



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Summary record of the 2907th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 17 August 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Shepherd

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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 fifth to eleventh periodic reports of Zimbabwe (CERD/C/ZWE/5-11; CERD/C/ZWE/Q/5-11)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Zimbabwe joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe), introducing his country's combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports (CERD/C/ZWE/5-11), said that national laws, including the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act and the Immigration Act, were gradually being aligned with the new Constitution, adopted in 2013, and the definition of racial discrimination contained therein was in conformity with the Convention. His Government had not declared any reservations regarding the scope or definition of racial discrimination in domestic law in relation to the Convention. The Prevention of Discrimination Act domesticated the provisions of the Convention. Under the Constitution, citizenship was granted on grounds of birth, descent and registration; rights were afforded to all citizens on an equal footing, and race was not a factor in its revocation.
3. As part of ongoing efforts to redress the land tenure system and the racial imbalance in landownership patterns that had been inherited at independence, the Government had embarked upon a massive land reform programme from 2002 to 2013. A global compensation agreement with former farm owners had been drawn up in 2020, through a sectorwide consultative process, reflecting the Government's commitment to a land redistribution process that restored the integrity and dignity of all the people of Zimbabwe. Laws against illegal land occupation were enforced.
4. The right to education was enshrined in the Constitution and governed by the Education Act, which provided for the right to education for minority groups without discrimination and prohibited discrimination in school admission. Measures were being taken to address inequalities in education. Under the new Constitution, all the country's 16 languages were taught in schools, whereas only 3 had been used in the past.
5. Five independent commissions, including the Human Rights Commission, had been established in line with the Constitution to support democracy and good governance. They were empowered to investigate cases of racial discrimination in accordance with their mandate.
6. The Government continued to strengthen implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, with a view to ensuring the protection of refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons in the country. A response strategy to climate-related displacement had been adopted in order to address the challenges facing internally displaced persons. Action had been taken, including the securing of support and resources, to enhance the livelihoods and welfare of refugees at Tongogara refugee camp.
7. A national referral mechanism for vulnerable migrants had been developed in 2019. It defined the roles of the different stakeholders involved in, inter alia, identification, referral and assistance for migrants, and linked them together to ensure protection of migrants' rights. Reception centres at the country's main ports of entry provided shelter and assistance to migrants without discrimination. A safety and repatriation centre in Harare provided assistance mostly for older foreign nationals who were returning to their countries of origin.
8. Despite his Government's efforts in terms of diplomatic engagement, a raft of illegal, unilateral and coercive measures imposed on Zimbabwe by a number of Western powers remained in place. The measures had inflicted widespread collateral damage, particularly by weakening the financial and banking sectors, which had had a negative impact on all Zimbabweans and undermined efforts to uphold the rights under the Convention. Dissemination of the Convention had been impeded owing to a lack of adequate resources, stemming, inter alia, from the restricted fiscal space caused by the coercive measures and the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

9. It was important to note that, regrettably, the shadow report was characterized by misinformation regarding the adequacy of the country's legal framework and the implementation of the Convention in the country. It had been designed to depict Zimbabwe as a lawless country and deliberately mislead the Committee. While the shadow report maintained that the country's labour laws did not represent the informal sector, the Labour Act did in fact apply to both the formal and the informal sectors. The shadow report also recommended courses of action that were considered illegal the world over, such as unregulated vending in undesignated areas. The use of hate speech contained in the report, especially that targeting employers who were foreign nationals, was designed to antagonize and was deeply regrettable.

10. He underlined that his Government objected to the use of the term "massacres" in references by the Committee to the disturbances which had occurred in parts of the country shortly after the attainment of independence in 1980. The events in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces were a political matter, which had concluded in 1987 with the signing of the Unity Accord.

11. It was crucial to reiterate that Zimbabwe had been born out of a protracted liberation struggle to reverse entrenched racism practised by a colonial minority settler regime. His country stood fully committed to using all means available to adhere to the Convention, as the creation of a non-racial society remained a cornerstone priority of his Government.

12. **Ms. McDougall** (Country Rapporteur) said that the delegation should rest assured that the Committee was aware of the struggles of all post-colonial countries to overcome the challenges inherited by colonialism and would bear Zimbabwe's history in mind as it considered its country report.

13. She would welcome statistics on the composition of the State party's population, including ethnic or linguistic minorities and all non-nationals, such as asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons. Noting that the provisions of the Prevention of Discrimination Act were limited in scope and the definition of racial discrimination in both the Act and the Constitution omitted mention of the grounds on which descent might be claimed, she said she would be interested to hear whether the State party was going to address those issues. She would like to know which laws infringed the right to equality and non-discrimination, when and how it was planned to amend them and which provisions of the Convention were still to be incorporated into national law.

14. She was concerned about reports that the killings that had occurred in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces in the early 1980s remained a source of ethnic tension, that there had been no accountability for the deaths and that the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission had not effectively contributed to reconciliation in that regard. Information would therefore be appreciated on the composition and activities of the Commission, the ethnic background of its members, whether victims of the events were involved in its activities, and what it had done to meet its constitutional responsibility to engage in public truth-telling about the events. She wished to know what steps had been taken to ensure that the victims had access to effective legal remedies and that all claims were investigated. She would like statistics and information on complaints relating to the events that had been submitted to the Commission or the courts, as well as on the number of cases investigated, persons punished for such crimes, victims awarded compensation and the amounts thereof, and persons who had received rehabilitation and support through the Commission's programmes. She asked what measures had been taken to prevent ongoing conflicts fuelled by those past events. She would appreciate comments on allegations that State authorities prevented survivors of the events in Gukurahundi from engaging in commemorative activities and mourning the dead or disappeared: had the allegations been investigated and, if so, what had the outcome been?

15. She would welcome statistics on the representation of ethnic minorities in the Government, the Parliament and in other political decision-making bodies in the State party, including at the regional level, and in the civil service, as well as information on any language requirements for employment with the civil service in certain regions and the languages in which the public could access public services. She asked whether any special measures were in place to ensure adequate political representation of ethnic minorities at all levels.

16. She was concerned about reports that historical tensions between the Shona-speaking majority and the Ndebele-speaking minority had resulted in the economic marginalization by the Shona-led Government of the regions with large Ndebele-speaking populations; statistics on infrastructure investments and other governmental support, disaggregated by region, would therefore be helpful, as would socioeconomic indicators and information on the ethnic composition of those regions. Information would be appreciated on any measures taken to ensure equal social and economic opportunities for regions with large ethnolinguistic minority populations. She would welcome the delegation's comments on allegations of violence by the State authorities against individuals and communities who held dissenting political views, and on measures taken to address and prevent such occurrences.

17. The Committee was aware of reports that land redistribution had favoured persons linked to the ruling party; in that regard, she would be grateful for statistics on beneficiaries of the land reform policies, including on financial and technical support and machinery received under those policies, disaggregated by ethnolinguistic categories and gender.

18. She asked whether the results of the 2020 land audit were available or when they would be, and whether they would include information on the ethnic background of landowners and the persons who had benefited from land reform policies. She would like information on the action taken by the Zimbabwe Land Commission to ensure accountability, fairness and non-discrimination in the administration of agricultural land vested in the State, on the reasons why persons who in the past had been classified as coloured were prevented, in law or in practice, from accessing land, and on reports that white farmers continued to be targeted and harassed.

19. With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, she would be grateful for statistics showing the degree to which the response to the pandemic, including the provision of health services and vaccinations, had benefited all people equally.

20. The Committee was concerned about reports that the livelihoods and traditional lifestyle of some indigenous communities were under threat, partly on account of the expropriation of their traditional land and the imposition of hunting bans. It wished to know whether the indigenous communities affected by such decisions were consulted and accorded the right to prior informed consent and whether they could challenge the decisions. The Committee would also be grateful for information on legislation that protected the livelihoods and traditional lifestyles of such communities and measures to assist them in meeting basic needs, such as food security and the right to public health, medical care and social security.

21. As the Committee was concerned about the discriminatory stereotypes that had been disseminated regarding certain indigenous communities, it wished to know whether the State party had conducted any awareness-raising or educational campaigns to eliminate such prejudices and negative stereotypes. In the light of reports that the languages of certain indigenous communities were close to extinction, she asked which communities were affected and what steps were being taken to assist them in preserving their languages.

22. According to the State party's report, all 16 official languages were taught in schools. She would appreciate information on the number of pupils who were taught in their mother tongue and how many had difficulties in accessing such education. She also wished to know how the issues of discrimination and racial diversity were reflected in the curriculum and what strategies were employed to promote the principles of tolerance and respect for diversity and understanding among different groups. Referring to the concern expressed by the Committee in its previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/304/Add.92](#)) regarding racial segregation in schools, she would welcome quantitative and qualitative information about the current racial and ethnic mixture in educational establishments. She also wished to know whether families of all ethno-linguistic groups had access to schools on an equal basis and to classrooms with diverse student bodies.

23. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, while the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act complied with article 4 (a) of the Convention in that it categorized the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred and incitement to racial discrimination or violence as an offence, its section 42 stipulated that the offence must have been committed publicly and the perpetrator must have intended to cause the offence or realized that there was a real risk or possibility of doing so. The Committee had stated in its previous concluding

observations that the inclusion of the “risk element”, which was replicated in section 6 (1) of the Prevention of Discrimination Act, weakened the provisions, since article 4 of the Convention did not limit or place conditions on the prohibition of racist statements. He wished to know how many legal proceedings had been instituted under the two pieces of legislation. It would also be useful to know whether the word “publicly” had been judicially interpreted and whether cases had been dismissed under section 42 for lack of proof that an offence had been committed publicly, or for lack of proof of intention to cause the offence or realization of a real risk of doing so. He asked whether the State party would ensure that prosecutions were flawless by removing the unnecessary elements from the two pieces of legislation.

24. The Committee commended the State party for having amended section 3 of the Unlawful Organisations Act to enable the President of the Republic to declare an organization unlawful if there were reasonable grounds to believe that its activities were aimed at promoting, inciting or propagating racial discrimination. It wished to know whether any organization had been declared unlawful and whether any presidential decision had been challenged.

25. It would be useful to know whether racist motivation was recognized as an aggravating circumstance under the State party’s criminal legislation. The Committee would welcome statistics on registered complaints before the courts or any other national institution concerning acts of racist hate speech and racist hate crimes, including on the Internet and through media outlets, on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, and on any reparations provided to victims.

26. He wished to know how many investigations of alleged racial discrimination had been conducted by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission under section 42 of the Criminal Law Act, section 6 (1) of the Prevention of Discrimination Act or any other relevant legislation, and how many cases had been referred for further investigation or prosecution. He would also welcome information on the number of recommendations made by the Commission under section 243 of the Constitution and on any action taken on them by other institutions.

27. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that the Committee’s previous concluding observations had been issued prior to the development of a follow-up procedure. Following the current interactive dialogue, the Committee would request the State party to provide information within one year on its follow-up to certain recommendations in respect of which concrete results could be achieved within that period. The basic aims of the procedure were to maintain a dialogue with the State party and to provide it with an opportunity to demonstrate the action that had been taken to address the issues that had been highlighted. The Committee attached great importance to the timeliness of the interim report.

28. **Ms. Tebie**, referring to paragraph 15 of the State party’s report, said she would like to know whether the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act had been reviewed and whether the Citizenship and Immigration Board had been established. If so, the Committee would welcome statistics concerning the number of people who had been granted citizenship and those whose citizenship had been revoked, as well as information on the composition of the Board. If not, what was the prospective timeline and how were such issues currently addressed?

29. **Ms. Esseneme**, noting that section 42 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act prescribed a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year for the offence of racial hate speech, said she would be grateful for information on the procedures for investigating such cases, for instance whether a formal complaint was required from the victim. She also wished to know whether compensation would be awarded to victims.

30. In the light of the mention in the State party’s report that non-governmental schools charged exorbitant fees and that educational establishments were required to request authorization for any increase in school fees, she wished to know whether education was provided free of charge in government schools.

31. **Ms. Tlakula** said that, although paragraph 166 (b) of the State party’s common core document ([HRI/CORE/ZWE/2021](#)) referred to the Women in Politics and Decision-Making

Strategy as being designed to achieve gender balance in politics and decision-making positions, the Committee had been informed that, in 2019, women accounted for 44 per cent of members of the Senate, 32 per cent of members of the National Assembly and 14.6 per cent of chief executive officers of parastatal bodies. In addition, 20 boards of stock-exchange-listed companies were composed solely of men, 16 had one woman member, 6 had two women members and 11 had three women members. Only 5 of 60 listed companies were chaired by women and only 3 of the 64 chief executive officers of listed companies were women. She wished to know what measures were being taken to accelerate the appointment of women to leadership positions in both the private and the public sectors. The Committee would also appreciate statistical data concerning the women mentioned, disaggregated in terms of race and ethnic origin.

32. The Committee noted the measures that had been taken under the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act to support persons who had been excluded from the economy in the past. It would welcome statistics, disaggregated by race, ethnic origin and gender, concerning persons, companies or associations that had benefited from the Act.

33. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would be interested in hearing about the role played by civil society in drafting the State party's report. He also wished to know whether the Unlawful Organisations Act was related in any way to the bill to amend the Private Voluntary Organisations Act to be debated in Parliament the following week, which reportedly provided for repressive measures, such as the dissolution of civil society organizations or the imposition of fines. In addition, civil society contributions to the bill had reportedly been deleted.

34. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 300,000 persons in the State party were currently at risk of statelessness. A series of laws, in particular the Citizenship Act No. 23 of 1984, reportedly denied citizenship of Zimbabwe to persons of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian origin. On the other hand, article 43 of the Constitution guaranteed the right to citizenship for all such persons. He therefore wished to know what action the Government was taking to align the country's legislation with the Constitution, whether the State party intended to ratify the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and whether it planned to draw up a national action plan to end statelessness, in line with the UNHCR Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014–2024.

35. A number of people had been unable to establish their nationality because they lacked birth certificates owing to their parents' demise during the Gukurahundi events. He asked whether the Government would consider enacting legislation to protect them and a law to protect human rights defenders.

36. Lastly, he wished to know whether staff of the law enforcement agencies had been familiarized with human rights norms, particularly those enshrined in the Convention.

37. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** asked whether education was compulsory and provided free of charge in public schools.

38. **Mr. Guissé** noted that the Constitution accorded the right to citizenship to nationals of member States of the South African Development Community (SADC), such as Mozambique or Zambia, if they had been born in Zimbabwe. He would therefore like to learn why the 35 per cent of non-citizens who were from Mozambique and 34 per cent who were from Malawi mentioned in the report had not applied for citizenship.

The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

39. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe) said that data from the 2022 census showed that 99.7 per cent of the population were of African descent, 0.1 per cent of European descent, 0.1 per cent of Asian descent and 0.1 per cent of other mixed races. Persons of African origin were not divided into Ndebele and Shona. In fact, the category referred to as Shona included several different ethnic groups. Zimbabwe was not divided along ethnic lines but rather into different regions.

40. There was no discrimination in Zimbabwe against any group of citizens, including those described as ethnic minorities and white persons. In line with the constitutional

prohibition on discrimination, the Government had enacted legislation and implemented policies to give effect to inclusivity for all citizens and had instructed ministries to develop programmes specifically aimed at minority tribes; for instance, children from the Doma and Tshwa San tribes were all targeted by the Government's educational assistance. Sustainable livelihood programmes had been rolled out in communities. In general, programmes aimed at empowering communities were not targeted on the basis of ethnicity but to achieve regional balance, as provided for in the Constitution.

41. Regional balance in political representation was ensured by allocating six additional parliamentary seats reserved for women to each province, regardless of its population size. In the Senate, unless a seat was vacant, fully equal gender representation was ensured by a system in which female and male candidates alternated on electoral lists. The constitutional framework provided for the equal political participation of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic origin, and for consideration of the need for representation of all regions in decisions on appointments to high political office.

42. The Government had consistently initiated programmes to provide vital civil registration documents such as birth certificates, national identity documents and passports to all its nationals, including ethnic minorities, and migrant communities. Some of the programmes involved bilateral engagement with the countries of origin of persons at risk of statelessness. Pursuant to a cabinet directive, the accessibility of civil registration had been improved through the introduction of mobile registration facilities, which meant that documents could be issued to ethnic communities in their areas of residence.

43. The land reform programme, under which more than 360,000 families had been resettled, was being implemented in a non-discriminatory manner. Applicants were not asked to state their tribal affiliation, and settlements based on ethnic lines were not encouraged. The focus in resettlement was not applicants' origin but ensuring that every Zimbabwean had access to land. The situation whereby mixed race, or "coloured", persons had previously been identified with a "00" code, meaning that they were not considered citizens, had been rectified and they now enjoyed the same constitutional right to access to land as all Zimbabweans.

44. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccination, had been assured without regard to ethnicity and equally across provinces. Measures had been taken to improve access to education and break down racial barriers in schools. The Government had begun to implement the provision specifying free basic education for all contained in the Education Act, which had helped the country achieve the highest literacy rate in Africa. The number of educational institutions had significantly increased since independence; there was now a secondary school for every primary school and a State university in every province.

45. Following the end of the War of Liberation in 1980, a policy of national reconciliation had been announced. Shortly after independence, the Gukurahundi disturbances had occurred, influenced by the country's close proximity to South Africa with its apartheid regime. The disturbances, which had not been confined to the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, had created victims on both sides of the conflict. A political settlement had been reached in 1987 and a general amnesty declared. Following the elections of 2018, the President had tasked traditional leaders with finding solutions to unresolved issues, such as the need to issue birth and death certificates and organize reburials. It was not, however, possible to violate the amnesty agreement, and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission was not mandated to deal with the issue.

46. Regarding hate speech, the Constitution prohibited all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of ethnicity, race, culture and language. The constitutional provisions had been given effect through various pieces of legislation, including the Prevention of Discrimination Act, the Criminal Law Code, the Domestic Violence Act and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act. However, in Zimbabwe, hate speech was not aimed at racial groups but at political parties. Individuals were targeted based on their party affiliation, regardless of their race, and all political parties were multi-racial. For that reason, no statistics on racially motivated hate speech were collected and no prominent cases of race-related hate speech had been reported.

47. **Ms. McDougall** said that the Committee required statistics to ascertain whether policy intentions had been realized on the ground. For example, it would be useful to have statistics on the number of persons vaccinated against COVID-19, which would demonstrate whether the response had been equal across all regions. While it was desirable to identify all citizens as Zimbabweans rather than dividing them into ethnolinguistic categories, it was impossible to achieve equality without collecting data in order to determine which special measures were required and to assess their impact.

48. It was her understanding that, while traditional leaders were responsible for handling practical issues relating to civil registration that had arisen from past conflicts, the constitutional role of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission was to help people deal with their feelings about those conflicts to allow them to move forward. She would like clarification as to whether the Commission was considered to have completed its work in that regard and would no longer be funded by the State.

49. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation could provide the Committee with statistics on land reform, as well as data on the rate of vaccination against COVID-19, disaggregated by province. However, it could not supply any data disaggregated by tribe or ethnic origin, because the Government did not gather data on those characteristics. Gender parity had more or less been achieved in the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court and the Senate, but remained an aspiration in respect of the National Assembly, where a total of 60 seats were reserved for women and the remaining 210 seats could be contested by anyone. It was hoped that the women occupying the reserved seats would serve as role models for the next generation of women. Zimbabwe had a general policy that the composition of boards of directors must, as far as possible, be gender-balanced, although other considerations, such as capability, were also taken into account.

50. **The Chair** recalled that, after the dialogue, the State party would have 48 hours to provide additional information, including statistics, in writing.

51. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe) said that the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission was fully operational and would continue to be funded through an annual budget allocation. It had not been established to deal with issues relating to the Gukurahundi disturbances: its purpose was to foster national cohesion and social harmony and to resolve political and other conflicts. Cases that had been closed because an amnesty had been granted to the perpetrators could not be reopened for the purposes of restorative justice. Traditional leaders, as custodians of local customs and culture, helped their communities to deal with emotions stemming from past conflicts by performing rituals to appease the spirits of the deceased and bring peace to their families. His Government would welcome advice from the Committee as to what else could be done to support people emotionally.

52. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** asked whether it was still the case that a woman could not register her child in order to obtain a birth certificate unless she was accompanied by her husband or a male relative and that, in cases where a Zimbabwean woman was married to a foreign national, the woman's children were not granted Zimbabwean nationality unless they had been born out of wedlock.

53. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe) said that all children whose mother or father was Zimbabwean were entitled to Zimbabwean nationality.

54. **Ms. Tlakula** said that she would like data, disaggregated by gender and race, on the composition of the boards of directors of the companies listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. She had not yet received answers to her questions regarding the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act.

55. **Ms. Tebie** said that the delegation had not yet responded to her questions on the review of the Citizenship Act and the Immigration Act.

56. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she had not yet received answers to her questions regarding the application of section 42 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. Given that primary education in State schools was free of charge, she would like to know which schools were concerned by the regulations on school fees mentioned in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the State party's report.

57. **Mr. Diaby** said that the delegation had not yet responded to his questions on the participation of civil society in the preparation of the State party's report, the bill that would amend the Private Voluntary Organisations Act, the provision of human rights training to the police and the progress made towards adopting a law to protect human rights defenders.

58. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, while it might be true that most cases of hate speech in Zimbabwe were related to factors other than race, he would nevertheless appreciate replies to his questions concerning section 42 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, which covered a range of protected characteristics, including race, tribe and religion.

59. **Mr. Ziyambi** (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation would provide the Committee with data on the composition of the boards of the companies listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. The Government was in the process of aligning the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act and the Immigration Act with the Constitution. In the meantime, judges were required to interpret all legislation in the light of chapter 4 of the Constitution, on human rights and freedoms, and the international conventions to which Zimbabwe was a party. No one had had their citizenship revoked; on the contrary, steps were being taken to ensure that citizenship was granted to all those who were eligible for it under the Constitution. The majority of Mozambicans in Zimbabwe had entered the country as refugees rather than migrants and were therefore afforded special treatment.

60. Since there were no pending cases of hate speech before the courts, it was not possible to say what percentage of such cases were related to race or other characteristics. However, hate speech was prohibited by law, and any gaps in the law were remedied by the fact that all legislation must be interpreted with due regard for the Constitution. He agreed that hate speech must be prohibited by law to ensure that it did not occur.

61. It would not be appropriate for him to comment on draft legislation that had not yet gone through the proper parliamentary and consultative process and been enacted, such as the bill to amend the Private Voluntary Organisations Act. Moreover, since that bill was intended to regulate a specific sector and did not concern the issue of race, it fell outside the scope of the dialogue.

62. Regarding the adoption of a law to protect human rights defenders, the Government did not support the idea of enacting legislation to protect a single group of people. The country's laws were designed to protect all citizens and to accord them the same rights irrespective of their social status.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.