



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua*

1. The Committee considered the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua¹ at its 45th and 47th meetings,² held on 7 and 8 October 2021, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 57th meeting, held on 15 October 2021.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fifth periodic report of Nicaragua, despite its being submitted late. However, the Committee regrets the fact that the State party did not submit its written replies to the list of issues,³ particularly since a great many noteworthy developments that ought to have been addressed took place between the date when the report was submitted and the date of the scheduled dialogue.

3. The Committee wishes to remind the State party that the interactive dialogue is a key component of the consideration of the report and provides a unique opportunity for the Committee and the State party to hold an open and constructive discussion which, together with the report and the other information received, allow the Committee to conduct the most thorough assessment possible of the progress made and to indicate to the State party the areas where further efforts are needed. In that connection, the Committee invited the State party to participate in the consideration of its fifth periodic report at the present session. On 21 September 2021, however, the State party informed the Committee that it would participate in the aforementioned dialogue “in listening mode” and that its representative would be the Ambassador of Nicaragua to Switzerland, who attended the public meetings via video link on the days scheduled for the review (7 and 8 October). At the meeting held on 7 October, the Committee, in accordance with its usual practice, invited the Ambassador to take the floor to make his opening statement but he did not avail himself of this invitation. The Committee proceeded to ask its questions concerning the implementation of the Covenant in the State party and invited the State party’s representative to reply. He repeated that he was attending the meeting in listening mode. In view of the situation, the Committee closed the public meeting. On 8 October, the Committee resumed the dialogue so that it could hear the State party’s replies. The State party’s representative said that the questions had been transmitted to the capital. On 8 October, after the closure of the public meeting, the Committee received a communication from the Minister for Foreign Affairs indicating that the State party would not be replying to the questions put by the Committee. The State party had ample opportunity to answer the questions, provide relevant information, and give its perspective on the issues raised. If it had done so, a constructive dialogue would have taken place and the Committee would have received better information in relation to its concerns. In view of this situation, the Committee wishes to point out that its invitation to the State party had been, in line with

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventieth session (27 September–15 October 2021).

¹ See [E/C.12/2021/SR.45](#) and [E/C.12/2021/SR.47](#).

² [E/C.12/NIC/5](#).

³ [E/C.12/NIC/Q/5](#).



its practice, to participate in an interactive and constructive dialogue. In this regard, the Committee stresses the importance of the full engagement of States parties in interactive and constructive dialogues with human rights treaty bodies, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268 of 9 April 2014. The Committee also reminds the State party that, in the full exercise of its sovereignty, the State party decided to ratify the Covenant and be bound by this Committee and this procedure. In that connection, it refers the State party to rule 62 of its rules of procedure. The Committee regrets that its attempts to assess, as independently as possible, the implementation of the Covenant in the State party have been seriously undermined by the lack of cooperation and interactive dialogue with the State party and is obliged to proceed, in accordance with its rules of procedure, in the absence of a dialogue with the State party.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to strengthen the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly for persons with disabilities and the indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples. The Committee also welcomes the efforts and progress made by the State party in combating poverty, reducing the gender gap in the areas of employment, education and health, and increasing access to education for children and adolescents.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

National dialogue and cooperation with international and regional human rights mechanisms

5. The Committee notes with concern that forums for participation and dialogue at the national and international levels, particularly with mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, are being closed down.

6. **The Committee urges the State party to take the necessary steps to re-establish forums for open and constructive participation and dialogue with all stakeholders at the national level, including representatives of civil society, academia and the private sector, representatives and leaders of indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples, and human rights defenders. The Committee also urges the State party to re-establish dialogue and cooperation at the international level with regional and universal human rights protection mechanisms.**

Independence of the judiciary and of the Office of the Human Rights Advocate

7. The Committee is concerned to have received information indicating that the judiciary is neither independent nor impartial. It is also concerned to note that the Office of the Human Rights Advocate lacks independence and fails to respond to human rights violations in the State party, which is why it has been downgraded to “B” status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

8. **The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure the impartiality and independence of the judiciary. It also urges the State party to take all necessary measures to ensure that the Office of the Human Rights Advocate, acting with full independence and diligence, fulfils its mandate to protect and promote human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, and complies with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).**

Human rights defenders

9. The Committee is seriously concerned to have received reports that human rights defenders, including university students, lecturers, doctors and medical staff, have been subjected to persecution, threats, harassment and acts of reprisals for protesting against the reforms to the Social Security Act and the inadequate response to the fire in the Indio-Mañá

Biological Reserve and for reporting alleged irregularities in the management of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

10. **The Committee urges the State party to take effective and timely measures to prevent acts of violence against all human rights defenders and to protect their lives and personal safety, ensuring effective coordination between the national and local authorities. It also urges it to conduct thorough, impartial and effective investigations into all reports of attacks on the lives, physical integrity or freedom of human rights defenders, including students, lecturers and medical staff, and into all acts of violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, bullying and defamation committed against them. Furthermore, it urges the State party to reinstate students, lecturers and medical staff who have been unjustly removed from their jobs or university courses. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its statement on human rights defenders and economic, social and cultural rights.⁴**

Rights of indigenous peoples

11. The Committee is concerned to have received reports highlighting the lack of appropriate mechanisms for guaranteeing the right of indigenous peoples to be consulted about decisions that may affect their rights, including their rights to the territories that they have traditionally occupied. The Committee is concerned to note that the State party failed to carry out appropriate prior consultation procedures before approving large investment projects that could affect the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the concession for the construction of the Grand Interoceanic Canal. The Committee is also concerned to note allegations that the State party has promoted the establishment of parallel governments to supplant the representative bodies of legitimately constituted communities of indigenous peoples, which affects consultation procedures and facilitates the usurpation of indigenous territories. It is also concerned about the stagnation of efforts to regularize indigenous territories and address the lack of effective mechanisms for the protection of indigenous peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources. The Committee is concerned about the serious social conflicts and violent disputes over the possession and use of lands and territories that arise between indigenous peoples and third parties that occupy or wish to exploit the natural resources in such territories, particularly in territories belonging to the indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples on the Caribbean coast (art. 1).

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Design, adopt and implement, in consultation with indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples, an appropriate procedure to guarantee their right to be consulted with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent to any legislative or administrative measure that may affect their rights and territories, and ensure that the procedure takes their traditions and cultural specificities into account;**

(b) **Ensure that communal authorities that are legitimately constituted and designated by indigenous peoples are not supplanted by parallel authorities in decision-making processes that may affect such peoples;**

(c) **Establish an effective mechanism that has sufficient human, technical and financial resources to protect the rights of indigenous peoples to possess, use, develop and control their lands, territories and resources in full security, including by strengthening the process of regularizing, legally recognizing and legally protecting territories in accordance with international standards;**

(d) **Conduct an impartial and thorough investigation into cases involving the usurpation of indigenous lands and territories and acts of violence carried out by third-party occupants against members of indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples.**

Corruption

13. The Committee is concerned about reports that high levels of corruption and impunity persist in the State party. It is also concerned to have received reports that access to

⁴ [E/C.12/2016/2](#).

information of public interest is restricted and effective accountability mechanisms are lacking, making it difficult to objectively assess the steps taken by the State party to ensure the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights (art. 2 (1)).

14. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Guarantee the necessary transparency and accountability in the public administration;**
- (b) Ensure the effective implementation of anti-corruption measures with a view to effectively combating impunity in this sphere;**
- (c) Adopt measures to provide effective protection to victims of corruption, their lawyers, activists who campaign against corruption, whistle-blowers and witnesses.**

Budget and tax reforms

15. The Committee regrets that it has not received information from the State party on the proportion of public expenditure allocated to social priorities such as food, housing, water, sanitation, health and education and notes with concern that funding for health and education has reportedly been reduced. It also regrets that the State party has failed to provide information on the proportion of public revenue raised from taxes and the impact of the Tax Harmonization Act on its ability to maximize the resources available for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee notes with concern that the above-mentioned Act provides for the elimination of exemptions for most of the products that make up the basic food basket (art. 2 (1)).

16. The Committee urges the State party to:

- (a) Ensure that the budget is formulated and implemented in such a way as to guarantee that all sectors of the population, particularly the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups and individuals, may realize their economic, social and cultural rights;**
- (b) Strengthen the accountability mechanisms applied to public revenue and expenditure and ensure greater transparency of access to information on tax receipts;**
- (c) Assess the impact of the Tax Harmonization Act with a view to conducting a comprehensive reform, in consultation with the relevant social stakeholders, that makes it possible to design, adopt and implement a progressive and socially just tax policy that will increase the resources available for the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.**

Non-discrimination

17. The Committee is concerned to note allegations that persons who oppose or criticize the Government are subjected to discrimination on the basis of political opinion that affects the exercise and enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, in particular their right to work and their access to health services. It is also concerned about the lack of information on the impact of measures taken to combat discrimination against indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples and discrimination on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation and gender identity (art. 2).

18. The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to ensure that no one is subjected to discrimination that affects their access to economic, social and cultural rights, including by adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that guarantees adequate protection against discrimination, in accordance with article 2 of the Covenant and taking into account general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee urges the State party to prevent and combat discrimination on the grounds of political opinion and to ensure that all victims of such acts have access to effective legal and administrative remedies to guarantee their protection.

Equality between men and women

19. The Committee notes the State party's adoption of the Equal Rights and Opportunities Act but is concerned about reports that gender stereotypes remain entrenched in society, which hinders women's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly in the area of employment, and their access to decision-making positions in the public and private spheres (art. 3).

20. **In order to ensure that family responsibilities are equally shared between men and women and to change stereotypes and perceptions of gender roles in the family and society, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt appropriate mechanisms for implementing the Equal Rights and Opportunities Act and a gender equality policy that includes measures to promote equal career opportunities through education and training in subjects other than those traditionally dominated by one sex or the other.**

Right to work

21. The Committee regrets that the State party has not provided up-to-date, disaggregated statistical information on employment, unemployment and underemployment rates and on the availability and accessibility of technical and vocational education programmes. The Committee is concerned about the high levels of unemployment and the significant number of persons working in the informal sector, in particular women and persons belonging to indigenous or Afrodescendent groups (arts. 6, 7 and 9).

22. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy on employment that tackles the main causes of unemployment, includes an action plan with specific targets and focuses on groups that are disproportionately at risk of unemployment. It also recommends that the State party ensure that workers in the informal economy fall within the scope of application of labour laws and the social protection system and adopt all necessary measures to progressively reduce the number of workers in this sector of the economy by integrating them into the formal economy. The Committee recommends that the State party develop quality technical and vocational training programmes that are tailored to the needs of the labour market and the most underprivileged and marginalized persons and groups.**

Minimum wage

23. The Committee notes with concern that there are no tripartite agreements on changing the minimum wage. The Committee regrets that it has no information on the amount of the minimum wage or on whether it is sufficient to ensure a decent living for workers and their families (art. 7).

24. **In order to ensure that all workers receive a minimum wage that provides a decent living for themselves and their families, the Committee urges the State party to take the necessary legislative and administrative measures to establish an effective mechanism for periodically reviewing the minimum wage in which workers, employers and their representative organizations participate.**

Working conditions

25. The Committee regrets that it has not received any information on the working conditions of women in some sectors, including the maquila and domestic service sectors, and is further concerned that working conditions in these sectors remain precarious and continue to expose women working in them to serious risks of abuse and exploitation (art. 7).

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take the necessary steps to ensure that women enjoy fair and equitable working conditions, especially in maquilas and the domestic service sector;**

(b) **Set up a labour inspection mechanism with sufficient material, technical and human resources to effectively and impartially monitor working conditions in all sectors;**

(c) **Establish effective mechanisms for reporting any sort of abuse or exploitation of workers, paying particular attention to the situation of women employed in maquilas and the domestic service sector.**

Unfair dismissals

27. The Committee is concerned to note allegations that university professors and lecturers have been unjustifiably dismissed for participating in social protests between April and August 2018. It is also concerned to note that doctors and medical staff have allegedly been dismissed because they refused to comply with orders not to provide medical care to persons injured during such protests and in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic (arts. 6 and 7).

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to ensure that persons who consider themselves to have been unfairly dismissed have access to an effective judicial remedy and compensation and, where appropriate, can be reinstated in their post. The Committee urges the State party to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of unjustified dismissals of lecturers, professors, doctors and medical staff that took place against the backdrop of the political crisis of 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic.**

29. **The Committee refers the State party to its general comment No. 23 (2016) on the right to just and favourable conditions of work.**

Social security

30. The Committee notes with concern that, according to information provided in the State party report, only 11.9 per cent of the population, or 26.06 per cent of the economically active population, were insured as of December 2018. It is also concerned to note that the State party still does not have unemployment insurance coverage. The Committee regrets that the State party has not provided any information on the impact of the reform of the Nicaraguan Social Security Institute (art. 9).

31. **The Committee urges the State party to develop a social security system that guarantees universal social protection coverage and provides appropriate benefits for all workers and all persons and families, especially those belonging to the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, with a view to ensuring that they have a decent standard of living. The Committee also urges the State party to take the necessary steps to set a social protection floor that includes basic social security guarantees. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security and to the statement it made in 2015 on social protection floors: an essential element of the right to social security and of the sustainable development goals.⁵**

Protection of children

32. The Committee regrets that the State party has not provided statistical data on the extent of the problem of child labour and the measures taken to protect children from hazardous work and economic exploitation (art. 10).

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to prevent and counter the economic exploitation of children by ensuring that child labour legislation is actively enforced and by strengthening labour inspection mechanisms and providing support to poor families to make sure that their children attend school. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that all instances of economic or any other type of exploitation of children and adolescents are thoroughly investigated and that those responsible are duly punished.**

⁵ E/C.12/2015/1.

Poverty

34. Despite the efforts made by the State party, the Committee is concerned to note that poverty levels remain high, particularly in rural areas and in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean coast, which are mainly inhabited by indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples. The Committee is concerned about reports that the poverty rate has increased as a result of the sociopolitical and health crises and the devastating impact of Hurricanes Iota and Eta on the Caribbean coast (art. 11).

35. The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to combat poverty, especially extreme poverty, by adopting a national action plan that incorporates a human rights-based approach, has sufficient resources for its implementation and takes due account of the disparities and gaps between urban and rural areas and the social exclusion of the indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples living in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast in order to ensure the full enjoyment of their human rights, in particular their economic, social and cultural rights.

Right to an adequate standard of living

36. The Committee notes with concern the information received about the negative impact of some firms' natural-resource exploitation projects, which cause irreparable damage to the environment and impinge on the right to health and the right to an adequate standard of living of the affected communities, particularly those of indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples (arts. 1, 11 and 12).

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Draft clear guidelines and regulations for evaluating the social and environmental impact of natural-resource exploitation projects throughout the territory of the State party, in particular those carried out in territories belonging to indigenous or Afrodescendent peoples;**

(b) **Ensure that communities affected by the exploitation of natural resources in their territory, including communities of indigenous or Afrodescendent peoples, are consulted and receive compensation for damages or losses incurred and a share of the profits from the activities.**

Right to adequate food

38. The Committee regrets the lack of up-to-date information on the prevalence of undernutrition and malnutrition in the State party and on the concrete results of the "Zero Hunger" food production programme. The Committee is concerned to note that, according to some reports, there are high levels of malnutrition and undernutrition in the State party, including overweight and obesity (art. 11).

39. The Committee recommends that the State party redouble its efforts to protect the right to adequate food and that it review and adapt the "Zero Hunger" programme in order to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition in an effective and comprehensive manner, including by establishing programmes that promote healthier diets and incorporate trade, land management, education and fiscal policy elements, setting clear, time-bound targets and appropriate mechanisms for assessing the progress made under the Programme. The Committee encourages the State party to take these steps in collaboration with civil society organizations. The Committee refers the State party to its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food and to the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Right to health

40. The Committee notes the information on the National Health Policy provided in the State party report. However, the Committee is concerned about reported shortcomings, including the failure to assign sufficient and appropriate resources to the health sector, shortages of inputs, medicines, medical and surgical supplies, and medical equipment, and

the worsening state of the infrastructure of some hospitals, especially in rural areas and in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned to note that medical assistance was allegedly denied to persons injured during the demonstrations that took place between April and August 2018 and that the State party has provided no information in this regard (art. 12).

41. **The Committee recommends that the State party allocate sufficient resources to the health sector. It urges the State party to adopt the necessary and effective measures to guarantee the availability, accessibility and quality of health-care services and to ensure that there are sufficient public health-care establishments, goods and services with skilled medical staff, scientifically approved and unexpired drugs and hospital equipment, and adequate sanitation conditions, especially in rural areas and in the autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast. The Committee urges the State party to conduct an investigation into the alleged denial of medical care to persons injured during the demonstrations that took place between April and August 2018 and to take the necessary steps to prevent such a situation from reoccurring.**

Management of the pandemic

42. The Committee is concerned to note that, according to reports, there is a lack of access to information based on an appropriate and comprehensive epidemiological analysis of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also concerned about the discrepancies between the official figures for infections and deaths and those recorded by civil society organizations and in scientific reports and the failure to ensure cooperation and information-sharing so that an analysis of the evolution of the pandemic in the country may be carried out. In this regard, the Committee is concerned that the State party has failed to take the necessary measures, based on the appropriate analysis, to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. Lastly, the Committee regrets that it has no information on the vaccination plan adopted by the State party (art. 12).

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to provide the population with accurate and scientifically sound information on the epidemiological situation and evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in the State party and that it ensure that this information is regularly updated and easily accessible to the entire population and to international health organizations. The Committee also urges the State party to establish, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, including representatives of civil society and the scientific community, an effective and regularly updated case registration mechanism in order to assess the epidemiological situation in the country so that the necessary and appropriate measures to prevent the risk of infection may be taken and quality health care may be provided to the entire population. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt a vaccination plan that provides all persons with access to vaccinations against COVID-19, without discrimination.**

Sexual and reproductive health

44. The Committee notes the information contained in the report on the care provided to women in “*casas maternas*” (maternity homes), particularly in rural areas that are difficult to reach. However, it is concerned to note that the reform of abortion law has led to the prohibition of therapeutic abortion and, as a result, the complete criminalization of abortion, giving rise to an increase in unsafe abortions in the State party. The Committee is concerned to note that the teenage pregnancy rate is very high in the State party. The Committee regrets that it has not received any information on maternal mortality rates or on any progress made towards the adoption of a law on sexual and reproductive health (art. 12).

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Amend its legislation on the prohibition of abortion in order to render it compatible with other fundamental rights, such as women’s rights to health, life and dignity;**

(b) **Take the appropriate measures to reduce the maternal mortality rate, taking into account the technical guidance provided by the Office of the United Nations**

High Commissioner for Human Rights on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce preventable maternal morbidity and mortality;⁶

(c) **Take the measures necessary to reduce the high teenage pregnancy rate, especially among girls from marginalized and underprivileged groups and from low-income and low-education families, and ensure the accessibility, availability and affordability of sexual and reproductive health services, particularly in rural areas;**

(d) **Incorporate comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education modules in primary and secondary school curricula for both sexes and develop and implement a specific training programme for teachers. The Committee also recommends that the State party take into account its general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health.**

Right to education

46. While the Committee notes that access to education has been broadened in the State party, it is concerned about shortcomings in the quality of school infrastructure and materials and in the content of curricula and the training of teachers, particularly in rural areas and on the Caribbean coast. The Committee is concerned to note that dropout rates are high in both primary and secondary education, particularly in rural areas (art. 13).

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt all necessary measures to improve the quality of education by increasing the number of qualified teachers and their participation in in-service training programmes and by improving infrastructure and educational materials, particularly in rural areas and the autonomous regions of the Caribbean Coast;**

(b) **Adopt the appropriate measures to reduce the school dropout and repetition rates at all levels of education, especially at the primary level and among students belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups.**

Academic freedom

48. The Committee regrets that it has not received any information regarding guarantees of academic freedom and is concerned about reports that the academic governance of universities is increasingly tied to political and partisan interests, which has led to the dismissal of teaching staff and the expulsion of students, restricting the right to education, freedom of thought and opinion, and freedom of scientific research and creative activity (arts. 13, 14 and 15).

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to ensure respect for academic freedom and freedom of thought and opinion in universities as well as respect for freedom of scientific research and creative activity. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the academic governance of universities is not driven by partisan political interests and refers the State party to its general comment No. 25 (2020) on science and economic, social and cultural rights.**

Cultural rights

50. The Committee notes with concern that the measures adopted by the State party have not done enough to promote respect for the cultural diversity of indigenous and Afrodescendent peoples or to disseminate information about their cultures (art. 15).

51. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary steps to strengthen the protection of cultural rights and respect for cultural diversity by fostering an environment that enables Afrodescendent communities to preserve, develop, express and share their identity, history, culture, traditions and customs.**

⁶ [A/HRC/21/22](#).

Access to the Internet

52. The Committee regrets that it has not received any information from the State party on measures taken to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of Internet services. The Committee is concerned to note that, according to publicly available information, the majority of students do not have access to the Internet, which, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has a significant impact on their right to education (art. 15).

53. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary steps to improve access to the Internet, especially in rural areas, by, inter alia, developing the requisite infrastructure and ensuring that Internet services are accessible, available and affordable for everyone, without discrimination.**

D. Other recommendations

54. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

55. The Committee recommends that the State party take fully into account its obligations under the Covenant and ensure the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined therein in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would be significantly facilitated by the State party establishing independent mechanisms to monitor progress and treating beneficiaries of public programmes as rights holders who can claim entitlements. Implementing the Goals on the basis of the principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination would ensure that no one is left behind. In this regard, the Committee draws the State party's attention to its statement on the pledge to leave no one behind.⁷

56. The Committee requests that the State party disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, including at the national and municipal levels, in particular among parliamentarians, public officials and judicial authorities, and that it inform the Committee in its next periodic report about the steps taken to implement them. The Committee encourages the State party to engage with the Office of the Human Rights Advocate, non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the follow-up to the present concluding observations and in the process of consultation at the national level prior to the submission of its next periodic report.

57. In accordance with the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations adopted by the Committee, the State party is requested to provide, within 24 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10 (human rights defenders), 12 (a) and (b) (rights of indigenous peoples) and 43 (management of the COVID-19 pandemic) above.

58. The Committee requests the State party to submit its sixth periodic report in accordance with article 16 of the Covenant by 31 October 2026, unless it is notified of a change in the review cycle. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the word limit for the report is 21,200 words.

⁷ E/C.12/2019/1.