



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Ninety-first session

Summary record of the 2494th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 24 November 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

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* No summary record was issued for the 2493rd meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention
(continued)

Combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Uruguay
(CERD/C/URY/21-23 and CERD/C/URY/Q/21-23)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay), introducing the combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Uruguay (CERD/C/URY/21-23), said that despite their substantial contribution to her country's development, persons of African descent had historically been vulnerable to discrimination, and structural inequality persisted.
3. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the historically poor treatment of persons of African descent and indigenous peoples in Uruguay had gradually begun to improve over the second half of the twentieth century with the ratification of various international instruments and the adoption of legislation that provided for measures to combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination. However, a 2011 census had found that those actions had not improved the situation of persons of African descent; indeed, households comprising persons of African descent suffered greater levels of vulnerability and, as such, accessed cash transfer programmes to a greater extent than other households. Therefore, the Government had adopted Act No. 19122, which provided for affirmative action on their behalf in the public and private sectors.
4. The Implementing Committee for the Act, which comprised various government agencies, had drawn up a plan of action for 2015-2020 after consulting civil society. That Committee and the Civil Society Advisory Council worked jointly to refine and coordinate the activities carried out under the Act and had established working groups on three separate matters: the implementation of employment quotas, education and the organization of an Afrodescendants' Month. The working groups' activities included a campaign to raise awareness of the grants available for secondary education, particularly in areas with large Afrodescendent communities.
5. Awareness of the Act had been raised by means of a video and various publications. Steps were being taken to create a database of education grants and competitive examinations for public sector posts. Civil society organizations had provided awareness-raising and training on the Act's application for 20 per cent of the government agencies that were required to meet the 8 per cent employment quota for persons of African descent prescribed in the Act. Training and awareness days were also organized by civil society outside the capital. Accountability was ensured through an annual report by the National Office of the Civil Service and a dedicated section of the website of the Ministry of Social Development, www.mides.gub.uy/afrodescendencia, where users could access information relating to all aspects of the Act.
6. The Act had produced mixed results. The goal of ensuring that 8 per cent of educational grants were awarded to persons of African descent had been exceeded, with a substantial increase in the proportion of grants awarded to students of African descent at the secondary, university and postgraduate levels between 2011 and 2016, rising to almost 20 per cent at the secondary level and around a third among post-graduate students. Additionally, almost 7 per cent of participants in training courses organized by the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training were of African descent.
7. However, the employment quota had not been met, with slightly less than 3 per cent of State sector posts having been occupied by persons of African descent in 2015.

Nevertheless, they had represented 10 per cent of applicants for such posts in 2016. The National Office of the Civil Service had been granted the authority to convene a commission that would examine whether the application processes for State posts complied with the quotas imposed for vulnerable groups and ensure that sufficient financial resources had been allocated to them.

8. According to the 2011 census, that year slightly more than 8 per cent of Uruguayans had considered themselves to be of African descent, with almost 5 per cent deeming it to be their main ethnic identity. Five per cent had considered themselves to be indigenous, of whom around half had considered that to be their main ethnic identity. A household survey undertaken in 2014 had found that the percentage of individuals who considered themselves to be of African descent had risen to 11.5 per cent.

9. A working group had been set up to coordinate public policies aimed at persons of African descent, and its members included the Secretariat for Human Rights and the Unit for the Rights of Persons of African Descent of Montevideo City Council. The working group's first action had been to launch the International Decade for People of African Descent in Uruguay.

10. The National Public Education Administration was working to include the racial perspective in its student monitoring system and intervened in a timely manner to address dropout risks. Together with the Ministry of Social Development, the Administration had opened centres that promoted rights and addressed racial issues in schools, and its working group on racial equality had worked with the National Women's Institute to provide training on preventing and addressing racial discrimination in the classroom for teachers across the country, particularly those in areas with large Afrodescendent populations. That process had contributed to the creation of a teaching guide on issues affecting persons of African descent which would be distributed to teacher training establishments.

11. The Department of Women of African Descent monitored, and made recommendations to, public bodies and decision-makers regarding the inclusion of the racial dimension in public policies and in the country's various administrative registers, and the National Women's Institute had provided training on women of African descent for more than 4,000 public sector workers. Training had also been provided for police officers, thus improving access to justice. Montevideo City Council had housed 17 families of African descent as reparation for evictions carried out during the dictatorship; it had also allocated four plots of land to housing cooperatives serving the Afrodescendent community and had created a service that offered guidance on health care for ethnic minorities.

12. With input from civil society, an Afrodescendants' Month was organized in July of each year as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent. It aimed to highlight the problems facing persons of African descent and the action taken by the State and by civil society to remedy them. Past activities had included a debate on institutional racism and exhibitions of the work of craftswomen of African descent.

13. **Mr. Avtonomov** (Country Rapporteur) said that the State party's adoption of electronic government technology was commendable because it allowed for much broader participation in governance. The country's historically poor treatment of its indigenous peoples meant that it was unclear which indigenous communities were present within its borders; all groups should be identified so that their cultural needs could be met. However, understanding of the racial composition of the Uruguayan population had been improved by the recognition of indigenous peoples and persons of African descent in the 2011 census. He asked why 2016 had seen high levels of emigration from the country, despite its good economic performance.

14. He would appreciate knowing more about diversity among the indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants themselves: there were urban populations in Montevideo and rural

communities near the border with Brazil, and the latter presumably included immigrants from that country.

15. There appeared to be a literacy and employment gap between the majority of the population and Afrodescendants. The report made no mention of special measures to prevent Afrodescendent girls dropping out of school. One reason why they did so might be that they became mothers at a younger age than the rest of the population: reports indicated that, while 9 per cent of non-Afrodescendent girls aged 15 to 19 became mothers, the figure for Afrodescendent girls was 14.6 per cent. Special measures might take the form of evening classes or distance learning programmes to enable young mothers to continue their education. As to employment, it was not sufficient to merely proclaim a quota of posts to be set aside for Afrodescendants in public administration, for example; it was necessary to create the conditions to make that possible.

16. The figures emerging from the ethnic self-identification questions in the 2011 census required clarification as they added up to more than 100 per cent.

17. The illiteracy rate for the population aged over 15 had been 1.7 per cent in 2011. That was not high but it was important to aim at 0 per cent. He would appreciate a breakdown of that figure by ethnic group.

18. It was important to identify the lands traditionally occupied by indigenous communities. Given the genocide and forced evictions to which they had been subjected, that would be no easy task, but it would be a form of moral justice to designate those lands as ancestral lands. Most indigenous groups had lived in urban communities for decades, however; the State party should investigate their cultural needs in order to be in a position to satisfy them properly.

19. The report made no mention of cases of incitement to racial hatred or of hate speech, though the Committee had received a report of one conviction for incitement to hatred against Afrodescendants. He wondered whether the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code could be properly implemented given that the judiciary tended to view incitement to hatred as a lesser offence and not a crime that was internationally condemned. Efforts were needed to change attitudes in what were traditionally conservative circles.

20. The State party had been involved in regional efforts to enhance the protection of migrants and afford them greater opportunities in accordance with the Brasilia Declaration on the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons in the Americas, yet there were reports of labour discrimination against migrants in Uruguay. Bolivian women were said to be working in poor conditions in domestic service, with long workdays and no rest periods, and to endure abuse and ill-treatment; Peruvians working in the fishing sector had also been mentioned. Naturally, all cases of discrimination needed to be investigated, but he would like to know whether such cases were a common occurrence or isolated incidents. Given the numbers of Afrodescendants in the domestic labour sector, did Uruguay intend to become a party to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)?

21. He was grateful for the information contained in the State party's report on access to justice, which was guaranteed in part by the work of the Legal Advice Office of the University of the Republic. He would be interested to know how many advisers were available and how long members of the public needed to wait for a consultation. Might it be possible to bring in other NGOs, in order to ensure that most of those needing advice were able to obtain it? The areas covered might also be extended to include labour rights and consumer rights.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.

22. **Mr. Calí Tzay** asked what other indigenous peoples were recognized in Uruguay. The name Charrúa appeared to cover several indigenous groups. He would appreciate some information on the current situation regarding the sacred places of the Charrúa.

23. Given that Uruguay was one of the majority of States that had adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that Uruguay itself had an indigenous minority, he would like to know what political will existed in the State party to ratify the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), since that was the instrument that set the standard for legislation.

24. He noted that one of the tasks of the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination, established under Act No. 17817, was to make proposals on the conclusion of new extradition treaties, which appeared to have nothing to do with the matter covered by the Act. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on that provision.

25. According to paragraph 39 of the State party's report, Act No. 19122 established a quota of 8 per cent of posts in certain government departments and services to be set aside for persons of African descent. Even though the Act had been adopted relatively recently, he wondered if the delegation could provide any figures to indicate what progress had been made in that regard, as a token of its determination to combat racial discrimination. The report also referred, notably in paragraph 91, to research and teaching in educational institutions on the subject of Afrodescendants' contribution to Uruguayan culture. He would be interested to know of any studies that had been carried out on that subject; he would also like to know what contribution the indigenous peoples had made to Uruguayan culture.

26. **Mr. Kemal** said that he was encouraged by the special measures referred to in the delegation's introductory statement. He would be interested to know how the various items of legislation that had been adopted by the State party were being implemented. It was his understanding that there had been only one conviction under Act No. 17677 of 29 July 2003, on incitement to hatred, contempt or violence or the commission of such acts against certain persons: could that be correct? Given the strong emphasis in Uruguay on freedom of speech, he wondered how that concept was reconciled with the notion of hate speech; for example, how many persons had been punished for hate speech?

27. It was commendable that Afrodescendants, who accounted for some 9 per cent of the total population, received 19 per cent of the funds available for scholarships and technical training. He wondered, on the other hand, how members of indigenous groups fared in that regard. At one time they had constituted 100 per cent of the population but they now constituted only 5 per cent; they deserved a good deal of help.

28. During the consideration of its previous report, the State party had announced several housing programmes; he would like to know, particularly in respect of indigenous populations and Afrodescendants, how many had benefited from those programmes and how many were still homeless. Also at that session, Mr. Murillo Martínez had asked what percentage of the prison population were young people of African descent, to which the State party delegation had replied that it had no data. He would like to know if there were now any relevant data and what percentage of the prison population were of African descent or members of indigenous groups. He also wondered whether the police engaged in racial profiling of those groups and whether there were adequate safeguards in place.

29. Three important issues had been raised by NGOs. First, they noted that the State party had no definition of racial discrimination; the Committee considered that a definition was necessary. Secondly, they reported that Uruguay had good laws, but that they were not as effectively implemented as they ought to be. Thirdly, they said that progress was being

made towards obtaining disaggregated data on Afrodescendants, but not on members of indigenous peoples; he would like to know why that was.

30. **Mr. Marugán** said that the dialogue was moving in the right direction if the State party recognized that Afrodescendants were not only vulnerable but also discriminated against.

31. The 8 per cent quota for employment of Afrodescendants, to be achieved by affirmative action, was repeatedly mentioned in the documentation, but according to information dating from July 2016 representation of that group was only 2.7 per cent, and that was in fairly low-skilled jobs in the public sector. The law did not make provision for similar special measures in the private sector and no goals appeared to have been set. He would like to know what measures were being taken in that regard in the private sector, in what kind of companies and at what levels of skill.

32. There was a lack of continuity between education and employment. Special measures might be applied in employment but it was not clear how far they were also being applied in education. In 2008 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had recommended that the State party should reduce school dropout rates for Afrodescendant girls; what progress had been made in that regard? Information from NGOs indicated that dropout rates for that group, and indeed for girls from indigenous groups, were much higher than for the rest of the population. He would therefore like to know what special measures were planned to address that situation. Could the State party provide statistics on university attendance among Afrodescendants, indigenous peoples and immigrants?

33. Some of the figures regarding complaints of racial discrimination in employment were puzzling. If, as stated in the report, 21.5 per cent of women of African descent who worked for pay were engaged in domestic labour and the General Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security had access to those workers, why had there been only two complaints of racial discrimination and two of discrimination on grounds of nationality during the reporting period? Did the Labour Inspectorate actually function? What financial and human resources did it have?

34. The National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office appeared not to have received many complaints either, which made him wonder if there were problems of underreporting. What was the State party doing to encourage people to come forward by making it easier for complaints to be lodged?

35. The Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination had been established in part to receive and centralize information on racist behaviour and file legal complaints. According to the State party's report, 195 complaints had been received between 2008 and 2015, but it was not clear whether they fell under criminal or civil jurisdiction. He would like to know what the procedure was for dealing with such complaints: could citizens complain to the police, could NGOs bring complaints on behalf of a third party, and were the complaints then dealt with by the prosecution service? He would also like to know what sentences had been handed down during that period and whether any proceedings were currently under way.

36. Lastly, he would welcome the delegation's comments on reports from NGOs that Afrodescendent members of the LGBTI population suffered multiple discrimination.

37. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** said that the delegation was to be commended for an excellent report, which had been submitted late, though not excessively so. He had been interested to learn that Uruguay was a leader in e-government, but would welcome clarification of what that entailed for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the concept. He called attention to the strong influence that the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination,

Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had exerted on Latin America and the Caribbean, noting that Uruguay had taken a number of steps in response to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, including the creation of the Ethnicity and Race Unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

38. The adoption of Act No. 19122 of 2013, on norms to promote the participation of persons of African descent in the areas of education and employment, was a significant development that had transformed the official policy towards persons of African descent. While recognizing that the law was very recent and information on its impact was limited, he would be grateful if the delegation could nonetheless circulate the statistics it had at its disposal. The State party should be commended for its approach to the Afrodescendent community, which combined quotas with public policies and grants and other types of financing, and was apparently modelled on the special measures envisaged under the Convention.

39. He had been interested to learn about the way in which the Government of Uruguay drafted census questions, and wondered whether the State party had followed the Committee's guidelines (CERD/C/2007/1), which asked States parties to include information on people "resulting from a mixture of cultures".

40. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, while being impressed by the exceptional quality of the State party's report, he was disappointed by the late submission of the core document (HRI/CORE/URY/2016), which had been made available in Spanish only.

41. With regard to Act No. 17677 of 29 July 2003, mentioned in paragraph 37 (e) of the report, he understood that the offence of incitement to hatred was punishable by longer sentences when the act was motivated by skin colour, race or sexual orientation, which constituted aggravating circumstances. In his view, the inclusion of such a provision must have been designed to address a specific problem, yet the statistics suggested that there had only been one case of aggravating circumstances. He would therefore be grateful if the delegation could explain the disjuncture between the spirit of the law and its application in practice.

42. On the question of legal aid, he welcomed the information that Uruguay guaranteed access to justice through the Public Defender Service, mediation centres and the Legal Advice Office at the Faculty of Law of the University of the Republic, but wished to know whether the State had legally defined a minimum threshold of financial eligibility for legal aid in court cases.

43. **Ms. Dah** said that the Uruguayan delegation was to be commended for its report and presentation, but expressed concern that the core document had not been translated for the benefit of all. In her view, Uruguayan society had shown courage in acknowledging its historical errors and attempting to correct them through the recognition of indigenous peoples and persons of African descent. While the Committee was grateful for certain details provided in the delegation's presentation, additional information was needed on measures to integrate those communities. It was regrettable that the State party had focused on Afro-Uruguayans and had rather overlooked indigenous peoples, but she hoped that that shortcoming would be corrected in the future.

44. In respect of indigenous peoples, she asked what had happened to their land, since they now lived mainly in urban areas. Did they retain a foothold in their ancestral lands, and if so, where?

45. Given Uruguay's sometimes tragic history, the Committee would be interested to learn how it was taught to children and reflected in school textbooks. She particularly wished to know whether the term genocide was used openly, how teachers explained the story of colonialization, and how indigenous peoples and Afro-Uruguayans were portrayed.

The State party should also say whether it had identified the elements of cultural richness that those two population groups had contributed to the Uruguayan nation.

46. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that he welcomed the Afrodescendent presence in the delegation, while regretting the absence of an indigenous representative. Uruguay was a country that made a great contribution to human rights, not least through the moral conscience of former President Mujica and the commitment of Mr. Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States. In his view, the report of the State party was both positive and constructive, while the establishment of the Ethnicity and Race Unit headed by an Itinerant Ambassador was an example of good practice for the region. He would be particularly interested to learn more about the trade impact of the diplomatic efforts undertaken by Uruguay to deepen ties with Africa, especially considering that the pursuit of a similar policy by Brazil had boosted the latter's trade balance with Africa.

47. Noting that the State party's report matched the assessment of the Committee in explicitly recognizing the existence of structural discrimination against Afro-Uruguayans, he asked what factors had led the Uruguayan Government to reach that conclusion, and what steps it was taking to tackle the problem in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Committee had been informed that the poverty rate of the Afrodescendent population was 27 per cent, as compared with 12 per cent for the population as a whole. Considering that Latin America and the Caribbean had not fully achieved the Millennium Development Goals owing to the disadvantageous conditions of its Afrodescendent and indigenous populations, more details were needed on what Uruguay doing to address the needs of those communities.

48. Uruguay had generated huge expectations by establishing a framework that recognized slavery as a crime against humanity and by adopting a landmark law, Act No. 19122 on norms to promote the participation of persons of African descent in the areas of education and employment, which was designed to provide reparation. In that regard, the delegation should explain the discrepancy between the quota of 8 per cent of public administration positions allocated to persons of African descent, and the 0.8 per cent of positions they actually held. How did the Government intend to address that disparity?

49. The State party should also review the standards listed under paragraph 37 of the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 on the meaning and scope of special measures in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, with a view to providing more detailed information. For example, the Committee would appreciate data on the percentage of the Afrodescendent population that benefited from social security affiliation and health-care coverage. Finally, he would like to know more about the nature of the reform of the Criminal Code; the progress made, if any, in implementing the National Plan against Racism and Discrimination; and the reasons for not ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

50. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she wished to congratulate Uruguay on its recognition that people of African descent suffered from the legacy of trafficking in peoples, that such trafficking had been a crime against humanity, and that people of African descent were a vulnerable group in need of affirmative action to address their marginalization. She hoped that the State party's laudable policies would soon yield tangible results in terms of socioeconomic and political data on the status and role of people of African descent in Uruguay.

51. **Mr. Amir**, referring to the issue of refugees and migrants, said that continuing wars were creating an ever greater number of victims, and the problem showed no sign of abating, as had been made clear at the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants. Unfortunately, the President-elect of the United States had put forward a policy on migrants that conflated Muslims and fundamentalists and sought to create a barrier to the movement of refugees and a deterrence to those who might be willing to welcome them. In that context, he believed it was appropriate to ask about the refugee and migrant policy of Uruguay.

52. Given that refugees mostly belonged to a different ethno-religious group to the Uruguayan population, he would like to know what efforts the State party might envisage undertaking in order to receive and integrate refugee families, including women, children and the sick, into society. Moreover, since it was clear that the issue could not be handled by a single country, he wondered what Latin America as a whole could do to address the problem. The Committee was aware that Uruguay had changed its policies and was willing to seek solutions, but it was unclear how long the victims would have to wait before they might be allowed to take refuge in the country.

53. **Mr. Khalaf** said that he agreed with previous speakers that the adoption of Act No. 19122 of 21 August 2013 had been a particularly positive development, as it provided for special measures that were fully in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 on the meaning and scope of special measures in the Convention.

54. In its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/URY/CO/16-20), the Committee had expressed concern over the absence of provisions that specifically and clearly prohibited racism and racial discrimination in the State party's existing legislative framework and had called upon it either to adopt a specific law against racial discrimination or to integrate appropriate provisions in its current legislation, in accordance with article 2 of the Convention. However, it appeared that the State party had decided not to act on that recommendation. He enquired as to the reasons behind that decision. Noting that the provisions of international treaties ratified by Uruguay were considered to be part of the domestic legal framework and were therefore directly applicable, he asked whether the Convention had ever been directly invoked before the national courts.

55. Lastly, he asked to what extent the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office had participated in the drafting of the periodic report, whether it published periodic reports on its activities and what progress had been made towards developing and adopting the National Plan against Racism and Discrimination.

56. **Mr. Bossuyt** said that the Committee welcomed the introduction of the ethno-racial variable in the collection of statistical data. He recalled the need to avoid using the term "positive discrimination", which was a contradiction in terms, and to use terms such as "special measures" or "affirmative action" instead.

57. Noting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had endorsed the implementation of a strategic plan to strengthen relations between Uruguay and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, under which various framework agreements had been concluded between Uruguayan and African academic institutions, such as the University of Kinshasa and the University of Lagos, he requested more information on the scope and nature of the cooperation between those institutions.

58. The delegation should also provide additional information on Uruguayan involvement in United Nations peacekeeping missions, indicate who would sit on the proposed Tripartite Commission for the promotion of racial equity mentioned in paragraph 44 of the periodic report, and explain the concept of *candombe* referred to in paragraph 75 of the periodic report and the decision to establish the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination.

59. **Ms. Mohamed** said that the disproportionate number of migrants and persons of African descent working in the domestic service sector was indicative of the discrimination that they encountered in accessing employment. It would be helpful to hear more about the special measures in place to promote the employment of persons belonging to those groups in other sectors and to increase the representation of persons of African descent in Parliament. She would also like to receive statistical data on the number of persons of African descent serving as a Member of Parliament or on municipal councils.

60. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that the State party was to be commended on having signed both the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance in July 2013.

61. He asked how the teaching guide on education and Afrodescendants differed from the teacher's handbook on the ethno-racial dimension and whether both documents had been published as planned. He invited the delegation to comment on reports that the Inter-agency Committee created by a presidential decision of 25 October 2011 and tasked with coordinating the drafting of reports and following up on the recommendations and observations made by the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies was not operational. Had the State party considered taking steps to expedite the work of the Inter-agency Committee? Was there a mechanism in place to allow civil society to provide input into its work as a matter of course?

62. He also wished to know the extent to which the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination served as a forum for dialogue with indigenous peoples and whether it had taken any steps to promote the involvement of indigenous peoples in its work. The overrepresentation of members of certain ethnic groups in the prison population was indicative of the racial discrimination that they faced. It would be useful to receive both general and statistical information on the Roma and Gypsy communities living in Uruguay.

63. Lastly, he wished to know whether the State party intended to ratify the amendments to article 8 of the Convention concerning the financing of the Committee's activities.

64. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** said that it would be helpful to receive statistical data on all the indigenous peoples who self-identified as such in Uruguay and to know whether those peoples were represented by organizations.

65. **Mr. Marugán** asked whether there was a body responsible for monitoring the Uruguayan media for racist content and making recommendations intended to eliminate any racial prejudice or stereotyping detected.

66. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that Uruguay was to be commended on the leading role that it had played in paving the way for the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC).

The meeting was suspended at 5.30 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.

67. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that the Government had submitted an updated core document in 2014, which, for bureaucratic reasons, had never been published. Upon noticing that oversight, the Government had taken the opportunity to update the core document further before submitting it for the second time. While it was regrettable that there had not been sufficient time for the final version of the core document (HRI/CORE/URY/2016) to be translated into French and English, the Government had not been able to submit it any earlier.

68. **Mr. González Arenas** (Uruguay) said that the Inspectorate General for Labour was the body empowered to enforce labour legislation in Uruguay. The Inspectorate General had first been established in 1915 to enforce the law on the eight-hour working day and its activities were currently regulated by Decree No. 680/977 of December 1977. It enjoyed independence and broad powers in discharging its functions, which included monitoring compliance with labour protection and occupational safety and health standards and the adequacy of working conditions, and imposing sanctions whenever necessary. Act No. 18065 on domestic work granted the Inspectorate General special powers to enforce its provisions.

69. The plight of the Bolivian migrants engaged in domestic service mentioned by Mr. Avtonomov had come to light in 2012 following the submission of a complaint by an NGO to the Inspectorate General for Labour, which, in the exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Act No. 18065, had obtained a warrant to inspect the private home concerned and to investigate the allegations made of irregularities in the hiring and registration of those domestic workers. However, the owner's refusal to grant the labour inspectors access to the property had prompted the Inspectorate General to seek assistance from the police in conducting the inspection. At the same time, the National Human Rights Institution, which was also competent to intervene in such cases, had contacted the Attorney General's Office to determine whether the Inspectorate General was apprised of the case, and the court specializing in organized crime to determine whether the case involved human trafficking. Upon learning of the Inspectorate General's involvement, the National Human Rights Institution had ceased its enquiries. Once the Inspectorate General had corroborated the allegations of irregularities in the hiring and registration of the domestic workers concerned, the National Labour Directorate had imposed a fine upon the owner of the property, which she had subsequently appealed before the Administrative Court. The Administrative Court had recently upheld the decision to impose a financial penalty upon the owner of the property given the seriousness of the case. The International Labour Organization (ILO) had referred to Act No. 18065 on domestic work in the studies that had preceded the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

70. Uruguay had a long history of supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations, having participated in peacekeeping missions in Kashmir and in many African countries, and continued to maintain a strong presence in the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uruguay was ranked among the top four countries in the world in terms of the number of military personnel that it sent to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in relation to its total population. The country's continued participation in such operations stemmed from its commitment to multilateralism and maintaining international peace and security.

71. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that the teaching guide on education and Afrodescendants and the teacher's handbook on the ethno-racial dimension were one and the same. There had been a slight delay in publishing the document on account of the recent change in Government and the need to obtain the prior approval of the Directorate of Human Rights of the Central Governing Council of the National Public Education Administration so as to avoid problems further down the line.

72. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for coordinating the preparation of the country's periodic reports and that the National Human Rights Institution and civil society were involved in that process as a matter of course. The presidential decision of 25 October 2011 creating the Inter-agency Committee tasked with coordinating the drafting of reports and following up on recommendations was no longer in force. However, the President had recently approved the introduction of a new software-based system intended to improve the follow-up given by the different State institutions to recommendations made by the Human Rights Council and the treaty bodies, which would

be rolled out within a month. Several thematic working groups would also be set up to support the inter-institutional follow-up process. It was hoped that the new system would encourage all competent State institutions to provide regular input into both periodic reports and follow-up initiatives.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.