



# 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 2495th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 25 November 2016, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Crickley

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*Twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Uruguay (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

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

*Twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Uruguay* (continued)  
(CERD/C/URY/21-23; CERD/C/URY/Q/21-23)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chair** pointed out that the meeting room had been decorated in orange to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, which would run from 25 November to 10 December 2016. It was important to understand the intersectionality of different forms of oppression and to acknowledge that women from ethnic and racial minority groups were particularly exposed to violence.
3. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that the Uruguayan legislative framework took a preventive approach to criminal policy. The fact that a particular act was criminalized in Uruguay did not indicate that it was a common occurrence, but rather that the act had been criminalized and penalties established as a form of deterrent. In his Government's view, the number of sentences handed down for hate speech or similar acts was less important than the fact that penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence had been established in the first place. National legislation did include a specific law on hate speech and also took into account the fact that hate speech was often committed not as a single offence but in connection with other offences. For example, unfair dismissals in the workplace carried heavy fines when they were found to be based on racial discrimination. The legislative framework thus dealt with racial discrimination from a broad perspective.
4. The legal system could be accessed free of charge. Court costs were borne by individuals only in civil cases, and only if they had the necessary financial means at their disposal. In the labour courts, it was the employer who paid the court costs. Public defenders' offices also provided highly specialized services free of charge. Within the next six months, Uruguay would switch to an adversarial legal system. That system would include strong guarantees and support for victims, who would be much more involved in court proceedings.
5. Aggravating circumstances were applied to offences carried out against members of particularly vulnerable groups, such as migrants or members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. Not only individuals but also legal persons were held responsible under the law for any discriminatory treatment. All legal persons must comply with the principles of a constitutional state governed by the rule of law. Criminal responsibility applied not only to the individuals within a corporation or other legal entity but also to the entity as a whole, and the State had the power to temporarily replace the offending leaders of the entity and, if necessary, to dissolve the entity itself.
6. The procedure for acquiring the status of legal personhood was complex and required the approval of a number of State institutions. Any entity whose statutes included clauses promoting racial hatred would not be granted legal personhood. Any form of discrimination was illegal under Uruguayan law, and persons convicted of discriminatory behaviour not only held criminal responsibility but could also be required to pay reparation for moral damages. Complaints of discrimination could be filed by individuals as well as NGOs working on behalf of the victim. Under the new adversarial system, the public prosecution service would play an important role in the initiation of proceedings on the basis of complaints received. Reform of the Criminal Code was currently under way to enable the establishment of the new adversarial system.

7. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that 16 of the 72 complaints of discrimination in the workplace received between 2011 and 2015 were complaints of racial discrimination. Of the 264 complaints of human rights violations received by the National Human Rights Institution in 2014, 34 were related to violations of the right to equality and non-discrimination, and of those about 6 per cent related specifically to racial discrimination. Of the 314 complaints received in 2015, 26 were related to violations of the right to equality and non-discrimination, and of those 7 per cent related specifically to racial discrimination.
8. Forty-three per cent of the complaints received by the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination between 2015 and 2016 were related to racial discrimination. Of those, 36 per cent involved discrimination against persons of African descent, and 14 per cent discrimination against Jews. As for the situations in which the discrimination had taken place, 41 per cent of reported incidents had taken place in the workplace and 15 per cent in schools, while 6 per cent involved interpersonal relations, 18 involved per cent access to public services provided by public or private entities, and 20 per cent access to performances and other public events.
9. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that, while there were no ongoing awareness-raising campaigns on racial discrimination, since 2011 several short-term campaigns had been conducted by civil society organizations as well as government bodies. They included campaigns to raise the profile of persons of African descent, to eliminate racist terms from everyday language, and to disseminate information about discrimination laws.
10. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that the age of criminal responsibility was set at 18 years, but that minors who committed serious offences could be deprived of their liberty within a specialized juvenile justice system. While the number of minors deprived of liberty was small, it was important to bear in mind that the country's population was only slightly more than 3 million. Some 500 adolescents were currently deprived of their liberty in Uruguay; they were kept in separate facilities from adults and received differentiated treatment. Seven per cent of adolescents deprived of their liberty were of African descent, which was slightly less than the percentage of the overall population that was of African descent. Further statistics on adults deprived of their liberty would be provided in writing.
11. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the National Institute for Youth conducted a programme to assist adolescents upon their release from detention. About 32 per cent of participants in that programme were of African descent. The overall dropout rate in the national education system was relatively high, and among certain racial groups the rate was significantly higher than the average. In response to that situation, a special support system was being developed for particularly vulnerable students.
12. A new computerized records system provided improved tracking of students' performance and allowed parents to register their children in advance for the upcoming school year, thereby indicating which children did not intend to return to school. A protocol was being developed on providing special support to students who might be in need of help for a variety of reasons, including reasons linked to racial discrimination.
13. While not all schools were plagued with discrimination, his Government recognized that discrimination did exist within the education system and it was developing a strategy to address the problem. A pilot project had been launched in 19 schools and would be expanded in 2017 to cover 40 schools. It would then be evaluated with a view to implementing the strategy throughout the country.
14. The primary school curriculum covered topics such as slavery, the relationship between identity and ethnicity, the contributions of Uruguayans of African descent to national culture and music, and the contributions of indigenous communities and persons of African descent to the revolution that had led to the country's independence. The teaching

of subjects related to ethnicity and race began at the age of 5 years and continued throughout all six years of primary school.

15. Education grants and employment quotas had been established by law for persons of African descent. A programme offering vocational training for technical jobs was also in place. The impact of the quotas and training programmes would be assessed in 2017.

16. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that, while various support programmes were available within the education system, most did not include a racial dimension. Thus, while overall achievement outcomes had improved at all education levels between 2010 and 2015, the racial gap had remained and in some cases had actually worsened. Her Government therefore faced a real challenge of ensuring that ethnicity and race were taken up as cross-cutting concerns throughout the education system.

17. The compounded effect of structural racism and structural sexism left girls of African descent in a particularly vulnerable situation. Teenage pregnancy among that group was therefore a multidimensional issue with a variety of possible causes and responses. Women of African descent had their first child earlier than their white counterparts and also had more children during their reproductive years. They typically came from families with lower-than-average incomes and education levels. Thus, the role models available to girls of African descent could be a factor affecting their likelihood of becoming pregnant and dropping out of school.

18. According to survey data, women of African descent were also at greater risk of experiencing violence in a variety of different environments, including in school, at home and in the workplace. Structural poverty, racism and sexism posed a major challenge, and a number of policies had been drawn up in an attempt to understand the limitations on the options available to girls of African descent and how that situation could be reversed. An intersectoral strategy was being developed, with the participation of civil society organizations representing women of African descent, to prevent unintended pregnancy.

19. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that, since 2013 an ethnic group variable had been included when gathering statistics. Illiteracy was 1.6 per cent across the country but 3 per cent among persons of African descent, 1.4 per cent among the descendants of indigenous peoples and 1.7 per cent among persons not of African descent. The authorities in Montevideo had carried out a survey in the past few months that had taken into account ethnic and racial variables for the first time.

20. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that her country had historically been open to migration and hosted a relatively high number of refugees. As at December 2015, there had been 370 refugees in Uruguay. Between 2011 and 2016, 28,000 residency permits had been issued to foreigners. Persons entering the country who wished to reside there were provided with temporary residency and an identity document within 48 hours of entry, in order to prevent the presence in the country of migrants in an irregular situation. Permanent residency involved an additional procedure. The identity document issued after entry permitted access to public services on an equal basis with Uruguayan citizens. Migrants cited free education, security and access to health care as reasons for choosing to live in Uruguay. Housing for migrants was the most difficult area to address, due to its high cost and the absence of references to migrants in housing legislation and plans. Data indicated that 38 per cent of recently arrived migrants worked in jobs requiring few qualifications. Unemployment was approximately 9 per cent for male migrants and 18 per cent for female migrants. Her country took in spontaneous refugees and also offered resettlement in solidarity with persons from Latin America under the Brazil Plan of Action and in agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Those programmes were being extended due to their success and to existing situations in Latin America that lead to displacement.

21. Studies had indicated that, although there were no recognizable indigenous ethnic groups in her country, there were people of indigenous descent who were seeking legitimate recognition of their place in the country's history. The historical and cultural contribution of persons of African descent and the indigenous population had been underestimated. Discrimination and the lack of opportunities for those groups should be improved through public policy measures.

22. Her country had accepted recommendations from the first and second cycles of the universal periodic review to consider ratification of International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Domestic consultations had been held for a number of years and a national tripartite committee had decided against ratification. That position was unlikely to change in the short-term.

23. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the overall unemployment rate was approximately 6 per cent and that disaggregated data on unemployment was available. The differences in youth unemployment rates among different racial groups were small. The rates stood at 13 per cent for the white population, 19 per cent for young people of African descent and 15 per cent for young people of indigenous descent. In general, unemployment was higher among young people, those who had not finished school and persons of African or indigenous descent.

24. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that the National Plan against Racism and Discrimination had not been officially presented and it had been recognized that the plan needed greater input from civil society, including all relevant actors and Uruguayan women of African descent.

25. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that the law took refugees and asylum seekers into account. Provisions to combat trafficking in persons were a major feature of migration law; indeed, Uruguay had been a pioneer in that area.

26. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that the courts were currently considering a case involving a migrant domestic worker. Women of African descent were overrepresented in the domestic employment sector. The National Institute for Women worked with the only trade union for domestic workers, although it had not tackled issues of race. The Department of Women of African Descent, however, had expressed concern about the situation of women domestic workers of African descent. Guidelines had been issued to regularize labour standards, improve access to social security — to which women of African descent did not enjoy equal access — and to promote reinsertion into education and the attainment of better jobs.

27. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that his country had recognized a number of inter-American conventions. A few articles of the media law had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court and proceedings had been initiated. While a lack of resources hindered work to overhaul the regulatory framework for the mass media, the law addressing stereotypes and discrimination in the media had been drafted with the involvement of civil society.

28. **Mr. González Arenas** (Uruguay) said that his country had not previously entertained a strong diplomatic presence in sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2010, foreign policy had been redefined and greater priority had been given to the continent of Africa. Embassies had been opened in Angola and Ethiopia — the Ethiopian embassy included a mission to the African Union — and a post for a roving ambassador had been established to strengthen ties with other African countries. Uruguay was one of the States in the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic and had hosted a ministerial meeting under that initiative in 2003, which had included discussion on bilateral dialogues with a view to strengthening ties with African countries.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.35 p.m.*

29. **Mr. Kut** (Rapporteur for follow-up) said that the Committee's concluding observations on the State party's combined sixteenth to twentieth periodic reports (CERD/C/URY/CO/16-20) had requested information within one year of their adoption on follow-up to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12, 14 and 15 of that document. No such information had been received. The Committee looked forward to receiving a timely follow-up report on its pending concluding observations.

30. **Mr. Avtonomov** (Country Rapporteur) said that, in the light of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, he asked whether the mechanism to protect and promote women's rights focused on the rights of women of African or indigenous descent in particular, and requested more information on the functioning of that mechanism. With respect to transatlantic cooperation, he wished to know whether the State party intended to take up an observer position at the African Union.

31. **Ms. McDougall** asked whether pregnant teenagers were allowed to remain in school and whether support was provided to render continuous schooling a viable option.

32. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that the Embassy in Addis Ababa had been opened just a few months previously and the process of accreditation of the Ambassador to the African Union had not yet been completed.

33. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that there were as yet no support strategies to enable pregnant teenagers to pursue their education. Uruguay had developed a stringent and dynamic policy aimed at preventing gender-based violence and offering support and services to victims. The Action Plan 2016-2019 for a life free of gender-based violence included ethnic and racial dimensions in the conceptual framework, the guiding principles for its implementation, and monitoring and evaluation indicators. Ethnic and racial dimensions had also been included in the input documents for the proposed comprehensive legislation on gender-based violence. According to the records, 11.5 per cent of all cases of gender-based violence involved women of African descent, a figure which indicated that victims were now lodging complaints and that such racial violence was no longer tolerated. The phenomenon had previously impeded access to justice, because the victims had lacked trust in the law enforcement regime. The National Institute for Women had a Department for Women of African Descent and provided training courses for all staff dealing with women victims of domestic violence.

34. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that steps had been taken to launch a comprehensive National Care System. Pilot projects for adolescents would be implemented in 2017 in three educational establishments. The "Uruguay Grows with You" programme also addressed the problem of teenage pregnancy. Data had been compiled for the past three years concerning support for vulnerable families.

35. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that women of African descent and indigenous women participated in most of the institutional mechanisms and programmes listed by the delegation.

36. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, referring to the historic genocide of indigenous peoples, expressed regret at the delegation's comment concerning the lack of indigenous communities. If there were only indigenous individuals and families, he wondered who had been consulted regarding ILO Convention No. 169. He asked whether the political will existed to pursue national policies and to allocate budgetary funds for the recovery of indigenous languages and the protection of indigenous culture.

37. Welcoming the steps taken to preserve the customs and culture of people of African descent, he urged the State party to take equally vigorous action to protect their rights. He requested further clarifications regarding the percentage of people of African descent and

indigenous people in the State party's prisons. The Committee would welcome a commitment by the State party to adopt a national policy to combat racial discrimination rather than separate small-scale programmes.

38. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) acknowledged that the legacy of indigenous culture and the culture of people of African descent had been omitted from Uruguayan history for many years. She reiterated, however, that people of indigenous origin did not live together in communities. No resources were allocated in the national budget for the recovery of indigenous languages or culture.

39. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that gender-based domestic violence and workplace and sexual harassment did not necessarily have a racial dimension. However, judges might conclude in some cases that the gender-based dimension was aggravated by racial hatred. The predominant indigenous language in the region was Guaraní, which did not require protection, since it was, for example, an official language in Paraguay.

40. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the periodic report presented a clear review of the procedures for the development of programmes and policies in recent years. The existing mechanisms incorporated an ethno-racial dimension and the variable of ethnic and racial origin had been included in state registers. The aim was to coordinate all mechanisms with an ethno-racial dimension in a comprehensive policy, an approach that would replace isolated small-scale actions by State bodies.

41. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) acknowledged the importance of remaining vigilant with respect to racism and of requesting input from all persons who were calling for a paradigm shift. Policies should not be limited to the provision of assistance and protection. A holistic approach should be adopted with a view to bringing about a transformation of society on behalf of the persons concerned. It was essential to incorporate experts from the community of African descent in the project.

42. **Mr. Calí Tzay** said that there seemed to be a form of structural racism in the State party. He enquired about the action that might be taken to address the structural issues.

43. **Ms. McDougall** agreed that it was important to adopt a holistic approach to existing problems and to ensure that affected groups participated in the process. While careful planning was appropriate, she urged the State party to speed up the move from policymaking to effective action on the ground.

44. **The Chair** said that the variables mentioned by the State party in the report should be incorporated in the planning of mainstream initiatives from the outset.

45. **Mr. Marugán** referred to paragraph 18 of the previous concluding observations (CERD/C/URY/CO/16-20), in which the Committee had expressed concern about the lack of sufficient information on sentences handed down for acts of racial discrimination and had recommended that prosecutors, judges and lawyers should be trained in how to deal with such acts. The State party had not responded clearly to that recommendation. It was also unclear whether the State party was fully aware of the difficulties involved in filing complaints. According to the delegation, the existence of evidence of criminal intent was more important than the number of sentences handed down. However, if offences such as incitement to hatred or discrimination could not be proven, it would be difficult to issue appropriate convictions. In addition, many people failed to submit complaints because of the possibility of secondary victimization and because they were not familiar with the legal system and were unaware of their rights. In fact, the legislation failed to mention racial or ethnic discrimination. He enquired about measures to facilitate the access of victims to justice.

46. With regard to corporate entities, he assumed that a corporation that promoted incitement to racial hatred could not be recognized. He enquired about the action taken by

the State in such circumstances. The Committee had recommended in its previous concluding observations that the State party should prohibit organizations that promoted and incited racial discrimination. The State party had failed to respond to that recommendation. He also enquired about the procedure for lodging complaints in that regard.

47. He asked whether the State party conducted surveys of people of African descent, indigenous peoples and migrants to establish whether they considered that they were victims of discrimination. He asked whether the State party's judges, prosecutors and police officers included persons of African descent. Lastly, he enquired about the action being taken to address the informal economy.

48. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that certain police officers received special training in investigating offences committed by corporate entities. The entities were prosecuted and the President of the Republic could also intervene if necessary. With regard to private-sector companies, there was a strong trade union movement in Uruguay. The unions included experts in the area of racial discrimination and complaint procedures. Moreover, all categories of public officials who detected such irregularities in the course of their work were required to report them.

49. Gender-based and sexual violence presented a major challenge. Specific legislation had been enacted to address the problem and people were encouraged to file complaints. Revictimization was a constant problem. A victim who lodged a complaint concerning racial discrimination could face diverse reprisals. The legislation therefore provided for oversight and therapeutic care.

50. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that the country's judicial system was generally sound, but the problem of racial violence presented a major challenge in terms of awareness-raising, training and effective action to address the issue. It was also essential to undertake an analytical survey of the difficulties encountered in prosecuting perpetrators for offences characterized as incitement to hatred and racism. Most of the complaints lodged with various entities had not been effectively addressed and it was extremely difficult to find witnesses who were prepared to come forward. Uruguay would therefore welcome the Committee's recommendations in that regard.

51. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that training sessions on the implementation of the Affirmative Action Act had been conducted for judicial officials, excluding judges, in the current year. A recent national survey on young people in Uruguay had included questions related to discrimination; however, while no survey focused solely on the issue of discrimination in Uruguay had been undertaken to date, it was a worthwhile recommendation.

52. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that it was unfortunate that the country's National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office was not represented at the dialogue with Uruguay. In its absence, he would be interested to hear more about that institution's budget and its status in the country.

53. He wished to know what concrete measures had been taken to raise awareness among the wider public of the Affirmative Action Act and other legislation designed to improve the situation of persons of African descent. He wondered whether the Government collected information, perhaps in the form of surveys, which would enable it to pinpoint the extent to which those laws had become embedded in society. He would be interested to know whether, in civil cases related to discrimination and racism, provision was made in Uruguayan law for the reversal of the burden of proof. In that connection, and noting that reference had been made to certain cases involving discrimination in the workplace, he asked what level of compensation had been awarded to victims and whether the delegation could provide any further statistical data in that regard. Lastly, information regarding the

rights of indigenous people, persons of African descent and migrants in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals would be welcome.

54. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that, although it could not be present for the dialogue, the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office had fully participated in the preparation of the periodic report of Uruguay and had presented its own report to the Committee. Moreover, it had confirmed having received the budget it had requested.

55. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that major strides had been taken towards achieving 8 per cent representation of persons of African descent in government departments. Awareness-raising campaigns regarding that quota had been undertaken among the relevant departments, and the latest figures for 2016 bore out those efforts, with 10 per cent of posts in public office currently being occupied by persons of African descent. Moreover, legislation had very recently been enacted which prevented certain government agencies from recruiting new candidates unless they had established a plan for ensuring compliance with the 8 per cent quota and for conducting promotional campaigns in that regard. Failure to comply with the terms of the new law would result in 8 per cent of their budget being fenced off to prevent them from filling vacant posts until they could prove their compliance with the new rules.

56. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) said that the concept of reversal of the burden of proof existed in relation to employment and other matters, but not in respect of articles 149 bis and 149 ter of the Criminal Code regarding hate crimes and discrimination. In a similar vein, compensation had been awarded only in labour disputes, none in civil cases relating to hate crimes and discrimination. Lastly, the website of the Ministry of Social Development had an entire section on activities concerning persons of African descent. It gave information on the workplan of the Ministry, including the training it was providing to all the human resources departments of government agencies to ensure that the 8 per cent quota was met. All those departments were scheduled to have received that training by the end of 2016.

57. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that no survey had been conducted to verify the impact on, or the perception of, wider society in respect of the Affirmative Action Act. However, there had been vigorous public debate of the issue. Furthermore, efforts were being made to engage with persons of African descent at the grassroots level and to empower them to exercise their rights. The Department of Women of African Descent of the National Women's Institute maintained open lines of communication with civil society and worked to strengthen the rights of women of African descent.

58. **Ms. McDougall**, while welcoming the fact that quotas had been established with regard to public sector employment, asked whether any similar strategies were in place for the private sector.

59. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that, at the present time, the only quota systems applied related either to the public sector only or, in respect of the private sector, to persons with disabilities.

60. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that the National Women's Institute had a gender equality policy for the public sector that would be applied to private enterprises in the future.

61. **Ms. Mohamed** said that her question from the previous session regarding how many members of parliament were of African descent had not yet been answered. She also wished to know whether any strategies had been adopted to prevent racial discrimination in schools, particularly in relation to the early years, and whether interracial marriage was permitted in the State party.

62. **Ms. Hohoueto** said that, if she had understood correctly, a third of the juvenile prison population was of African descent; if that was the case, then it was of serious concern. She wondered whether the State party had examined the causes underlying that imbalance and whether measures were being taken to reverse the trend and integrate those young people through education and apprenticeships. Moreover, were juveniles held in separate detention facilities to adults?

63. **Mr. Scavarelli** (Uruguay) said that he wondered whether perhaps the figures given previously had caused some confusion. To clarify, there were 509 juveniles in places of detention, of which 35 were of African descent, meaning that 7 per cent — not a third — of the juvenile prison population was of African descent. In addition, juveniles who were deprived of their liberty were housed separately from adults irrespective of the category of offence committed.

64. **Mr. Graña** (Uruguay) added that perhaps the confusion had been compounded by the fact that 30 per cent of the juveniles participating in a Ministry of Social Development reintegration programme were of African descent.

65. **Ms. Moreira** (Uruguay) said that of the 99 representatives in the chamber of deputies, only two — one male, one female — were persons of African descent, and there were a further two representatives who were alternates. Interracial marriages did, of course, take place in Uruguay. In that connection, the National Women's Institute was including interracial marriages as a variable in a forthcoming survey on domestic violence, with a view to gaining a better understanding of the role of power in those relationships. Lastly, a didactic guide on combating discrimination had been developed and included early years' education.

66. **The Chair** said that she wished to voice concern that the term “community” was only being used in relation to persons living physically in the same space. One could surely be part of a community, such as an indigenous community, without necessarily living in the same area.

67. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that he wished to thank the delegation for what had been an open and sincere exchange. However, it was clear that problems remained that would be reflected in the Committee's concluding observations. In the light of the genocide and forced displacement of the indigenous communities that had occurred in the country's past, it was important for measures to be taken to rebuild those communities, reconstruct the public memory and make space available in which those communities could live and grow. Many indigenous people were living in urban areas, which complicated the development of a sense of community. The situation of the Roma people in Uruguay should also be taken into consideration. It was pleasing to note, however, that the State party was ready to respond to those challenges.

68. **Ms. Costa** (Uruguay) said that she wished to thank the Committee for a fruitful dialogue, which had provided an opportunity for reflection on the progress made and the challenges still to overcome in Uruguay. Every effort was being made by the Government to put in place workable policies to fight racial discrimination and combat the structural inequalities affecting the Afrodescendent population. As a result, the quality of life of vulnerable groups of society was improving. It was true that certain groups required more attention and, in that regard, the Government looked forward to receiving the recommendations of the Committee, which it would widely disseminate in Uruguay.

69. **The Chair** said that she wished to acknowledge the consistent support of the Government of Uruguay in terms of various United Nations initiatives, including its engagement with countries such as Burundi.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*