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Summary record of the 35th meeting

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

Chair: Ms. Saran

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports *(continued)*

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

Seventh periodic report of the Russian Federation (continued) (E/C.12/RUS/7;
E/C.12/RUS/Q/7; E/C.12/RUS/RQ/7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the meeting.*

2. **A representative of the Russian Federation**, resuming his delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting, said that 8.4 trillion Russian roubles had been allocated to social spending under the federal budget in 2024, 1.5 trillion roubles more than in 2023 and 1.7 times more than in 2019. That increase had largely been due to the measures introduced by the Government to support citizens and ensure economic development in the face of the sanctions imposed against the Russian Federation. It should be noted that 99.9 per cent of the social expenditure budget had been executed. All social payments had been increased by 9.5 per cent since February 2025 to account for the actual rate of inflation.

3. In order to be able to compare poverty levels before and after 2021 – when the method for calculating the minimum subsistence level had been changed by legislation from one based on a basket of consumer goods to one that used median income – the Government had introduced the concept of a poverty line. The poverty line took account of inflation and was calculated quarterly using the last minimum subsistence level derived, in the fourth quarter of 2020, from a basket of consumer goods, thereby allowing the series of statistical observations with respect to poverty levels to be meaningfully continued. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of people living in poverty fell from 18.4 million, or 12.4 per cent of the population, to the historic low of 10.5 million, or 7.2 per cent of the population.

4. The Government used social contracts as a tool to address low income levels. In 2024, 204,000 such contracts had been concluded with over half a million beneficiaries, of whom more than 60 per cent were families with children. Social contracts allowed beneficiaries to open their own businesses, for example, or simply receive financial support in a difficult life situation. The contracts were primarily intended to provide a long-term source of income for citizens and families with children. A type of social contract for registered unemployed persons provided them with a payment equal to the minimum subsistence level and then three times that level once they found a job. Persons seeking to open a business received up to 350,000 roubles and business skills training.

5. Workers were entitled to a one-time State-funded maternity benefit in an amount, in 2025, of up to almost 800,000 roubles and a monthly childcare allowance of up to 68,000 roubles while the child was under one and a half years of age. The State also provided families with a federal maternity allowance of 690,000 roubles for the birth of their first child and of 912,000 roubles for the second child, which could be used for housing or education expenses, including for preschool. A similar regional maternity allowance was available in 73 regions. A child benefit had been introduced in January 2023 for families with incomes that were, per person, below the minimum subsistence level. The amount of the benefit depended on the family's region of residence but was, on average, 17,000 roubles per child. A federal housing mortgage subsidy programme was in place.

6. As at 1 April 2025, there had been over 700,000 children with disabilities in the Russian Federation, accounting for 2.3 per cent of all children in the country. Students with disabilities were entitled by law to have adapted curricula and receive support from special education teachers, psychologists and social workers. Children with disabilities received free medical care, families received a monthly cash payment for each child with a disability, and the State provided any rehabilitation equipment required under a child's rehabilitation programme.

7. Some 35 million citizens, or 24 per cent of the population, were over working age – meaning, for men, that they were 63 years of age or older or, for women, that they were 58 or

older. A national strategy for older persons was in place for the period until 2030, and the national project on demography included a federal project called “Older Generation”. All constituent entities of the Russian Federation had quality standards on the accessibility of medical care for persons over working age, and a system of long-term care for older persons had been introduced. Measures to prevent falls and fractures among older persons had been instituted in the 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, resulting in a 120 per cent increase in the detection of fractures between 2020 and 2024 and a 140 per cent increase in the number of surgical interventions. By the end of 2024, over 41,500 priority facilities, or 78 per cent of all such facilities, had been made accessible to persons with reduced mobility. All government digital services were adapted for older, visually impaired and hard-of-hearing persons.

8. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the questions raised by the Committee with respect to the evacuation by the Russian Federation of children from the area of armed conflict had been discussed in detail when the Committee on the Rights of the Child had considered the country’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([CRC/C/SR.2768](#); [CRC/C/SR.2769](#)) in 2024. The Russian Federation had, in line with the standards of international humanitarian law, evacuated children – primarily orphans and children without parental care who were living in institutions – from the area of armed conflict. There was a return mechanism. At the request of the Ukrainian side, and with facilitation by Qatar, the Red Cross and the Holy See, children were being returned, as had been widely discussed in the media.

9. School curricula were built on the spiritual and moral values of the Russian Federation, values that were recognized by all Russian citizens and peoples living within the Russian Federation. Sex education was approached through the prism of the family. Children began to learn family values through the subjects that they studied in primary school and, in biology and other secondary school classes, continued their study of topics such as responsible parenthood, the structure of the human body and personal hygiene.

10. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that a special law on the crime-prevention system had been enacted in 2016, systematizing the work of all the authorities and agencies involved in the prevention of various types of offences, including domestic offences. As family members were reluctant to report such crimes, the internal affairs agencies took proactive steps to identify and document cases. In 2017, certain categories of battery had been made administrative rather than criminal offences, with the number of documented cases increasing significantly.

11. A preventive register was maintained of persons who had previously committed certain offences. The police visited and interviewed them regularly, and if there was any cause for alarm, other special measures could be taken. For the protection of victims, provisions had been added to the criminal procedure legislation in 2018 that allowed courts to prohibit suspects from engaging in certain acts, such as communicating by telephone with the victim or witnesses.

12. As a result of the measures taken, the number of cases in which the aforementioned offences were committed against women had fallen 15.6 per cent in 2024, with a 9.3 per cent decrease in serious and very serious offences. In 2024, 6,500 persons had been criminally prosecuted for the infliction of moderate harm, 8,000 for minor bodily harm, 6,600 for battery overall, 800 for torture and over 10,000 for death threats. The penalty imposed was generally community service, as it did not exclude the persons concerned from society and allowed them to engage in useful work and provide some income for their families.

13. There was a dedicated law on support for persons in difficult life situations, including victims of domestic violence. The over 2,500 crisis centres in place in 68 regions provided shelter, psychological and legal assistance and other forms of support to women victims of domestic violence. The centres also worked with the perpetrators, in line with the focus of the Russian Federation on strengthening the country’s traditional values and preserving the family.

14. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Constitution ensured the protection of the health of all citizens, regardless of factors such as their race, ethnicity, language, origin or place of residence, and guaranteed that they would not be discriminated

against on the grounds of state of health. Everyone, regardless of where they lived, including in constituent entities reunited with the Russian Federation, was entitled to receive a guaranteed volume of medical care free of charge, in accordance with the programme of State guarantees of free medical care for citizens. Recognized refugees had the same rights to medical assistance as Russian citizens.

15. A federal law on preventing infectious disease was in place. Areas of focus under the strategy for the prevention of infectious disease that had been adopted for the period until 2035 included immunization throughout the life cycle, equality of access to existing vaccines and the development of a public information system. Citizens were vaccinated against 12 diseases under the national vaccination schedule, and vaccinations against 24 infectious diseases were provided to persons at risk, including persons living in areas where the diseases were endemic or working in certain professions.

16. One of the objectives of the National Strategy for Women was to protect women's health at all ages. Reproductive healthcare encompassed measures to safeguard the reproductive health of the population, including adolescents, prevent abortions, increase the availability and effectiveness of in vitro fertilization and encourage responsible attitudes towards health. Activities to raise women's and children's awareness of various health-related issues were being carried out at all levels of education and in the workplace. A wide network of public healthcare providers provided gynaecological care, even in remote, sparsely populated areas. There were more than 32,000 obstetric stations, of which more than 2,500 were mobile, and 1,500 mobile teams of medical specialists. The legal, psychological and other assistance provided by medical and social care offices to women facing a reproductive choice had contributed to the steady decline in the number of abortions in the Russian Federation, which had dropped more than 6.5 per cent over the previous year. A federal project on the development of children's healthcare provided for the screening of both girls and boys between the ages of 15 and 17 for reproductive health disorders, with a view to their early detection and treatment. Because of such measures, the child mortality rate had decreased to 4 per mille in 2024, representing a twofold reduction over the preceding decade.

17. The key objectives of the State Strategy to Combat the Spread of HIV Infection in the Russian Federation until 2030 included raising public awareness of HIV infection and countering the stigmatization of persons with HIV. A programme for universal access to antiretroviral therapy was being introduced. The number of persons being tested for HIV was increasing annually and had exceeded 54 million in 2024, while the number of new HIV infections, which was declining every year, had decreased by 50,000, or 11 per cent, in 2024.

18. Federal law guaranteed treatment and social rehabilitation to all drug users. The Strategy of State Anti-Drug Policy until 2030 prohibited the use of substitution therapy for the treatment of drug abuse, the legalization of recreational drug use and the unjustified expansion of the use of narcotic analgesics. Substitution therapy could be described as a form of palliative therapy, which was intended not to cure the disease but simply to reduce the individual's pain, and it was thus based on the fundamentally unsound assumption that drug addiction could not be cured. The effectiveness of such therapy remained unproved and its adverse medical and social consequences exceeded the transient positive effects that were observed in some patients. In the Russian Federation, treatment for drug addiction, which entailed complete abstinence from all drugs, involved the use of methods not prohibited by law and duly registered medicines. The inclusion of methadone, often associated with substitution therapy, on the list of narcotic drugs prohibited in the Russian Federation was fully in line with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961. As a result of the approach to treatment followed by the Russian Federation, the incidence of drug abuse disorders had decreased 1.7 times over the previous decade and the primary morbidity rate had fallen 2.5 times.

19. Various types of healthcare quality and safety controls were provided for by law, including independent assessments of the services of healthcare providers and monitoring carried out under the compulsory medical insurance framework. The assessments, which covered the timeliness of the care provided and the appropriateness of the methods of prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation used, could result in the imposition of penalties, including fines or the full or partial forfeiture of payment for the services. The

imposition of a penalty did not relieve the healthcare providers of any obligation they might have under the Civil Code to compensate the patient for the harm suffered.

20. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the objectives of the Strategy for the State Anti-Drug Policy until 2030 were to reduce drug trafficking and the consequences of illicit drug use and to encourage negative social attitudes towards such use. Particular attention was paid to the prevention of large-scale drug crimes; since 2021, more than 300 tonnes of banned substances had been removed from circulation, more than 500,000 crimes had been detected, more than 300,000 individuals had been prosecuted, some 1,000 illicit drug laboratories had been closed down and the operations of 76 organized crime groups had been stopped. As criminal groups had moved into the digital sphere, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had blocked access to more than 400,000 websites. In a ruling rendered in November 2012, the European Court of Human Rights had found in favour of the Russian Federation, confirming that it had not committed any human rights violations against drug users in connection with the denial of opioid substitution therapy.

21. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that Indigenous Peoples made up one third of the country's ethnic groups in the country. Due to their way of life and the areas where they lived, some healthcare mechanisms might not be available to them. In view of their vulnerable situation, persons belonging to Indigenous communities were entitled to receive pensions five years earlier than the rest of the population. Special measures were in place for the provision of medical assistance to nomadic populations living in remote areas, including the use of dedicated trucks, ships and airplanes to provide mobile care. The Government also provided funding for the purchase of medical kits to treat diseases in the tundra or the taiga, where Indigenous populations had to contend with difficulties linked to disruptions to their traditional food chains. Federal laws provided for a series of measures to ensure priority access to natural resources for Indigenous Peoples.

22. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, under the 2018–2024 National Environment Project, unauthorized landfills had been eliminated, waste processing centres had been established, protected areas had been expanded, 1.3 ha of bodies of water had been rehabilitated and improvements had been made to more than 27,000 ha of defined areas of water and 602 km of hydrographic networks, thus helping to improve the quality of life of more than 21 million people. A federal project for the protection of unique bodies of water had received funding of more than 13 billion roubles. In 2025, a new environmental well-being project would be launched with the objective of reducing emissions in 29 cities by 20 per cent and promoting citizen environmental monitoring. A special programme for the rehabilitation of forests as natural carbon sinks had also been launched.

23. **Ms. Lee** (Country Task Force) said that, in view of the climate risks faced by the State Party, including permafrost thaw, wildfires, floods and Arctic coastal erosion, she wished to know whether the national action plan on adaptation to climate change, covering the period up to 2025, had been updated for the next phase of adaptation. She would also be interested to hear how the State Party would ensure that the updated plan identified vulnerable groups and included measurable indicators disaggregated by region, sex, age, ethnicity and economic status. She would like to know what measures were in place to ensure the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in climate risk assessments and adaptation planning; what steps had been taken to protect housing and infrastructure in permafrost and coastal zones during wildfire smoke events and to protect livelihoods and cultural life from climate risks in general; and what measures had been taken to strengthen regional capacity and financing to close protection gaps between regions.

24. **Mr. Hennebel** (Country Rapporteur) said that it was important to reiterate that, as the rights established in the Covenant continued to apply fully and without exception during periods of armed conflict, including situations of prolonged military occupation, the State Party had an obligation to respect, protect and realize all the rights enshrined in the Covenant for all persons within its jurisdiction or under its effective control, in accordance with the Covenant and with the general principle of international law. That obligation extended to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine over which the Russian Federation exercised at least direct administrative, security and institutional control. Obligations under the Covenant applied extraterritorially whenever a State Party exercised de facto or de jure authority over a territory or population. Compliance with the Covenant in a context of conflict was neither

discretionary nor subject to geopolitical considerations, but a binding international legal obligation.

25. During the interactive dialogue thus far, the delegation had not provided substantive responses to the repeated requests for clarification on allegations and reports from various sources about serious, massive and persistent violations of economic, social and cultural rights, both in the occupied territories and within the territory of the Russian Federation. In the absence of a substantive response to those issues, the Committee would be justified in potentially considering the allegations to be true.

26. The Committee would therefore welcome the delegation's comments on the allegations of deliberate and indiscriminate destruction of essential civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and electrical and water networks, in conflict zones. The delegation might also comment further on the issue of the forced transfer of Ukrainian children, their placement in institutions, the erasure of their cultural and linguistic identity, and their forced re-education. The Committee was also particularly concerned about allegations that high-level officials of the State Party, including the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and the President, might be implicated in the commission of war crimes – the illegal deportation and transfer of children from the occupied territories of Ukraine to the Russian Federation – in respect of which international arrest warrants had been issued by the International Criminal Court.

27. Other issues of concern included the use of coercion and threats to force civilian workers to continue their duties under an occupying administration, particularly in high-risk sectors such as nuclear energy, emergency services, prisons and healthcare, and the abolition of Ukrainian language teaching, the closure of schools, the imposition of rewritten historical narratives, the persecution of teachers and educational officials, and the systematic exclusion of ethnic minorities.

28. **Ms. Pérez** (Country Task Force) said that it would be interesting to learn what the State Party was doing to combat so-called honour crimes, forced marriages and community reprisals in the North Caucasus. It would also be useful to know whether the State Party conducted time use surveys to ascertain how unpaid domestic labour was shared in households. She would appreciate information on the legal remedies available to Ukrainian families who were subjected to forced evictions and whose properties were subsequently declared abandoned. She would also like to know whether the State Party had data on investment in healthcare as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) and whether relevant healthcare indicators were published. She would be interested to learn whether female genital mutilation continued to be performed in the North Caucasus and what measures had been taken to prohibit and punish the practice and what was being done to close the considerable gap in life expectancy between men and women.

29. **Mr. Palmisano** said that he would appreciate information on any planned measures to reduce the very high rate of institutionalization of children with disabilities in the Russian Federation, a practice that was contrary to article 10 (3) of the Covenant, as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. He would also appreciate details of how and to what extent the right to health for detained persons and political prisoners was effectively guaranteed throughout the Russian Federation, and in Crimea.

30. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would be interested to know more about the obstacles to voluntary registration in the register of Indigenous Peoples. He would also like to know how many of the territories of traditional resource use were operational, what plans were in place to make others operational, and how problems in access to fishing rights were addressed.

31. In view of the State Party's ageing population, he wondered how the State Party intended to approach the question of social payments to older persons. Lastly, he wished to know how the State Party reconciled its strong commitment to the protection of children's rights and the right to health in the Russian Federation with its bombing of civilian facilities in Ukraine that were full of children, including hospitals and kindergartens.

32. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the successor to the National Environment Project was the National Environmental Well-being Project for the period

2025–2030, which had been adopted in January 2025. The main focus of the new project was to reduce overall emissions of hazardous pollutants in 29 cities, while providing accessible public information on the main areas of environmental monitoring. The project also included a component for the training of specialists for protected areas, including regions of the Russian Federation such as the Donetsk People's Republic, the Luhansk People's Republic, Kherson Oblast and Zaporizhzhia Oblast.

33. In 2023, a socioeconomic development programme for Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts had been adopted, which involved the renovation of housing, the upgrading of community facilities and transport infrastructure and the development of the social sphere and the achievement by those reunified regions of the average Russian quality of life indicators by 2030 through an increase in business activity and direct State support from the federal budget.

34. With regard to climate change, there had been some positive developments from the Russian perspective, including the fact that many regions in the Far North were increasing their agricultural growing season, and there was a longer season for shipping in the Northern Sea Route. A set of measures had been adopted to adapt to climate change, and mid-term and long-term plans were in place for their implementation.

35. There was 100 per cent pension coverage in the Russian Federation, meaning that all older persons were entitled to a pension. Persons who had not worked also received a pension, but the pensionable age was five years higher than for those who had worked. Pensioners were allowed to continue working while in receipt of their pension. Pensioners with disabilities were entitled to both their pension and the monthly disability benefit. Sufficient resources were available from the receipt of insurance contributions to the Pension and Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation (the Social Fund of Russia) to meet all obligations towards older persons. Pensions were indexed at a level no lower than inflation. The long-term care system covered free assistance for older persons and persons with disabilities who needed ongoing care. Training was also available for relatives, who could now be paid for their caregiving duties.

36. With regard to the implementation of the Covenant in the regions reunited with the Russian Federation under the Russian Constitution, including the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and Kherson Oblast, the legislation of the Russian Federation was implemented in full in those regions, including in relation to pensions and social care, and all of the same legal regimes that existed in other constituent entities of the Russian Federation applied.

37. It had been necessary to evacuate children from the conflict zone. A comprehensive reply had already been provided on that point, and all evacuation measures had been in compliance with both international humanitarian law and the Covenant. With regard to allegations of forced labour in certain areas, it must be borne in mind that forced labour was prohibited under Russian criminal law and was thus not practised by any employers, who would not wish to face criminal liability. Various mechanisms such as labour inspections were in place, including in the newly reunified regions, and in the event that a case of forced labour did come to light it would be investigated.

38. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that any difficulties faced by persons belonging to Indigenous Peoples in being added to the register of numerically small Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East were not due to administrative or legal obstacles, as the person simply had to self-identify as being an Indigenous person in order to be included. Incomplete documentation was not a barrier, as the agency administering the register did not verify the information provided by applicants. Having said that, the fact that a large volume of people had had to be registered in a short space of time had given rise to some technical difficulties. Individuals could submit their applications at one of the multifunctional centres available in each region.

39. Some 9 million km² of land in the Russian Federation was recognized as traditional land; of that land, 2 million km² was designated for traditional nature use, in respect of which a stricter legal regime applied. Complex mechanisms, including financial mechanisms, were required given the broad rights enjoyed by Indigenous Peoples. In one region where half of all Russian oil was extracted, a quarter of that land fell under the strictest category of

protection, which meant that no oil or gas facilities could be established there without the consent of every affected family. Any gaps in the regime for traditional lands were explained by the sheer size of the land mass in question. Traditional hunting and fishing by Indigenous Peoples was recognized as a separate category of use of natural resources and accorded legal priority. There could be some restrictions on access by Indigenous Peoples to certain valuable species of fish that were under threat. In recent years, Constitutional Court and Supreme Court rulings had broadened the interpretation of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and required the reform of relevant legislation to remove administrative barriers.

40. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that pregnant women were entitled to 70 days of maternity leave before the birth and 70 days after, all on full pay. Social insurance covered loss of earning during maternity leave, calculated based on the average income, until the child was 18 months old. Under labour legislation, either parent could take parental leave until the child was 3 years old, although that must be taken as unpaid leave once the child was 18 months old.

41. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, in recent years, overall spending on healthcare had amounted to approximately 3.5 per cent of GDP. With regard to female genital mutilation, the Ministry of Health had spoken out many times in international forums against that and other harmful traditional practices, including in some regions of the North Caucasus. Since the practice was illegal and not on the list of permitted medical services, there were no official data on the number of procedures performed. By law, in cases where harm to the health of patients appeared to result from illegal activity, a report must be submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

42. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the delegation would provide written information on children with disabilities. More than 110 social organizations for persons with different types of disabilities ensured that such children were properly cared for in institutions, where they were placed only on a voluntary basis by their parents.

43. **Mr. Caunhye** (Country Task Force) said that he would be grateful for disaggregated data on the progress achieved in terms of the literacy and the school enrolment, attendance and completion of children from ethnic and religious minorities, including Roma children and children from the numerically small Indigenous Peoples. He would be interested to know what measures had been taken to address the decline in school enrolment and completion in rural and remote areas, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and among marginalized and disadvantaged population groups, including Roma, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities. It would be useful to know what safeguards had been put in place to protect LGBTQI children and other children from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds from harassment, stigmatization or discrimination in the school environment.

44. In the light of statistics suggesting that most children with disabilities were excluded from mainstream education and placed in segregated institutions, he wished to know what steps had been taken to put an end to the institutionalization of children with disabilities and to ensure inclusive education. He wondered how the State Party ensured that asylum-seekers, stateless children and children of foreign nationals were not denied access to schooling because they could not meet administrative requirements, such as providing proof of registration of place of residence, or because they lacked knowledge of the Russian language.

45. The militarization of education in the occupied territories was a major concern. The Committee had received reports that the occupying authorities had introduced educational programmes and policies that promoted military training, war propaganda and the enlistment of Ukrainian children in military service; that the Russian curriculum had been imposed in place of the Ukrainian curriculum, and that the study of the Ukrainian language in schools had been discontinued. He therefore wished to know whether the State Party would amend the curriculum so that it did not militarize education, glorify war or seek to erase Ukrainian identity and culture, and ensure that schools did not indoctrinate children or prepare them for military enlistment. It would be interesting to know what was being done to ensure that Ukrainian children in the occupied territories had free access to Ukrainian online education programmes without harassment or fear of reprisals. He wondered what steps the State Party, as the occupying Power, had taken to effectively guarantee the rights of Ukrainians to education and to take part in cultural life, as enshrined in the Covenant.

46. Furthermore, he would be interested to know what steps had been taken to protect educational infrastructure, cultural sites and monuments and to prevent the expropriation of Ukrainian cultural artefacts or objects in the occupied territories. Information on such cases, including on the restitution, reparation or other remedies provided, would be welcome.

47. The Committee would appreciate information on the measures that had been taken, such as the provision of adapted curricula, educational materials and suitably qualified teachers, so that Indigenous and ethnic minority children could receive an education in their mother tongue. Information might also be provided on mechanisms to guarantee artistic expression free from censorship and other forms of interference. It would be interesting to hear how artists, singers, musicians, authors, scientists and artists were protected from harassment, in the light of reports that some of them had been deprived of their incomes for expressing views critical of the Government.

48. In the area of scientific research and technological progress, he would like to know what safeguards were in place to prevent the use of emerging technologies – particularly in the areas of artificial intelligence, surveillance and biotechnology – for purposes incompatible with the protection of human rights, privacy and dignity. It would be useful to know what measures had been taken to guarantee academic freedom and the independence of scientific and academic research and to protect researchers and academics from reprisals or ideological interference. He wondered how the State Party ensured the equitable enjoyment of the benefits of scientific progress, including, in particular, for people living in rural and remote areas, people living in conflict-affected regions, and Indigenous persons. What steps had been taken to ensure affordable access to the Internet for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups?

49. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Constitution of the Russian Federation enshrined free basic general education. Access to preschool, primary and secondary general education was universal. In respect of literacy, the Russian Federation participated in the Programme of International Student Assessment and had a national system for assessing the quality of education. According to international rankings, the Russian Federation scored highly in literacy, while Russian pupils often won international competitions in science and the humanities. The Russian education system was designed to ensure that all citizens, including children in rural, remote and hard-to-reach areas and territories, had access to education. Small, under-enrolled schools and so-called nomadic schools, accompanied by specialized teacher training programmes and support measures, had been established to provide education for Indigenous Peoples in remote areas. The Government had taken appropriate measures, including engagement with families, to increase the school enrolment of Roma children. In the 2023/24 school year, about 50,000 Roma students had been enrolled in school – a figure that was gradually rising.

50. The principle of inclusive education had been applied in the Russian Federation for at least 15 years. Educational programmes were adapted in accordance with the child's capabilities and the decisions of the relevant commission to assess the child's developmental, psychological, and educational needs – such as the provision of a tutor or personal assistant – in order to study. The country had many educational institutions for children with disabilities who could not receive an inclusive education. Parents could also choose for their children to be educated at home. The relevant law provided a comprehensive range of options for the education of children with disabilities.

51. The Federal Act on Education stated that foreign nationals enjoyed the same right to education as Russian citizens: there were no restrictions related to registration of place of residence. Children who lived in the vicinity of the educational institution were usually given priority in terms of enrolment, but that did not preclude the enrolment of other children. The purpose of the requirement for foreign nationals to sit a Russian language test prior to enrolment was to determine the child's level of Russian and ensure that he or she had sufficient knowledge of the language to be able to follow the curriculum. Children who failed the test would be offered a preparatory course. Tests were designed to be simple enough for children to pass with even a minimal knowledge of Russian. For example, in the test for enrolment in the first grade, children were asked to say their name and where they lived, and to describe what they could see in a picture.

52. In accordance with the obligations of the Russian Federation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, children were prohibited from serving in the military or participating in armed conflicts. In some specialized schools, known as Suvorov and Nakhimov schools, cadets studied the system and principles of military service in addition to the general educational curriculum. Enrolment in such schools was voluntary and cadets did not participate in military action. Upon completion of their studies, they could join the armed forces or law enforcement or choose another path.

53. On 1 September 2025, a new school year had commenced in over 2,600 education institutions in the territories that had been reunited with the Russian Federation – the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics and the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts. Some 92 per cent of those schools were carrying out activities with children in attendance and 8 per cent were teaching online. Some 421,000 children were enrolled in the schools, including 25,300 who had entered the first grade. The authorities had worked extensively to prepare for the school year, including by repairing and renovating more than 300 school buildings. Children attending school in the reunited territories enjoyed the same guarantees that existed elsewhere in the territory of the Russian Federation.

54. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Constitution guaranteed the right of everyone to receive free higher education on a competitive basis. The Federal Act on Education required the State to fund 800 higher education places per 10,000 individuals aged between 17 and 30 years, although, in practice, more State-funded places were made available each year. In 2025/26 academic year, the State had budgeted for a total of 592,000 places, while an additional 29,600 places had been created for the reunited territories. State-funded places were distributed throughout the country: 76 per cent of them had been allocated for regions other than Moscow and Saint Petersburg. In addition, quotas had been set for the allocation of free places to persons with disabilities, orphans, persons who had been wounded during military service and persons belonging to numerically small Indigenous Peoples. More than 39,000 students with disabilities were currently enrolled in higher education institutions; over half of them obtained employment after completing their studies.

55. The laws of the Russian Federation recognized the principle of freedom of scientific activity and the right of access to academic and technical information, except in certain cases connected with State security. Legislative provisions established standards for the use of artificial intelligence and provided for civil liability in the event of its unjustified or harmful use. The improper or dishonest use of personal data without the consent of the data subject, including for artificial intelligence purposes, was a criminal offence.

56. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said he wished to emphasize that the State funding of higher education places meant that the students who were offered those places received higher education free of charge. One of the Government’s priorities was the sustainable development of infrastructure in rural areas, with particular importance attached to the digitalization of rural economy. There had been significant investment in telecommunications. In 2023, 45,000 schools, half of which were in rural locations, had been equipped with high-speed Internet.

57. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation ensured the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations. State authorities at all levels prioritized the protection of cultural heritage sites. Cultural heritage sites located in the regions that had historically been returned received State protection from the moment they rejoined the Russian Federation.

58. The Constitution also enshrined the freedom of literary expression and other types of creative activity. The State provided support for theatre, music, circus and other arts under a federal project for creative professionals. Artists were encouraged to participate in competitions at the local, regional and international levels. Inclusive “creativity labs” had been developed to allow children with disabilities and persons with special needs to participate in creative projects.

59. **Mr. Caunhye** said that he would be grateful for any information concerning measures to protect disadvantaged and marginalized children from stigmatization, harassment and

discrimination at school. He was keen to know how the State Party intended to remove militarized content from the school curriculum; ensure that the Ukrainian language could be used in schools in the occupied territories; and provide native language teaching and educational materials, both in the occupied territories and for Indigenous Peoples. He would welcome further information on measures to ensure the freedom of artistic expression from censorship and other forms of interference.

60. The Committee had received disturbing reports that current policies were leading to the extinction of Indigenous languages, a trend marked by declines in numbers of native speakers, the cessation of educational instruction in those languages and a steep fall in the number of teachers. It would be helpful to know what was being done to reverse the trend and to ensure the preservation of Indigenous and other linguistic heritage. Lastly, he would appreciate information on safeguards to prevent the misuse of emerging technologies in the areas of surveillance and biotechnology.

61. **Ms. Chen** said that she would welcome further information on native language education for Indigenous Peoples and the provision of humanitarian food aid.

62. **Mr. Bouzid** said that it would be useful to receive further information on the State quota for the enrolment of foreign students in Russian universities, including the selection criteria, the number of foreign students currently enrolled and their nationalities.

63. **Ms. Rossi** said that she wished to know what sociocultural measures were being implemented to eliminate prejudice, stigmatization, hate speech, exclusion and violence against LGBTQI+ persons, to promote their participation in cultural life and to ensure their access to healthcare, including identity-affirming therapies, on an equal basis and without discrimination of any kind.

64. She would appreciate detailed information on the procedures for obtaining the consent of Indigenous communities in relation to hydrocarbon, mining and other projects on their territories. She wished to know whether those procedures respected the principles of free, prior and informed consent and whether reparation and restitution were provided to communities whose territories had been contaminated by extractive activities.

65. She would welcome information on any follow-up given to the recommendations made in the Committee's previous concluding observations (E/C.12/RUS/CO/6) regarding the decriminalization of drug possession for personal consumption and the delegation's comments on reports that certain organizations providing HIV-related harm reduction services had been declared "undesirable" and prohibited.

66. **Ms. Lee** said that she would be grateful for an explanation of the reduced publication of socioeconomic data by the Federal State Statistics Service and information on measures taken to ensure the availability, accessibility and transparency of the aggregated statistical data required to monitor economic, social and cultural rights. She would also welcome the delegation's comments on reports of widespread censorship, including restrictions on global search engines, increasing content bans on instant messaging applications and fines imposed for searching prohibited materials online.

67. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would appreciate further disaggregated data on registered territories of traditional resource use. He would also appreciate the delegation's comments on reports that migrant workers from Central Asia were being replaced by workers from other regions. It would also be useful to receive further information on how State revenues could be sustained and budgetary adjustments managed given the country's ageing population.

68. **Ms. Pérez** said that she wished to learn about the State Party's plans for investment in scientific research and about the availability and accessibility of emergency contraceptives.

69. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that children aged 7 to 10 received two free school meals every day. There was no issue with discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children in schools, because all children were protected from bullying and harassment by peers or teachers. There was a system in place, including mediation and conciliation, to prevent such incidents. Starting in 2025, the basics of security and defence of the homeland were taught in schools once a week. Children were taught how

to behave in emergencies, how to protect their own lives and how the State was protected internally, by law enforcement, and externally, by the armed forces. Children and their parents could access online lessons without any hindrance, using information technology resources abroad.

70. With regard to teaching in the Ukrainian language, in the newly reunified territories, Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts, the legal system of the Russian Federation applied, and throughout the Federation, the teaching language was Russian. However, as Ukrainian was the mother tongue of many people there and throughout central Russia, it could be studied as an additional subject, like other languages. The school system supported the study of the native languages of Indigenous Peoples, including rare languages spoken by very few people. The education system included 338 working programmes on native languages, including the Chukchi language, with relevant textbooks.

71. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that about 380,000 foreign students were currently studying in the country. By the end of the 2025 enrolment period, that number was expected to rise to 410,000 through the addition of 30,000 foreign students enrolled through the quota system.

72. There were several ways in which foreign students were selected to study in the Russian Federation through the quota system. Participating countries could put forward the best available candidates, or selection could be carried out through the Federal Agency for Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Diaspora and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo). Quota students were given grants that covered not only tuition but also travel and other relocation expenses. The aim was to continue increasing the number of foreign students, with a specific instruction from the President to raise the number to 500,000 individuals.

73. In addition to budget allocations for scientific research, various funding mechanisms were used, including partnerships with major industrial corporations and businesses. Under the "Priority 2030" programme of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, high performing engineering graduates were trained for corporate needs, supported in their research and encouraged to implement their results in practice. Currently, more than 800 billion roubles were allocated annually to scientific research, and that sum was being increased on a regular basis.

74. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the State ensured the protection of health regardless of gender, social condition, illness or belief and guaranteed individuals protection from any form of discrimination, including on the basis of illness. There were no restrictions on access to medical services, including for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

75. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the disappearance of languages spoken by national minorities was a transborder issue linked to the small size of such populations and their way of life, with some small groups living in areas spanning thousands of square kilometres. Such conditions, combined with the limited demographic and academic potential of the languages themselves, made preservation difficult. Specific efforts had been made in respect of small Indigenous Peoples. All of their languages had a written form, created over the past 50 years through State programmes. The federal policy on languages adopted in 2024 included a special section on Indigenous languages and work was under way on a federal law on languages. The Russian Federation was one of the few countries to have created a State authority to manage the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, under which 700 events were planned.

76. Concerns about the decline in the number of teachers of Indigenous languages were based on alternative reports, which were not obliged to provide sources and therefore had to be verified. Annual monitoring of the preservation of languages was conducted in the Russian Federation; the results were public and open to verification. For example, during the 2025 school year, 64 subjects would be taught in 76 different languages. In 25 per cent of all preschool and school facilities, pupils studied the languages of the peoples of Russia. The number of teachers of native tongues had risen from 23,726 in 2023 to 25,598 in 2025, and in additional education, the number had grown from 573 to 1,048. While individual languages

showed variations, the overall dynamics and trends were positive. Official monitoring showed that there were 2,300 media outlets or publications in native languages and about 130 radio or television stations.

77. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the closure of non-profit organizations was an exceptional measure that was applied only on legal grounds in cases of serious or repeated violations of Russian law. If irregularities were identified that conflicted with an organization's charter, the Ministry of Justice or the public prosecution service would first issue a warning and require the violations to be remedied. An organization could only be dissolved after receiving more than two such written warnings, and even then solely by a court decision. The procedure applied regardless of the organization's field of activity, and full legal safeguards were in place.

78. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, with regard to allegations that artists had been deprived of income for criticizing the Government, Russian legislation provided for administrative penalties and criminal liability not for criticism, but for discrediting the actions of the armed forces. However, no economic sanctions were imposed. In some cases, individuals whose actions contravened the law chose to leave the Russian Federation to avoid punishment, thereby depriving themselves of the opportunity to earn income in the country.

79. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, by early October, the Government would submit to the State Duma the new federal budget and the budget of the social fund. The plans covered a three-year period, with sufficient resources allocated to meet all needs in the education sector and to fulfil all social obligations. The main source of revenue for the insurance system was insurance contributions. The law also provided for national funding in the form of State budget subsidies, although in practice insurance contributions usually sufficed.

80. Migrants from Central Asian countries could enter the Russian Federation without a visa. To work legally, they were required to purchase a work patent and then secure employment; if those conditions were met, there were no further obstacles. Many, however, chose to work illegally. Efforts were under way to regularize such employment, but since stricter legalization requirements were now in force, many Central Asian migrants found it more advantageous to seek work in other countries. No other factors explained their decision to leave.

81. **Mr. Hennebel** said that he wished to thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for its active and committed participation in the dialogue and for the information and clarifications it had shared. He also welcomed the sustained participation of different actors, including civil society, which had provided important reports that had helped the Committee to better understand the situation in the country. He hoped that the dialogue and the ensuing recommendations would help the State Party to strengthen in tangible ways the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights across all its territory and for all persons concerned.

82. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Russian authorities would continue to make efforts to improve the legislative framework and practice in implementing the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee's recommendations would be carefully studied.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.