



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2470th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 August 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

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

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

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

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Pakistan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Michael** (Pakistan), introducing the State party's combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports (CERD/C/PAK/21-23), said that a series of consultative meetings had been held at the provincial and federal levels, followed by a national consultative meeting led by the Ministry of Human Rights, in order to prepare the reports. Over two dozen civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations had participated in the process.
3. In Pakistan, there were no distinctions made based on race. The country had been built on the interaction between successive waves of migration and local inhabitants, which meant that the racial composition of its society was highly mixed and complex and it cut across linguistic, ethnic and religious lines. Simplistic categorizations of race were therefore not applicable to Pakistan and did not enhance understanding of its social context. The occasional instances of linguistic or ethnic groups lobbying for greater participation in the national mainstream could be largely attributed to perceptions of uneven development in various parts of the country, which was inevitable in a market-based economy. Nevertheless, the Government was making strenuous efforts to ensure that the benefits of development reached all citizens, and it had recently launched major structural initiatives, including the devolution of certain areas of responsibility to the provinces and the progressive strengthening of local government institutions. It had also taken steps to channel major development projects and investment to all parts of the country.
4. Pakistan had clear constitutional and penal provisions that strictly prohibited and criminalized discrimination and its propaganda. For example, chapter I of the Constitution laid down the framework for the protection of the fundamental rights of all citizens "without any discrimination", and section 505 (2) of the Criminal Code criminalized the publication of any material that might incite group differences leading to discrimination or violence.
5. The country was home to a multicultural and multi-faith society comprising several ethnic groups that lived in peace and harmony. However, decades of conflict and instability in Afghanistan had had an adverse effect on the Pakistani people, and terrorists and extremists had targeted all citizens regardless of ethnic origin and religion with the aim of generating fear and destabilizing the population. The Government of Pakistan was working hard to address that challenge.
6. A number of administrative and policy-related measures had been introduced by the Government to ensure that all Pakistani citizens enjoyed equal rights. The recently launched national Action Plan for Human Rights included six areas of intervention: policy and legal reforms; access to justice; the application of key human rights priorities; the implementation of international treaties; the establishment and strengthening of human rights institutions; and the creation and monitoring of a mechanism for the Action Plan. A national task force with oversight and monitoring functions had been set up for the implementation of the Action Plan. Human rights education, as an integral part of the Action Plan, had been incorporated into school curricula and the training of law enforcement personnel and members of the judiciary. The National Commission on Human Rights had been in operation since May 2015 and had been granted *suo moto* powers to

take action in cases of human rights violations in the country. The Commission had been made financially independent in accordance with the Paris Principles.

7. The National Commission on the Status of Women had been given financial autonomy and the *suo moto* powers of a court to take action regarding cases of women's rights violations. Special measures had also been implemented to ensure the full participation of women in all walks of life. Legislation had been adopted to address issues related to violence and discrimination against women, and several administrative and policy-related measures had been taken to implement such laws. The National Action Plan for Counter-Terrorism had been developed, the Government had criminalized hate speech and incitement of hatred which led to violence, and human rights cells had been established in the Supreme Court and the High Courts to address human rights complaints. Moreover, the Supreme Court had issued a landmark judgment stating that all Pakistani citizens were free to exercise the right to profess, practise or propagate their religious views.

8. The National Heritage Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting organized a wide range of cultural and music programmes in order to promote cultural awareness and harmony in society. Furthermore, the free and vibrant media in Pakistan continued to counter the extremist narrative and foster respect for religious and ethnic diversity by raising awareness of religious, social and cultural issues.

9. Pakistan played an active role in the elimination of new and contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia, including sincere efforts to implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. As a progressive, free and democratic country, it openly acknowledged the human rights challenges that it faced and the Government remained fully committed to promoting and protecting the rights of its citizens without any discrimination.

10. **Mr. Khalaf** (Country Rapporteur), after providing a brief overview of the State party's structure and geopolitical situation, said that the Constitution did not recognize the multiple ethnic groups in Pakistan and that he hoped that that issue would be remedied. The Constitution did, however, recognize religious groups and minorities, many of whom faced persecution. In addition, the population included some two million refugees and over one million displaced persons, many of whom had fled regions of war and instability.

11. Pakistan was therefore facing a number of challenges which created underlying tensions for its population. Two major factors were at play. The first was the India-Pakistan partition, which had been followed by territorial disputes and the creation of provinces that had subsequently experienced different rates of economic development; that, in turn, had contributed to discrimination against minority and vulnerable groups. The second factor was a sectarian division stemming from the Shiite resurgence during the Iranian revolution and the conflict in Afghanistan, which had given rise to the imposition of sharia law.

12. The Committee was concerned by the proliferation of madrasas dispensing an antiquated form of religious education that glorified Islamic jihad and encouraged the use of hate speech against Shiites, heretics and non-Muslims. The demand for the religious education provided by those schools could be explained in part by the fact that it was free of charge. It was particularly worrying that those schools had the potential to turn out a new generation of young people incapable of rational thought or of distancing themselves from radical religious discourse, which could have a negative impact on Pakistani society as a whole.

13. Due to strong support for the enforcement of the country's law against blasphemy, in the recent past accusations of blasphemy had led to riots and murder. More than 30 people had been murdered while awaiting trial for blasphemy or after having being acquitted. In 2011, a prominent governor, as well as the Minister for Minority Affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, who had supported the reform of the law and the cause of Asia Bibi, a

Pakistani Christian woman convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death, had been murdered.

14. In Pakistan, extremist groups sought to destabilize the State and to terrorize the population, including human rights defenders, by means of targeted terrorist attacks, such as that which had claimed the life of Bilal Anwar Kasi, the president of the Bar of Quetta, and a number of those who had gathered to pay their respects at a hospital morgue in August 2016. It was clear that the attack in question had targeted human rights defenders such as lawyers and judges, whose courtrooms were often encroached upon as an intimidation tactic.

15. Although the Convention did not address religious discrimination directly, the plight of persecuted religious minorities did fall within the Committee's purview. Members of Christian minority groups had been the target of a suicide attack as they celebrated Easter in March 2016. Attacks had also been carried out against places of worship with the support of certain religious leaders. Other persecuted religious minorities included Ismaili and Ahmadi Muslims. Acts of persecution against the members of those minorities were often accompanied by attempts to force them to convert to Islam under threat of physical violence or for the purposes of gaining employment or entering into a forced marriage. The persecution of religious minority groups had led not only to increased tension within those communities but to the creation of religious ghettos and a climate of fear.

16. Sectarian and fratricidal clashes between Shiite and Sunni Muslims had undermined the country's social cohesion and threatened to weaken its Islamic unity, which had been the fruit of its establishment as a land of refuge for all Muslims living in South Asia. Prior to the escalation of the Shiite-Sunni conflict owing to the influence exerted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan and other actors, and the emergence of armed faith groups, no distinction had been drawn between Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Pakistani society, where mixed marriages had been the norm and senior government positions had been held by Shiite and Sunni Muslims alike.

17. Notwithstanding the feeling of powerlessness engendered by the current situation in the country, he said that he was pleased to note that the State party had attempted to make the fight against terrorism a priority by adopting a law to combat that phenomenon and a law to guarantee the protection of the Pakistani people. However, the latter legislation permitted ground offensives to be carried out against extremist groups, and those offensives had often entailed negative consequences for the population, such as mass displacements, which only served to exacerbate their precarious situation; the trying of civilians by military courts; and the radicalization of the discourse of moderate political parties.

18. Despite the threat posed by extremist groups, the State party had failed to reform the law against blasphemy, to protect judges from populist pressure and to monitor the content of the instruction provided in religious schools. It was in that tense climate that the members of minority groups, other vulnerable groups and victims of discrimination were in most need of protection. The minority groups that were not recognized by the State party included Biharis, Bengalis, children born in Pakistan for whom the Pakistani authorities refused to issue a birth certificate, which included the children of refugees and asylum seekers, and children born to a Pakistani mother and a foreign father who were denied Pakistani nationality on that basis. The main groups that were vulnerable to discrimination included Dalits, Hazaras, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, persons of African descent and women, who could be subjected to forced marriage, forced conversion and honour crimes. He invited the delegation to provide an overview of the measures taken by the State party to protect the members of those groups.

19. **Mr. Kut**, recalling that the Committee had requested the State party to provide information, within one year of the adoption of the previous concluding observations (CERD/C/PAK/CO/20), on the steps that it had taken to give effect to a number of recommendations, namely that it ensure that its national laws, including those relating to the implementation of the Convention, were applicable in its entire national territory (para. 9), that it establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles as planned (para. 13) and that it intensify its efforts to implement the laws and programmes adopted to put an end to bonded labour and discrimination against marginalized groups (para. 21), said that it was regrettable that the State party had not submitted an interim report. He would appreciate an explanation as to the State party's failure to comply with that reporting obligation.

20. **Ms. Dah** said that the State party's periodic report, while informative, did not fully comply with the Committee's reporting guidelines. The Committee deeply regretted the absence of a common core document, as the document would have provided it with the statistical data necessary to better understand and to analyse the composition of the population of Pakistan, the situation with respect to racial discrimination in the country, its legal framework and its administrative structure.

21. She took note of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, which addressed a number of issues that were of concern to the Committee. It was important to resist the tendency to view Pakistan simply as a safe haven for the Muslim population of colonial India and to recognize that the State of Pakistan had been established first and foremost to defend human rights.

22. She questioned the veracity of the assertion in the periodic report that racial discrimination did not exist in the State party, recalling that, while less flagrant forms of racial discrimination did exist, no country in the world was completely free from that scourge. The State party would do better to acknowledge the existence of that phenomenon and to outline the measures that it had taken to address it, the results of those measures and the challenges that it had encountered in that connection.

23. She noted with interest that, although the State party did not recognize caste-based discrimination, it appeared not to deny the existence of a caste system in its national territory. The fact that the National Database and Registration Authority did not collect data on caste under the pretext that there was no requirement under Pakistani law to maintain such data was a serious cause for concern. While she understood that the State party did not wish to encourage the recognition of individuals on the basis of caste, it should find a means of ensuring that national institutions supplied the information necessary to allow it to formulate policies to tackle racial discrimination and to reduce racial inequalities.

24. It would also have been helpful to receive specific statistical data, disaggregated by sex, on the number of refugees currently living in Pakistan and general information on the measures taken to address the problems facing that vulnerable group.

25. Although the State party recognized the existence of slavery in the form of bonded labour and had adopted legislation to prevent and punish that phenomenon, to her mind the legislation in question was not sufficiently dissuasive.

26. Lastly, it was her impression that the law against blasphemy was applied in such a way that it violated the right to freedom of religion enshrined in the Constitution. She invited the delegation to comment on that observation.

27. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that, despite the lateness in submission, he appreciated the fact that the State party had structured its periodic report around the recommendations contained in the Committee's previous concluding observations. He asked whether the State party intended to ratify the proposed amendment to article 8 of the Convention, which, while it

was connected with financing, had more to do with the procedures for funding the Committee and would not result in increased contributions from States parties, or to make the optional declaration under article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications.

28. As the State party's periodic report made no reference to that group, he would like to receive statistical information on the number and situation of Pakistani gypsies. According to information at the Committee's disposal, many Pakistani gypsies were undocumented and effectively stateless on account of their births never having been registered, which precluded them from accessing rights and benefits on an equal footing with Pakistani citizens. The State party should pay more attention to the needs of that group and should refer to the Committee's general recommendation No. 27 on discrimination against Roma for guidance in that regard.

29. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** said that he would be interested to know whether the delegation found the situation in Pakistan as depicted by Mr. Khalaf to be an accurate reflection of the reality on the ground. Based on information provided by alternative sources, he understood the main challenges facing the State party to include the threat of terrorism in the form of religious extremism; the numerous obstacles preventing the reform or abrogation of the law against blasphemy, the very existence of which could be considered to run counter to the freedom to profess, practise and propagate religion enshrined in the Constitution; and the high prevalence of honour killings, which the State party struggled to prevent.

30. **Ms. Li Yanduan** said that the State party was to be commended on its efforts to promote and protect human rights amid the plethora of challenges that it was facing in the field of national security and the ever-present threat of terrorism. She welcomed the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and its broad and ambitious scope, which attested to the State party's commitment and determination to improve the human rights situation in its national territory.

31. Noting that Pakistan had a common law system and that its anti-discrimination framework consisted of the Constitution, the Criminal Code and relevant case law, she asked whether the Convention could be directly applied by the national courts and, if not, how the State party guaranteed the full implementation of its provisions throughout the national territory.

32. **Mr. Murillo Martínez**, welcoming the steps taken by the State party to combat incitement to discrimination, said that it would be useful to have statistics on the results of those efforts.

33. With regard to the State party's Action Plan for Human Rights, he asked whether aspects of combating racism and racial discrimination would be included in the legal reforms envisaged under the Action Plan. The reforms would provide an opportunity to review and amend legislation to ensure compliance with article 4 of the Convention. He wished to know whether the education and awareness-raising strategies included use of the Internet in view of the major challenge of how to address the frequent use of new technologies and technological platforms to spread hatred, xenophobia and discrimination. He also wondered whether the Action Plan envisaged using those very tools to reverse the trend and prevent offences. Could the delegation provide statistics on the incidence of discrimination, incitement to discrimination and racism via the Internet and the results of efforts to combat the problem?

34. He would like to hear more details of the implementation of legislation on quotas in favour of minority groups. Were reports from non-governmental organizations that religious minorities were not adequately covered in quota legislation true? The issue of

caste was of special interest to the Committee, and he asked what steps were being taken to enable greater social mobility for people belonging to castes.

35. Women in Pakistan faced many challenges, particularly those belonging to certain ethnic groups. Domestic violence was prevalent, including atrocious acid attacks on women. He requested statistics on acid attacks and information on measures adopted to curb that practice. He also requested statistics on the number of suicides reported among girl victims of forced marriages. What steps were being taken to halt that practice?

36. He would like more up-to-date information on the number of hate crimes recorded in the country and on action taken to address that problem.

37. **Mr. Bossuyt** said that there were contradictory statements in the periodic report regarding quota-setting. Paragraphs 34 and 35 stated that, on the one hand, Pakistan did not encourage the recognition of individuals on the basis of caste but, on the other, it had adopted measures for the advancement of socially disadvantaged classes of citizens by prescribing a quota for the underdeveloped castes and regions. Moreover, in paragraphs 54 and 55 it was stated that there were quotas for religious minorities but not for ethnic groups, as that would not be conducive to national harmony and cohesion. Could the delegation comment on those contradictions?

38. He asked the delegation to give a fuller explanation of the requirement in the act on abolishing bonded labour that workers who owed their employers more than a week's wage should be freed of their debts. He asked whether US\$ 1.5 million had actually been spent on registering brick kiln workers to help them repay debts, whether the measure was ongoing, and how the abolition of bonded labour and the system for the reimbursement of debts were interrelated.

39. The abuse of the blasphemy law against religious minorities continued to cause concern. He asked whether Ordinance XX adopted in 1984 was still in force, noting that it was extremely discriminatory against the Ahmadis. In his opening statement, the head of delegation had said that the Supreme Court had declared that every citizen of Pakistan was free to exercise his or her religion. How could that be reconciled with the existence of Ordinance XX and discriminatory practices against some religious minorities, particularly against the Ahmadis? The blasphemy law was often a pretext to persecute religious minorities, treating the persecutors with impunity. Could the delegation verify reports that the Ahmadis were excluded from electoral lists by not being allowed to be listed as a separate religious group?

40. Radicalism, extremism, fanaticism and terrorism were all threats to Pakistan and other countries, even those far away. Legislation alone could not address the problems; changes in education would be more effective.

41. **Mr. Cali Tzay** said that he would be interested to hear about the State party's plans to commemorate the International Decade for People of African Descent. It might, for example, consider introducing legislation to combat discrimination against people of African descent in Pakistan. In that connection, he had received reports that the Sheedi community had been forced to abandon their plans for their annual Sheedi Mela in 2015, which was a festival that had been celebrated at the shrine of Pir Mangho in Karachi for centuries. That was a violation of article 5 of the Convention, which protected the right to freedom of thought, conscience and expression. He asked why the decision had been taken to suspend the festival and whether that decision could be reversed. Moreover, he would like to know what action would be taken to protect the Sheedi people, who faced restricted access to employment and education.

42. He would appreciate receiving more information on the mechanisms for reporting violations of human rights and statistics on the number of complaints received and convictions and sentences handed down.

43. He would also like to receive further information on the mechanisms in place to support and protect the large number of refugees in Pakistan. What was the legal framework in place to provide protection, and did they have access to health-care services and education? He sought information on what Pakistan was doing for internally displaced persons, particularly on action taken to rehouse and support the 920,000 persons displaced by the 2015 floods. What was it doing to ensure that displaced women from tribal areas had proper identity papers to enable them to access housing and public resources?

44. **Mr. Marugán** asked whether statistics and data were available on the number and types of complaints received by the human rights complaints cell established by the Provincial Government of Punjab.

45. With regard to the application of article 4 of the Convention, he requested information on how many of the 1,777 registered cases of publication of hate material were offences via the Internet or the media and how many were offences related to incitement to racial discrimination or religious discrimination. He also asked how many of the 1,799 arrests in those cases had led to legal proceedings and how many and what kind of sentences had been handed down. He would also like to hear more about the role of the media in Pakistan in preventing hate speech and promoting harmony between different ethnic and religious groups.

46. Beyond the efforts to abolish bonded labour, he would be interested to know what was being done to eliminate racial discrimination in employment, what bodies had been established to monitor and prevent racial discrimination, what sanctions were in place and what proactive measures were being promoted to raise awareness and prevent racial discrimination in the workplace. He would also like to receive disaggregated information on migrants in Pakistan to gain an idea of numbers and origins. He would appreciate more information on the working conditions of Dalits and on the labour exploitation and racial discrimination they experienced.

47. He asked whether civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations had participated in the drafting of the State party's report.

48. **Ms. Hohoueto**, referring to article 25 of the Constitution, in which the principle of non-discrimination was enshrined, asked whether the fact that it could be enforced directly at the request of an individual "within the jurisdiction of Pakistan" meant that there were persons who were considered not to fall within its jurisdiction. Normally in a country all people were within that jurisdiction.

49. She said that she was concerned that criminal court judges might interpret article 25 very narrowly. There appeared to be no provision in the Criminal Code to criminalize and punish discriminatory acts, and in her view it was dangerous to give judges the power to do so based solely on their interpretation of article 25. The State party should consider introducing a definition of discrimination in accordance with the Convention into the Criminal Code, rather than leaving judges to make arbitrary interpretations of article 25 of the Constitution.

50. She asked what measures had been taken to combat discrimination against women and girls in access to education, to improve their situation throughout Pakistani society and to address the phenomenon of honour killings. Were disaggregated statistics available to enable the Committee to have a better understanding of the situation and formulate views and suggestions to help the State party improve the situation of women?

51. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen**, referring to the Supreme Court's statement that Pakistani citizens were free to exercise the right to profess, practise or propagate their religious views, even against the prevailing or dominant views of their own religious denomination or sect, said that he was concerned that the Government had been unable to stem religiously motivated violence. Citing the example of the Hazara people, who were Shia Muslims but had been declared heretics by militant Sunni Islamist groups, he said that they had become victims of racial discrimination because of their faith and different looks and had become easy targets of bombings and other violence. Not being sufficiently familiar with religion, Islam or the situation on the ground, he had researched and found that some people believed that the Government was unwilling to tackle hard-line Sunni militants for fear of being deemed un-Islamic.

52. **Mr. Amir** said that he was concerned that the discussions on the State party's report had focused only on present-day Pakistan and its problems of cultural and religious dismemberment, terrorism, slavery and other ills, which were current circumstances that ignored the history of the country and had arisen after the partition. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the others who had fought for Pakistan continued to form part of its identity. That Pakistan still existed in the consolidation of a State that continued to produce civil servants, diplomats, magistrates and teachers. In his view, it was regrettable that those praiseworthy achievements had been obscured by concerns related to terrorism.

53. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that he would like to know more about the State party's cooperation with the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its efforts to address discrimination through membership of that organization. Referring to the national action plan, he said that the attention given to the administration of justice was important, in particular the establishment of a fund to provide legal aid for poor victims of human rights violations. The State party should give further details on the steps it had taken in that regard, such as whether the assistance would be available to undocumented victims of human rights violations and whether any special funding would be earmarked for minorities.

54. **Ms. Dah** said that, although the State party had adopted a constitutional provision and laws supporting the prohibition of bonded labour, slavery and servitude, in her view the penalties were not severe enough to pose a deterrent. Punishments that typically included fines and sentences of up to 10 years' imprisonment were insufficient. She said that both buyers and sellers of slaves ought to be punished and, given that slavery was a crime against humanity, she was of the view that life imprisonment might have a more dissuasive effect.

55. The State party should give further clarification on some provisions of its Action Plan for Human Rights. She welcomed the amendments to the legislation governing Hindu and Christian marriage and divorce inasmuch as that granted rights to minorities, although it was unclear what was being done for the Muslim majority and whether there was any discrimination in that area. She agreed with Mr. Amir that the historical context of Pakistan might have been provided by the State party in the core document, since it was preferable that the State party tell its own history rather than leaving it to the Committee.

56. Lastly, recalling that article 4 of the Convention obliged States parties to punish the dissemination of ideas based on racial discrimination or hatred, she said that, even in the absence of criminal organizations proclaiming racial superiority, such punishment still had dissuasive force and it was therefore advisable to legislate in that area to provide future safeguards.

57. **Mr. Kut** said that he would welcome clarification in relation to the size of the population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which he believed was stated incorrectly in paragraph 9 of the report. He also failed to understand why paragraph 9 described the majority of clans in that province as Pathan, when paragraph 11 referred to them as Pashtun.

58. Referring to paragraph 46 of the report, which dealt with the Committee's prior request that the State party should consider signing and ratifying the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, he said that he would welcome more information on refugees in Pakistan in general. He broadly agreed with the statement that Pakistan had done more than the signatories of the 1951 Convention, and he understood that it was difficult to deal with millions of refugees that had arrived in a short space of time and were unable to return to their countries of origin. However, that did not mean that Pakistan should not sign the Convention, and the delegation should explain why it had not done so, as well as describing the steps taken to prevent racial discrimination against those refugees.

59. **Mr. Khalaf**, expressing regret at the lack of a core document, said that a document on regional mechanisms would have proved useful. The Committee welcomed the efforts described by Pakistan in its report and was grateful for the provision of census data on the ethnic and linguistic composition of the country. Considering that the data were from 1998, he was interested to learn why another census had not been conducted since then and whether another census would be conducted soon. The Committee would also appreciate receiving updated and disaggregated data on the different socioeconomic groups living in Pakistan, including immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons.

60. He said that the Committee welcomed the participation of civil society actors in consultations and in the preparation of the report. In that regard, the State party should clarify the grounds on which those 20 non-governmental organizations had been selected for participation.

61. In his view, further explanation was needed on why the National Commission on Human Rights had not been consulted or called upon to provide input. He expressed concern over the proposed establishment of a new national commission, in addition to the existing one, which he considered might create some contradictions and was not necessarily an improvement on having a single national human rights commission accredited with category A status in accordance with the Paris Principles. The establishment of the National Commission for Minorities was, however, an important development.

62. On the legal front, the State party had not given a response to the question of how racial discrimination was defined in domestic law pursuant to article 1 of the Convention. The Committee had asked States parties to be vigilant in implementing that provision, since it allowed them to better understand the concept of racial discrimination. No country was without discrimination, and even if only a few cases were recorded in Pakistan, victims still ought to be protected by domestic laws that included a definition in accordance with article 1 and punishable offences as per article 4. It was necessary to strengthen the domestic legal arsenal to help ensure implementation of the Convention.

63. Lastly, he said that it was unclear whether the definition of minorities was exclusively applied to religious minorities or if, as mentioned in the oral presentation, it could be extended to other minorities. He said that he would also be interested to learn whether religious minorities such as the Shia and the Ismaili would be recognized under the Constitution, if not as minorities, then as religious groups.

64. **Ms. Janjua** (Pakistan), expressing gratitude to the Country Rapporteur for his exhaustive and colourful picture of Pakistan, which was perhaps slightly different from the everyday reality, said that the Pakistani people were facing a huge struggle against terrorism. It was indeed sad that the discussions had centred on extremism, terrorism and slavery and had overlooked efforts in other areas. For example, Pakistan was one of the few

countries in the Islamic world to have witnessed a democratic transfer of power. The Parliament had been extremely active, the judiciary had made some excellent decisions and the legal system was meeting the demands of 180 million people. The economy had been performing steadily in spite of the challenges. Pakistan was geographically located in a difficult neighbourhood, and the war in Afghanistan had taken its toll on Pakistani society and culture. However, the Government had taken strong and determined action to ensure that the terrorists, despite numerous attacks, would not gain a hold over society. She expressed confidence in the resilience of the Pakistani people and their ability to defeat terrorism and extremism.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.