support and legal aid to victims. In addition, standard operating procedures had been established for the services involved, as had codes of conduct to be observed in the processing of personal data. The Programme also provided training for counsellors, lawyers, hotline staff and other

professionals, including police officers, judges and health professionals. In addition, it was responsible for the around-the-clock operation of the nationwide SOS 15900 domestic violence telephone and e-mail hotline, which had been launched in 2011 by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and had received over 22,000 calls and about 250 e-mails since then.

9. From April 2011 to November 2014, an extensive awareness-raising campaign had been conducted to promote the hotline, counselling centres and shelters. The campaign had been carried out in Greek, English, French and Albanian and had made use of television and radio advertisements, publicity posted in public transport facilities, cultural events, social media and other web pages and web banners.

10. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality had worked with 14 municipalities to set up shelters for abused women and two more shelters had been set up by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. Five more municipalities had signed on to set up shelters in the period between 2012 and 2015, bringing the total number currently in operation to 21. The shelters generally had a capacity of about 20 women and children each, with annual budgets ranging from €300,000 to €700,000. There were plans to set up additional shelters in some 25 more municipalities in the near future; the corresponding counselling centres were already in operation.

11. All of the facilities were accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition to the counselling provided by the General Secretariat's centre in Athens, which dealt with some 800 incidents a year, since June 2015 some 8,000 people had received counselling in regional facilities.

12. **Mr. Katrougalos** (Greece) said that the austerity measures had disrupted the delivery of State services, exacerbating latent and endemic social problems in the country and driving up poverty rates, with some 40 per cent of the population now at or under the poverty line. Hundreds of thousands of people were without health insurance, and it was common to hear stories of children fainting in school for lack of a nutritious diet.

13. The very first bill put forward by the new Government upon assuming office in January 2015 had been designed to address the humanitarian crisis by ensuring access to food and electricity for those who lacked resources and to medical care for the uninsured. Owing to the economic crisis, the Government did not have the necessary funds to provide a minimum guaranteed income, as the cost of even a very modest minimum income scheme had been estimated at about €1 billion per year, while the current budget for all essential social welfare services came to about €700 million. The Greek Government was working with the World Bank to seek a way of overcoming the funding constraints that currently blocked the implementation of such a policy.

14. Pension system reform could help to improve the economic situation in the country. The existing system was structurally unsound and mixed welfare services with social insurance benefits, which led to an irrational distribution of resources. By introducing a national pension system that would reduce the risk of poverty, the Government hoped to address many of the issues related to article 11 of the Covenant.

15. **Mr. Kedzia**, noting that the State party had provided the Committee with copious information on the steps taken to protect the Roma and their culture and identity, asked whether similar measures had been taken in respect of other minority communities. The Committee would also like to know what efforts had been made to bridge the digital divide and ensure access to the Internet for disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

16. **Mr. Kerdoun** said that enjoyment of the right to education had been severely jeopardized by the economic crisis. Because of financial cutbacks, the recruitment of teachers had been curtailed, educators' salaries had been reduced and budgets slashed. Since 2008, no fewer than 1,000 schools had closed their doors and another 2,000 had been merged. Studies conducted by Greek and other European experts pointed to the segregation of students of Roma and other minority backgrounds in special classes at public schools. Noting that Greece was among those European countries that had espoused an inclusive approach to education, he asked what percentage of students with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream schools. What efforts had the Government made to combat racial or ethnic segregation in education, in line with European Union directives concerning the equal treatment of persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin? Given the current funding constraints, it would be of interest to the Committee to learn whether the Government's policy on the establishment of educational priority zones to assist students from disadvantaged areas and to encourage them to stay in school would be maintained and whether that policy was proving to be effective.

17. **Mr. De Schutter** said that the Memorandum of Understanding recently concluded between the European Commission, the Greek Government and the Bank of Greece called for the implementation of an action plan by 2016 for the rationalization of the education system in coordination with experts from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In that context, the term "rationalization" could have numerous implications. The Greek education system had already undergone deep funding cuts that had resulted in pupils having to travel longer distances to schools and higher student-to-teacher ratios. How would the Government take into account article 13 of the Covenant and the Committee's general comment No. 13 on the right to education during the design of such a plan of action? Would further rationalization be consistent with the State party's international obligations?

18. **Mr. Abdel-Moneim** said that the implementation of the Covenant was not only a national obligation of the State party, but also an international responsibility. The use of austerity plans as a solution for a country's economic crisis had met with mixed success, and no one could say for sure whether it was an appropriate response in the case of Greece. The main concern must be to overcome the economy's current fragility, and doing so would require not only fiscal or financial measures, but also economic reforms. In the relations between the State party and its partners, the Government must bear in mind that the Covenant addressed the broader question of economic health. The enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights must not be hindered by financial and fiscal arrangements designed to address economic problems.

19. **Ms. Bras Gomes**, noting that the Government was engaging in a dialogue with the World Bank on various questions, including social security, said that, in the Committee's experience, a minimum guaranteed income was the kind of measure that was most closely associated with a human-rights-based approach to social security. The Government should bear in mind that not all the programmes and measures advocated by the World Bank placed emphasis on such an approach. The delegation had referred to the fact that, in the past, the interlinkage of welfare and social insurance programmes had caused some problems. Pursuant to article 9 of the Covenant, social insurance was an essential part of the right to social security. However, that did not mean that an effort should not be made to clarify funding arrangements and entitlement conditions if they had not been spelled out.

20. The Committee had been informed that the non-contributory pension benefit had been redesigned and reshaped since January 2013 into what had been named the "flat-rate first pillar". Apparently, some of the eligibility requirements had been made much more stringent. Was there a risk that the new requirements would exclude many people

who still needed support? The Committee would be interested in receiving updated information on the positions of the State party's social partners with respect to the possible establishment of a third pillar consisting of a private pension scheme.

21. **Mr. Martynov** said that in 2012 the minimum wage had been cut and different minimum wages had been set for people of different ages. The Chairperson of the Committee had issued a letter in which he had emphasized that austerity measures must be temporary and should not introduce discriminatory criteria of any kind. What were the new Government's views on the steps taken by its predecessor? In its previous concluding observations, the Committee had expressed concern about the number of children under the age of 15 who were illegally engaged in work. Had the problem worsened with the economic crisis?

22. **Ms. Shin** said that she wished to commend the State party for making all shelters for victims of domestic violence accessible to persons with disabilities. She asked whether the problems faced by women with disabilities were covered by the training modules for professionals who dealt with domestic abuse cases. The replies to the list of issues indicated that there had been a large increase in reports of domestic violence and in the number of arrests related to such violence between 2011 and 2014. Was the increase attributable to increased awareness and reporting of such cases, or did it reflect a policy failure?

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

23. **Mr. Oikonomou** (Greece) said that his country had developed a road map for efforts to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including the Roma, who had recently been accorded legal recognition as a special group. Health-care and accommodation policies for Roma were being brought into line with those of other European Union member States. A new national strategy for combating poverty among vulnerable groups called for the development of infrastructure and the provision of rental subsidies. Municipalities had the authority to pursue their own housing strategies, and Roma communities participated in the corresponding decision-making processes. The municipality of Chalandri had discontinued its plans to evict the Roma inhabitants of a settlement there. Only a few broken-down houses had been demolished, and the Roma community had agreed to their demolition. The municipality was currently giving rental subsidies to Roma and seeking to offer them employment opportunities.

24. **Mr. Baskozos** (Greece) said that Greece was in the throes of an economic crisis that had caused many people to slip below the poverty line and that was also having repercussions on health care: around 2.5 million persons were uninsured, while mental illness, suicides, the incidence of HIV/AIDS and hospital admissions had all increased over the previous five years. Ever greater numbers of people were relying on the public health-care system, which was underfinanced and understaffed.

25. A joint ministerial decision issued in 2006 had established procedures for registering uninsured and poor persons, both Greek nationals and foreigners, with the public health-care system. Beneficiaries included refugees, asylum seekers and persons eligible for subsidiary protection. Health-care services were also available to foreigners suffering from HIV/AIDS or other infectious diseases and to foreign children requiring urgent hospitalization. Medical identification booklets were being distributed which would allow anyone resident in Greece access to all health-care services, regardless of income or citizenship status. Special provision was made for such persons as pregnant women, children, addicts, and persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities.

26. Given the current massive influx of refugees, efforts were being made to ensure that they underwent health screening and had their primary health care needs met. To

that end, mobile health-care units had been stationed at the main entry points. In cooperation with NGOs, the Ministry of Health had set up a group to coordinate all operations relating to the health of refugees.

27. The Ministry of Health was working with anti-drugs organizations to supply addicts with substitute substances and to increase treatment capacity. The Government was also committed to eliminating the waiting list for rehabilitation programmes by 2016. The law treated addicts as patients rather than criminals, decriminalizing drug use and decreasing the penalties for small-scale drug trafficking. Greece had also been one of the main sponsors of a resolution on the world drug problem adopted recently by the Human Rights Council.

28. The increase in reported cases of HIV/AIDS had not been adequately researched, but it seemed that deteriorating living conditions and the rising incidence of depression were leading people to engage in high-risk behaviour. The new Government had begun reinstating the distribution of syringes and condoms to drug users, and a decree which had made it possible to force sex workers to undergo HIV testing had been rescinded. A few cases of malaria had been diagnosed in recent years but the persons in question had, with one exception, all been migrants from countries where the disease was endemic.

29. The Government was committed to providing universal health coverage. It was able to meet primary health care needs, thanks in part to the help of volunteers and NGOs, but public health structures had suffered during the past five years of austerity measures. The support of the international community was indispensable if Greece was to increase its public health spending from the current 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the European average of 7.5 per cent.

30. **Mr. Kastanas** (Greece) said that the authorities were careful to ensure that policies affecting minority communities such as the Roma or Muslims took account of their cultural heritage. Initiatives focusing on the Muslim minority in Thrace sought to promote intercultural dialogue and integration. Youth councils had been established, and cultural and artistic events were being held that involved cross-border contacts with neighbouring countries. The issue of the recognition of new minorities was being debated throughout Europe, where most countries appeared to consider that the traditional presence of a given group was a condition for its recognition as a minority. In any case, the Greek Government believed that it was important to recognize distinct cultural characteristics and to promote diversity.

31. There was no policy of forced evictions in Greece. The authorities were attempting to upgrade existing settlements and to find alternative accommodation for persons in illegal settlements. In the Chalandri case, which was the subject of an individual communication before the Human Rights Committee, a Roma settlement had existed for 20 years on a plot of private land. The courts had upheld the landowners' rights and ordered the removal of the settlement, but the authorities had refused to implement the court order until a decision on relocation had been taken, in accordance with the interim measures indicated by the Human Rights Committee. Efforts to find a solution were under way but consensual resettlement was a very complex issue, especially in times of financial difficulties.

32. **Ms. Charokopou** (Greece) said that the Ministry of the Interior was working to facilitate the integration of migrants resident in Greece. Those efforts included intercultural training for civil servants dealing with third-country nationals, cultural mediation programmes and exchanges of best practices. Between 2007 and 2013, a budget of around €15 million had been used to fund a total of 92 projects benefitting some 950,000 people.

33. **Ms. Toura** (Greece) said that the education system had been hard hit by the economic crisis. Government spending in that sector had been reduced, and salaries, pensions and holiday bonuses had all been cut. Schools that had had few pupils or had been located very near one another had been merged in an effort to rationalize their financial management and make the best use of resources. Once merged, they were better equipped and could offer more optional courses. In some cases children had to travel greater distances to school but the Ministry had intervened and, in most cases, the problem had been resolved. Schools in remote areas and on border islands had been maintained irrespective of the number of pupils or operating costs.

34. The Educational Priority Zones initiative had been under way since 2010. Its objective was to introduce a holistic approach to education and innovative teaching methods and to give all pupils from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds equal learning opportunities regardless of school performance. It included programmes to help both Greek and non-Greek students overcome language learning difficulties, as well as guidance and counselling services for teachers, parents and students. The initiative had yielded positive results in terms of pupil performance, learning outcomes and the reduction of the dropout rate. It had helped to promote a more positive attitude among students, parents and teachers, increase cooperation and interaction between schools and local communities, and combat segregation. Thus far, some 13,500 Roma students, 16,640 migrants, 6,040 members of the Muslim minority in Thrace and 2,820 pupils from other vulnerable groups had benefited from the initiative.

35. A database was currently being developed on all students between the ages of 4 and 25 with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The Hellenic Parliament had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a number of recent educational reforms had focused on making the education system more inclusive. Measures were in place to ensure that digital educational material and education infrastructure were accessible to all students with disabilities or learning difficulties. Special education was available in mainstream schools that had been fitted with appropriate support structures, as well as in special schools. Home teaching programmes were available where necessary. Under a recent joint ministerial decision, a €10 monthly discount on access to the national telecommunications network was available for various categories of persons, including those with disabilities.

36. The efforts being made to improve the educational experience of Roma students were outlined in paragraphs 303 to 306 of the periodic report. The Education of Roma Children Project, which was being implemented throughout the country, had so far helped 13,500 students. In addition, the Government was making serious efforts to address the segregation of Roma children by means of various measures, including arranging for transfers to neighbouring schools. Unfortunately, such measures sometimes met with opposition from the Roma themselves.

37. **Ms. Margaroni** (Greece) said that there was no specific module on disability in the training received by domestic violence counsellors. Victims with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities were referred to services that could provide them with specialist care. The increase in the number of recorded cases of domestic violence between 2011 and 2014 proved that the National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women was effective in encouraging women to come forward and report abuse. Statistics on domestic violence were published periodically in press releases and were available to the public upon request. The establishment of a national observatory on violence against women would further facilitate access to relevant data.

38. **Mr. Katrougalos** (Greece) said that, although creditors were pushing for a reduction in pension outlays as a percentage of GDP, the Government would attempt

to negotiate a compromise and would seek to provide creditors with clarification regarding the fact that the expenditure figures that they were concerned about covered social assistance as well as pensions and other forms of social insurance.

39. The proposed reform of the social security system would lead to the creation of a first pillar divided into two subsystems consisting of, on the one hand, a tax-funded State pension scheme and, on the other, a contribution-based pension scheme. The overall aim would be to ensure that the system retained its redistributive character, despite the recommendations made by international creditors, who wanted to align contributions more closely with benefits. During the formulation of the corresponding amendments, the Government was willing to accept input from a range of sources, including the World Bank, as it attempted to find the best possible arrangement. For the time being, national income levels were not sufficient to sustain a second social security pillar based on occupational pension schemes. Nevertheless, the idea of establishing one in the future had not been discarded.

40. Under previous Governments, labour relations had been deregulated as part of a policy of what the International Monetary Fund referred to as “internal devaluation”, which involved wage cuts and was tantamount to the dissolution of the collective bargaining system. Consequently, social partners in Greece no longer exercised any influence over the national minimum wage, which was defined by statute and had been reduced in 2012 at the demand of creditors. In the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the European Commission on 19 August 2015, it had been agreed that the Government would reintroduce legislation on collective bargaining and draft a new law on collective action in line with European best practices. The term “best practices” was subject to interpretation, however. The Greek Government understood that term to refer to the European social model, whereas some, if not the majority, of its creditors believed that deregulation was a best practice. The Government intended to introduce legislation to combat labour-related discrimination against, for example, employees aged under 25, who had been subjected to disproportionate cuts in the minimum wage applying to them.

41. **Mr. Pillay** said that, while the delegation had provided very enlightening responses to most of the Committee’s questions, he was disappointed with its answers regarding housing, which had not dealt with the segregation, discrimination and deplorable living conditions experienced by the Roma and had touched only very lightly upon the issue of forced evictions in Chalandri. Homelessness and the social exclusion of the Roma predated the imposition of austerity measures by the so-called “troika”, yet it appeared that the Government was doing very little to tackle those issues. He therefore urged the delegation to consult paragraphs 44 and 45 of the Committee’s previous concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.97) and to ensure that the State party’s next periodic report provided an adequate response to the request for information made in paragraph 23 of the list of issues.

42. **Mr. De Schutter** said that he had some concerns about the extent to which human rights had been borne in mind during negotiations between Greece and its international creditors, including the talks leading up to the Memorandum of Understanding of 19 August. He wondered whether the creditors had been aware of the rights enshrined in the Covenant and the European Social Charter and, if so, how the Government apportioned responsibility for the potential impact of continued austerity measures on the enjoyment of social rights.

43. **Mr. Uprimny Yepes** asked what institutional mechanisms would be put in place to avoid a repeat of the data- and transparency-related problems identified in the 2014 report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights (A/HRC/25/50/Add.1).

44. **Mr. Katrougalos** (Greece) said that the Roma faced discrimination in all European countries and that there were many measures still to be taken in order to rectify that situation. Although the delegation had answered the Committee's questions on the subject, he hoped that the Government's continued efforts to support the Roma community would enable it to provide more satisfactory responses during future review processes.

45. Almost all first-world countries faced the challenge of conserving institutions that had been built in a very different economic and ideological climate and of upholding the traditions established during the period of economic expansion that had come in the wake of the Second World War and that served as the bedrock of the European social model. In more recent years, globalization and an emphasis on development regardless of the social cost had led to immense inequalities and undermined the possibility of achieving a Keynesian welfare state. The Greek Government's task was complicated by political and legal impediments stemming from the special adjustment programmes, although that could not excuse a failure to respect international obligations. Responsibility for implementing the Covenant was international as well as national and could not be subordinated to the need to abide by agreements struck between previous Governments and their creditors.

46. The Government intended to ratify the revised European Social Charter and other international instruments. Since its assumption of office, however, it had realized that Greece could not change unless the general orientation of Europe changed, as well. The European Union was in danger of repeating the mistakes made by European countries after the First World War, when an insistence on restrictive economic policies had fuelled the rise of fascism and, ultimately, contributed to the outbreak of another world war.

47. The fact that the Eurogroup was tasked with assessing the Government's compliance with its obligation to legislate on labour issues was clearly absurd. For that reason, he supported the notion of a Eurogroup of labour ministers. The Government would make every effort to honour its political pledge to respect social rights and would attempt to change what it found unacceptable in previous agreements between Greece and other European countries. Such an approach was necessary to protect the European social model and the Union itself, which was under threat from a wave of Euroscepticism.

48. His Government looked forward to continued cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies. In that connection, the Memorandum of Understanding of 19 August stipulated that the International Labour Organization would be the final arbiter in negotiations between Greece and its partners. The Government had called for the inclusion of that provision because it believed that the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies was of fundamental importance in keeping alive the dream of an equitable social protection system for all.

49. **The Chairperson** said that the Greek Government had to perform a delicate balancing act between a commitment to its existing social model and its obligations to international creditors. He hoped that priority would be given to the promises made to the Greek public and that the Covenant would serve as an effective tool for the protection of economic, social and cultural rights in future negotiations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.