



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2521st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 26 April 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

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

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Twenty-third periodic report of Finland (continued) (CERD/C/FIN/23;
CERD/C/FIN/Q/23)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Finland took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Leikas** (Finnish Human Rights Centre) said that the alternative reports submitted to the Committee by, among others, the Finnish Human Rights Centre, which was part of the national human rights institution of Finland, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and several civil society organizations, had highlighted the same recurring issues, namely hate speech and discrimination, the rights and treatment of foreigners and minority groups, and the status and rights of the Sami peoples. Of those issues, the growing phenomenon of hate speech in political discourse and online was at once the most visible and the most disturbing. Although laudable measures had been taken by the Government, including through enhancing police training and police activities to tackle hate crime and providing funding for 14 local projects targeting hate speech, the phenomenon's prevalence and effects continued to increase. Discrimination, too, was becoming more widespread in Finnish society and, notwithstanding the creation of equality and non-discrimination monitoring mechanisms, there were concerns that insufficient funding was being provided to address the problem.

3. The impact of changes to policies and legal provisions regarding refugees, asylum seekers and migrants had not been fully considered. Indeed, those changes had far-reaching ramifications, effectively limiting unaccompanied minors' and undocumented migrants' rights and reducing the services available to them, as well as having repercussions for family reunification and the asylum process in general. The status and definition of the Sami peoples and the lack of an appropriate consultation procedure were also causes for concern, since they had an adverse effect on the image and livelihoods of the Sami and on neighbourly relations in northern Finland. Although various related legislative amendments were under way, in many cases the rights of those peoples to be consulted on matters relating to them had been partially or even completely disregarded.

4. Human rights education for all was critical to enhancing social inclusion and preventing hatred. While human rights education had been incorporated into the national school curriculum, further resources were needed to increase knowledge of human rights and ensure that human rights education was available at all levels of education and for all professions.

5. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland), replying to questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting, said that the country's common core document was in the final stages of being updated, in line with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, and would be submitted to the Committee in due course. Within the long-established procedure for preparing periodic reports, civil society organizations were invited to submit written information, comment on draft reports and take part in public discussions on the content of those reports. In view of the strict word limits introduced as part of the treaty body strengthening process, however, the Government was increasingly encouraging civil society and other stakeholders to submit reports directly to the treaty bodies to better ensure that their views were heard.

6. Every government ministry had a focal point who also served as a member of the Network of Contact Persons for Fundamental and Human Rights, which additionally comprised representatives of, among others, the Finnish Human Rights Centre and the Parliamentary Ombudsman. As well as providing more systematic monitoring of the human rights situation in Finland, the Network contributed to strengthening coordination and cooperation between ministries, improving information sharing and enhancing the public discourse on fundamental human rights issues. The Network had also drafted the recently adopted Second National Action Plan on Fundamental Human Rights for the period 2017-2019 and would be following up on its implementation.

7. As explained in paragraph 4 of the periodic report of Finland (CERD/C/FIN/23), official statistics on the composition of the population were drawn from censuses and electoral rolls, which collected data regarding nationality, language and country of birth or country of parental origin, rather than ethnicity. Data on the Sami people, for example, were based on the number of Sami persons who had registered to vote or who had identified themselves as speakers of the Sami language in the population census. Data on the Roma people were gathered and assessed in close collaboration with that community. Persons of African descent was not a concept or category used by the Government, and thus the data available in that regard was on the basis of country of origin or language.

8. The Government's position that ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was not expedient had not altered, since migrant workers had the same rights as other immigrants under the Finnish Constitution and were protected by the human rights conventions already ratified by Finland as well as by Finnish and European Union social security legislation and bilateral agreements.

9. Under the special, autonomous status of the Åland Islands, which was summarized in paragraphs 12-16 of the periodic report, islanders enjoyed the right to keep their Swedish language and strong cultural identity. Since Swedish was the only official language, one of the main challenges was to maintain sufficient Swedish language proficiency in all fields of public administration on the islands. In that connection, the information regarding threats against Swedish speakers, as referred to in paragraph 40 of the report, related only to the mainland, not to the Åland Islands. As to the Karelian language, which had official status as a non-regional national minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, approximately 5,000 persons in Finland identified that language as their mother tongue, while a further 25,000 spoke it to a lesser extent. The Ministry of Education and Culture was launching a programme aimed at reviving the Karelian language and culture, and a joint Finno-Russian task force had been set up to develop a common written form of the language, which was crucial for its revival and long-term survival.

10. The Government recognized that the impact of climate change was likely to be felt soonest in northern Finland, meaning that the Sami people would be the first to experience its effects in Finland. Promoting the rights of indigenous peoples was central to the Government's policies on Arctic areas. By way of example, the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022 recognized the vulnerability of the Sami to climate change, and Lapland had its own climate strategy, which had been drawn up in conjunction with all stakeholders. The Sami Parliament was also represented on the Government's Arctic Advisory Board, which had drafted its 2016 strategy on the Arctic and climate change. In addition, Finland was due to assume its two-year term as chair of the Arctic Council in May 2017, with one of its priority themes being climate change. The Sami Parliament was not only actively involved in that Council, but was also represented on Finnish delegations to United Nations climate negotiations and for issues relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A representative of the Sami Parliament was also participating in the development of the United Nations Platform for Indigenous and Local Community Climate Action. Lastly, the Finnish Government had been working tirelessly since the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples to negotiate a draft resolution aimed at enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples within the United Nations system. As things stood, for example, the Sami Parliament did not have the right to participate independently in the Human Rights Council, and the resolution sought to change that.

11. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that the mandate of the new Non-Discrimination Ombudsman was broader than that of the earlier Ombudsman for Minorities, since it conferred responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the 2015 Non-Discrimination Act and, thus, dealing with discrimination on all grounds. In 2015, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman had received 496 complaints of discrimination, 203 of which had related to discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin. The National Discrimination and Equality Tribunal had begun operating in September 2015 and, in 2016, had received 70 discrimination cases, only 7 of which had related to ethnic origin. Both the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the National Discrimination and Equality Tribunal worked in close cooperation with, but independently of, the Ministry of Justice. While it was true

that the Tribunal could not award compensation — since claims for compensation had to be made through the district courts — it could issue conditional fines. In that connection, 14 claims for compensation under the Non-Discrimination Act had been filed in 2016. The only data available regarding cases of work-based discrimination related to the occupational safety and health unit in southern Finland, which, in 2016, had received a total of 109 complaints of discrimination, 13 of which had related to ethnic origin or nationality, and had conducted 93 labour inspections.

12. An independent impact assessment of the First National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights had been commissioned by the Government. Among other things, it had found that it was actually very difficult to measure the outcomes of individual projects under that Action Plan, even if they had specific indicators. The assessment's findings had also been used as the basis for drafting the Second National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights.

13. Regarding hate speech and hate crime, as things stood, it was only possible to obtain statistical data in relation to prosecutions of certain specific offences, such as incitement to hatred. There were other limitations to the search results, such as the fact that the system only returned details of the most serious instances of an offence and was not able to show whether an aggravating factor, such as a racial motive, had been taken into account to increase a perpetrator's sentence. By way of example, the data for 2016 indicated that there had been five instances of the offence of incitement to hatred, although it was possible that there had been others. The data system was, however, currently being revised to pave the way for more comprehensive data in the years to come.

14. Training for prosecutors and judges regarding hate speech and discrimination had been carried out, and further training was in the pipeline. The Prosecutor General was also preparing a two-day training programme on hate crime and hate speech for prosecutors, law enforcement officials and judges, to be held on an annual basis. In addition, Finland was taking part in a European Union project aimed at increasing the capacity of municipal police to identify the signs of, and take action against, different forms of hate crime and intolerance.

15. **Ms. Mankinen** (Finland) said that in September 2016 the Government had allocated €15 million in funding to help the police combat hate speech and hate crime. All 11 police departments in the country had recruited police officers specifically for tackling online hate speech, thereby strengthening policing of the Internet and virtual communities. In similar vein, the National Bureau of Investigation had hired five new intelligence experts to investigate online hate speech and a special police investigation team had also been created in Helsinki. The offences of hate crime and illegal hate speech could be prosecuted *ex officio* and the underlying motives for the hate crime were entered in the police database. National statistics on hate crime were compiled on the basis of complaints made to the police. In 2015, 1,250 hate crime offences had been reported, a 50 per cent increase on the previous year. Some 40 per cent of those cases related to online hate speech. The rise in the number of cases was likely attributable to greater awareness of the issue and lower reporting thresholds rather than to the increase in asylum seekers. Promoting tolerance was now one of the basic elements of police training and the national police college had also developed a training programme on identifying hate crimes.

16. The police had investigated 16 cases of arson attacks against refugee reception centres as hate crimes, the most recent of which had occurred in February 2016. No links to organized right-wing extremist activity had been found. In that connection, in view of the increasingly high-profile nature of both right-wing and left-wing extremism in Finland, a national action plan for preventing violent extremism had been adopted in April 2016. Drafted and implemented in conjunction with NGOs and religious communities, it targeted all forms of extremism and contained measures to prevent and combat hate speech and hate crime. A report on extremist violence in Finland had been produced every year since 2013. An annual demonstration organized by anarchists was often the scene of violent confrontations between anarchists and neo-Nazi groups, for example. Anarchists also often participated in anti-racist demonstrations organized to counter anti-immigration protests and, although the vast majority of protestors held moderate views, the presence of the

extreme left wing and right wing at those rallies increased the risk of polarization and violence.

17. An action plan for the prevention of irregular migration for the period 2017-2020 had been adopted and included recommendations for the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman to share knowledge and best practices with the police so as to prevent ethnic profiling, which was prohibited.

18. **Mr. Rajanen** (Finland) said that the national core curricula from early childhood education up to vocational-level education had been updated to emphasize human rights and respect for human dignity. All schools were legally required to provide a safe learning environment and to safeguard pupils from violence and harassment. In addition to the “KiVa Koulu” anti-bullying programme, which had been used to good effect by 90 per cent of Finnish comprehensive schools and was summarized in paragraph 225 of the report, the Ministry of Education and Culture supported awareness-raising and counselling activities run by NGOs and other actors working to combat cyberbullying. Similarly, the Ministry was implementing an action plan to prevent hate speech and racism and to foster social inclusion aimed at improving the ability of teachers and other professionals working with children and young people to promote tolerance, equality, inclusion and multiculturalism.

19. The Action Plan for the Revival of the Sami Languages included measures to increase subsidies for Sami “language nests” and learning materials. Funding for teaching in Sami languages in Sami homeland areas was guaranteed by law, and a budget had also been provided for Sami-language education outside those areas. Furthermore, distance learning for Sami outside homeland areas was now also available. The Sami Education Institute provided vocational courses in subjects such as business, tourism and environmental studies to Sami pupils in homeland areas and promoted Sami culture. Similar measures had been taken to preserve the Roma language, which also had legal status as a language of instruction at primary, secondary and vocational levels and, since 85 per cent of Roma were living in municipalities in which the Roma language was the language of instruction, access to education was fairly good. Progress in preventing Roma pupils from leaving school early had been slow, however, although efforts had been made through promoting cooperation with parents.

20. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that, although the Nordic Saami Convention did not cover the Sami peoples in the Russian Federation, the working group responsible for monitoring its implementation was able to cooperate with a range of different actors, including with the representative organizations of Sami peoples in the Russian Federation. No decision had as yet been taken on how to proceed in the event that the Sami Parliament wished to propose amendments to, or, even, rejected, that Convention. In that connection, the Government intended to decide whether or not to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) later in 2017.

21. The Government planned to amend the Sami Parliament Act with a view to strengthening the Sami peoples’ right to participation and ensuring that the principle of free, prior and informed consent was always taken into account. The definition of the Sami peoples was a sensitive, challenging but important issue and one that needed to be approached in very close cooperation with the Sami Parliament.

22. The various State forestry and agriculture boards had already begun to take action with a view to strengthening Sami participation in the use and management of land and resources in Sami homeland areas, such as in fishing and reindeer husbandry. In that connection, while no decision had been taken as to whether to postpone the Teno Fishery Agreement, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was committed to paying special attention to the views of the Sami Parliament in order to protect the salmon stocks that were so integral to the livelihood of the Sami. Lastly, although the underlying causes of localized tensions in northern Finland were unclear, it was possible that uncertainty regarding the ratification of ILO Convention No. 169 and the creation of a definition of the Sami were contributory factors, for which reason it was necessary to find solutions to those challenges.

23. **Ms. Arrhenius** (Finland) said that the 2009 Roma Policy Programme had had a clear, positive impact on the situation of Roma people in Finland, most notably in the area

of education. Almost two thirds of respondents in a 2016 survey on the educational background of Roma persons had, for example, completed their basic education in comprehensive schools. Moreover, nearly half of all respondents had described themselves as having a positive attitude to education, which demonstrated that progress was being made. Efforts to preserve the Roma language, which was in danger of disappearing in Finland, included courses for university students wishing to become Roma language teachers and the funding of Roma immersion centres, or language nests. The housing situation for Roma people was generally good, except for problems in certain municipalities, and a new survey was being conducted in that regard. In addition, the National Institute for Health and Welfare was carrying out a study for 2017 and 2018 to determine the health, living conditions and ability to access services of Roma people in Finland. Employment of Roma persons was an area in which progress needed to be made, and many projects had been launched to offer Roma people guidance and support in relation to education, employment and entrepreneurship. Funding had also been provided for initiatives aimed at Roma women, older Roma persons and Roma migrants. Work was due to begin on a new Roma policy in late 2017, which was likely to include more specific, targeted issues, including in education and employment.

24. There had been no known cases of female genital mutilation in Finland. It was a criminal offence under the Criminal Code, as was taking a person abroad for the purposes of female genital mutilation. Recommendations for preventing female genital mutilation were contained in an action plan on sexual and reproductive health.

25. Lastly, in 2012, a wide-ranging study of 3,000 migrants hailing from Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Somalia had been carried out by the National Institute for Health and Welfare with a view to providing an overview of their health, education, employment, access to services and experience of discrimination or violence.

26. **Ms. Krüger** (Finland) noted that in 2015, there had been a huge surge in the number of asylum seekers, most of them of Iraqi, Afghan, Somali, Syrian and Albanian origin. As a result of the increase, the Government had introduced a number of policies to streamline its processing of asylum applications and had based such policies on its international human rights obligations, the Finnish Constitution and European Union legislation. Each application was assessed on the basis of a personal interview with the asylum seeker, documents provided by him or her and relevant, up-to-date information on the country of origin. The criteria for international protection were laid down in law and included whether the asylum seeker would be at risk of persecution or serious harm in the country of origin. Any asylum decision contained a judicial evaluation of the case and the grounds for the outcome. Unsuccessful applicants had the right to appeal their asylum decisions to the Administrative Court, which would take into account any changes in the situation of the asylum seeker or in the country of origin. Those who were not granted residence permits were required to leave Finland and provided with guidance and assistance for their voluntary return.

27. Since April 2016, residence permits had no longer been granted on humanitarian grounds. Humanitarian protection was a purely national category of international protection, as Finland had no obligations arising from international treaties or European Union legislation in that regard. Only 50 residence permits had been issued on humanitarian grounds in 2016 and 119 in 2015. Moreover, since July 2016, the income requirement for persons seeking residence permits on the basis of family ties had also applied to family members of persons who had been granted international protection, as the Government had wished to align its legislation with that of other European Union Member States. The Government considered that it was too soon to assess the impact of that change.

28. Asylum seekers had the right to receive free legal aid when their application was being processed or when appealing their asylum decision. The Public Legal Aid Office would assign a counsel, who was a public legal aid attorney, to the case; only in exceptional circumstances could a private advocate or attorney provide assistance.

29. With regard to the large number of Somalis residing in Finland, many Somali asylum seekers had arrived from the Russian Federation following the collapse of the

Soviet Union and been granted international protection. The number of Somali asylum seekers in Finland had remained high ever since, and many Somalis were also granted residence permits on the basis of family ties.

30. The Immigration 2020 Strategy sought to promote labour migration, improve employment opportunities for people from an immigrant background, pursue more successful integration policies, and provide international protection to those in need. With regard to the use of the term “aliens”, the title of the Aliens Act had not been amended since its enactment and was a literal translation of the Finnish word, which referred to persons who were not Finnish citizens. It was nevertheless desirable to update the term, as had already been suggested by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman.

31. As to statistics on the use of detention in Finland, a total of 953 persons had been placed in detention in 2016 and 286 in 2017 to date. The longest periods of detention in the two detention facilities in Finland had been 43.5 days and 14 days in 2016 and 36.2 days and 9 days in 2017.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

32. **Mr. Kut** (Country Rapporteur) asked why monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and not the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was considered a statutory, special task of the Human Rights Centre. He expressed concern that the new Non-Discrimination Act did not refer to skin colour or cover employment and asked whether the Government might consider amending the Act in that regard. He also asked how the Government would implement the Second National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights given that it lacked a budget, and ensure that it was assessed in an effective manner.

33. He said that the State party should develop a plan to improve the collection of data on racial violence and incitement to racial hatred. The fact that there were only a handful of court cases concerning racial discrimination might be the result of an absence of such discrimination, but it could also be due to a lack of prosecution or police investigation or even to the reluctance of victims to report such offences.

34. **Mr. Suomi** (Finland) said that the Promotion of Integration Act covered all persons residing in Finland with a valid residence permit. Immigrants were encouraged to maintain their language and culture, but could also receive Finnish and Swedish lessons in order to facilitate their familiarization with and integration into Finnish society. According to the findings of a government evaluation of its first integration programme, immigrants were in a relatively weak labour-market position due, inter alia, to their lack of language skills in Finnish and Swedish, their lack of networks, and the attitudes of employers. The Government was taking steps to prevent discrimination against immigrants and to promote their employment under various action plans and in cooperation with labour-market organizations. Diversity was also being promoted in the workplace and in communities through the establishment of a diversity charter.

35. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) said that, although a separate budget was not earmarked for the Second National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights, all 43 projects under the Action Plan were fully funded either through the Ministries or the European Union. The Human Rights Centre considered monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to be a statutory, special task on the basis of a requirement under article 33 of that Convention to that effect, but it also closely monitored the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. While Finland had not established a specific action plan as follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the issues covered by the Conference were addressed through various policy measures and the Second National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights. Moreover, Finland, as a Member State of the European Union, was represented in the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

36. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that the Non-Discrimination Act did in fact cover employment under section 2, which referred to private and public activities. The implementation of the Act was monitored by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the National Discrimination and Equality Tribunal, on the one hand, and by the occupational safety and health authorities, on the other. While the Act did not explicitly refer to skin colour, section 8 referred to “other personal characteristics”, an expression which had been interpreted broadly by the Tribunal.

37. Although the Government currently lacked statistics on racial violence and hate crimes, it was in the process of implementing a new data system for prosecutors and judges. In 2013, a discrimination monitoring group had commissioned a study on access to justice which had covered all forms of discrimination, including racism. Based on the findings of that study, training on the Non-Discrimination Act had been developed for prosecutors and judges in order to help them better identify cases of discrimination. The findings had also been presented to the working group that had prepared the new Non-Discrimination Act so that they could be taken into consideration.

38. **Ms. Mankinen** (Finland) said that there had been an increase in the number of reported hate crimes as a result of greater awareness of such crimes among the police, as well as efforts to streamline reporting procedures.

39. **The Chair** said that the Committee would welcome any statistics on that increase, as well as clarification on whether the Non-Discrimination Act covered the employment of domestic workers.

40. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, noting that various measures under the Action Plan for the Revival of the Sami Languages had yet to be implemented and lacked funding, asked when such measures would be implemented and whether a budget would be earmarked for that purpose. Turning to the Act on Metsähallitus (Finnish Forest and Park Service), he asked for clarification regarding the decision-making power of the Sami and whether their presence on advisory committees ensured their free, prior and informed consent. Lastly, he asked for data on the number of Sami in prison.

41. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that the Finnish Constitution referred to the right of the Sami to maintain and develop their own language and culture, but not to any land rights. Almost 2,000 Finns described Sami as their mother tongue, but Finns were not required to inform the authorities of their mother tongue, and some bilingual Sami listed their mother tongue as Finnish.

42. **Mr. Rajanen** (Finland) said that the Ministry of Education and Culture was responsible for the implementation of most of the measures under the Action Plan for the Revival of the Sami Languages and for its funding.

43. **Mr. Calí Tzay** asked whether the Government intended to earmark resources for the Action Plan, and not just for the Ministry of Culture and Education in general, and reiterated his request for data on the number of Sami in prison.

44. **Mr. Avtonomov** asked for clarification on whether Sami living outside their homeland were able to study their language at school.

45. **Mr. Rajanen** (Finland) said that funding the Action Plan for the Revival of the Sami Languages through the Ministry of Education and Culture was a reliable, flexible, effective way to finance its various projects. In fact, funding for Sami language nests and learning materials had increased. As to the instruction of the Sami language outside the Sami homeland, such instruction had been secured in various municipalities. Ninety-two foreign languages, including Romani, were taught in Finnish schools.

46. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that the question of who was Sami was a complex one and that a new interpretation of who constituted the Sami might have significant implications for the number of people registered with the Sami Parliament.

47. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) agreed that the question of who was Sami was a delicate one, as the Government had to respect people’s right to self-identify, as well as the way in which the Sami viewed themselves. The Government was actively addressing the issue and trying to strike the right balance.

48. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that the Government did not currently have any data on the number of Sami in prison, but it did have statistics on the number of foreigners in Finnish prisons. There had been an increase in the number of foreigners in prison in recent years, presumably due to the increase in the number of foreigners arriving in the country. Most such foreigners were Estonians and Russians, followed by Iraqis, and had been convicted of drug-related crimes. Prisoners were usually held in open facilities, rather than in solitary confinement, although some requested to be placed in isolation for fear of racism and right-wing radicalism.

49. **Mr. Marugán** asked for clarification on the number of relevant court cases under way and the number of decisions handed down; whether any sentences had been imposed or any compensation or damages awarded to the victims; whether the findings of inspections ever resulted in sanctions; whether prosecutors could initiate proceedings without the victims necessarily filing complaints; whether the increase in the number of hate crimes was linked to the Internet; and whether the Parliament had considered formally condemning hate speech.

50. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** asked what steps the State party was taking to address the lack of data on discrimination experienced by Sami women; to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and to commemorate people of African descent. He also requested further information on human trafficking and labour discrimination.

51. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) said that Finland was involved in the planning of an upcoming regional conference on people of African descent.

52. **Ms. Nyman** (Finland) said that the proceedings of the National Discrimination and Equality Tribunal were administrative and that while its decisions were as binding as court judgments, it could not impose penalties or award compensation. The employment-related cases heard by district courts, however, could result in compensation of approximately €5,000 for the victims. Occupational safety and health authorities conducted workplace inspections and issued recommendations, but handed any cases of a criminal nature over to the police.

53. There had been five cases of incitement to racial hatred in 2016, one in 2015, two in 2014, and four in 2013. The penalty for the perpetrators of such offences was often a fine, which took into account the income of the perpetrator, although one individual who had been extremely active in producing blogs inciting racial hatred had been given a prison sentence. As to the lack of prosecution of hate crimes, it sometimes happened that online hate speech was reported to the police, but the author could not be identified due to the use of a foreign server.

54. **Ms. Mankinen** (Finland) said that the Internet did not appear to be the reason for the rise in the number of hate crimes, as there had been an increase in such crimes both online and offline. As to the contrast between the number of crimes reported and the number of cases prosecuted, any prosecution would depend on the findings of a police investigation, an assessment by the prosecution and, ultimately, an assessment by the court.

55. **The Chair** said that the Committee would welcome the statistics requested by Mr. Marugán, as well as further information regarding the National Policy on Roma.

56. **Mr. Kut**, commending Finland on its good record of compliance with the Convention, thanked the Government for its continued cooperation in the fight to eliminate racial discrimination.

57. **Ms. Oinonen** (Finland) thanked the Committee for its pertinent questions and said that the Supreme Administrative Court had referred to the Committee's previous concluding observations on various occasions. The Government remained committed to achieving zero tolerance for racism and hoped that, by 2025, Finland would be a caring and safe country characterized by trust and mutual respect, in which people from all backgrounds participated in building society.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.