



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 103rd session

Summary record of the first part (public)** of the 2813th meeting

Held via videoconference on Monday, 19 April 2021, at 12.30 p.m. Central European Summer Time

Chair: Ms. Li

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* Reissued for technical reasons on 30 April 2021.

** The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CERD/C/SR.2813/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the 103rd session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

2. **Mr. Cissé-Gouro** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that he wished to begin by paying tribute to former Committee member Ms. Yemhelha Mint Mohamed, who had passed away in November 2020. Having joined the Committee in 2016, her contribution had been highly appreciated, including her particular attention to racial discrimination in the justice system. He welcomed Mr. Vadili Rayess, who had been designated by the Government of Mauritania to serve for the remainder of Ms. Mohamed's term.

3. He welcomed the Committee's decision to conduct its first online review of a State party's periodic report as yet another indication of the tireless efforts made by the Committee's membership since the onset of the coronavirus disease pandemic to avoid a protection gap by ensuring the business continuity of the treaty body system. The Office was committed to supporting the Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate, which had become even more necessary in the current global context of rising racism and racial discrimination. Unfortunately, the pandemic continued to highlight and deepen inequalities everywhere around the globe, especially for the most vulnerable, including persons of African descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. There were increasing reports of incidents of racial discrimination, stigmatization, racist hate speech and hate crimes, including against Asians and people of Asian descent.

4. He welcomed the development of vaccines and underscored the importance of ensuring that access to them was fair, non-discriminatory and inclusive, a point reflected in the statement issued by the Committee in 2020, Human Rights Council resolution 46/14 and two statements recently adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

5. Regarding the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 43/1 on the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers, the High Commissioner had held consultations with various stakeholders who had reported that victims and their families continued to encounter difficulties in their interactions with police and the judicial authorities. Specifically, the authorities had shown a lack of willingness to investigate violations of their rights, even in cases of murder. As a result, victims and their families often became distrustful of the criminal justice system and harboured feelings of injustice. The consultations had shown the need to pay greater attention to racial discrimination in law enforcement.

6. In her letter of 25 March 2021, the High Commissioner had drawn the attention of Member States to the consequences of their decisions regarding human resource allocations for the treaty bodies. Despite intensive advocacy for greater support, the General Assembly had not approved the request for additional posts for the processing of individual communications, which had recently increased in number by 80 per cent. Moreover, due to the recruitment freeze, the team supporting the Committee had been reduced in 2020, though it had continued its activities using its limited resources. It was still too early to say whether increases in staffing were in the offing, but he would keep the Committee informed of any developments in that regard.

Adoption of the agenda (CERD/C/103/1)

7. **The Chair** said that she wished to amend the agenda orally to include the approval of the appointment of Mr. Vadili Rayess in replacement of Ms. Mohamed. In the absence of any objection to that amendment, she took it that the Committee wished to adopt the agenda.

8. *It was so decided.*

Formal approval of the appointment to fill a vacancy

9. **The Chair** said that, in accordance with article 8 (5) (b) of the Convention and rule 13 (1) and (2) of the Committee's rules of procedure, the Government of Mauritania had nominated Mr. Vadili Rayess on 11 February to replace Ms. Mohamed. The secretariat had later transmitted Mr. Rayess's curriculum vitae to the Committee. No objections to the nomination had been raised. While the rules of procedure provided for a nomination to be approved by secret ballot, recent practice in the absence of objections had been to approve such nominations by consensus. As she saw no objections, she called on the Committee to approve the nomination of Mr. Rayess by consensus.

10. *It was so decided.*

The public part of the meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.