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Summary record of the 3425th meeting

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Chair: Mr. Iwasawa

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant
(continued)

Fifth periodic report of Mauritius (continued) (CCPR/C/MUS/5; CCPR/C/MUS/Q/5; and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mauritius took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Gopaul** (Mauritius) said that the reported cases of elder abuse involved emotional, financial and physical abuse, neglect and other forms of ill-treatment. Protection against forced labour for migrant as well as other workers was provided for under the Constitution and other domestic laws on such matters as human trafficking, employment rights and occupational health and safety. The Government had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).
3. The employment of children under the age of 16 was prohibited, and young persons were not permitted to undertake work that could jeopardize their health, development or well-being. The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training was responsible for inspecting businesses, monitoring compliance and detecting cases of child labour. Employers who infringed the law were prosecuted. Approximately 2,400 inspections had been carried out between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2017, and no cases of child labour had been found. It was true, however, that a small number of cases of children employed in agriculture or as street vendors had been reported. In order to further strengthen measures to combat child labour, the Ministry was working with the national statistics office on a database for use in mapping child labour. A special hotline had also been established so that people could report cases of human trafficking and child labour, but no cases of the worst forms of child labour had been reported in Mauritius.
4. The independence of the National Human Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission was guaranteed by law, and each body had its own budget. The National Human Rights Commission had been accredited as an A-status institution in 2014, following its restructuring and was now fully staffed. Both institutions were chaired by legal experts, and their administrative and support staff were either appointed by the head of the civil service or recruited directly through job postings.
5. One of the 33 cases referred to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal had been rejected, while the remaining 32 were pending examination. None of the cases related to sexual orientation. A total of 20 cases concerning sexual orientation had been lodged with the Equal Opportunities Commission; 14 of those cases had been examined, 4 cases had been withdrawn and 2 remained pending. Of the cases examined by the Commission, six had been deemed beyond its purview and three had been referred for conciliation; in the remaining five cases, no evidence of discrimination had been found.
6. Statistics relating to domestic violence over the previous five years indicated that more women were coming forward to report cases of violence, partly because they had more confidence in the improved protection framework. Measures to combat domestic violence and provide support to victims included court protection orders, the provision of counselling and legal advice, follow-up visits, temporary shelters and referrals to other institutions, as appropriate, while measures targeting perpetrators focused on intervention, prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration. A 2012-2015 national action plan aimed at putting an end to gender-based violence provided for legislative amendments, capacity-building efforts, awareness-raising campaigns, research and media education and advocacy. The first phase of work had begun on the establishment of a command centre for the prevention of domestic violence pursuant to recommendations made by the National Coalition against Domestic Violence in its 2015 report.
7. There were two shelters for victims of domestic violence in Mauritius, in addition to a shelter for women and children in distress. The Government planned to open a fourth shelter in the western part of the country. Reports that the police had refused to take the

statement of a woman victim were somewhat surprising, since police were duty-bound to take down statements. However, it was possible that the woman had been advised to report the case to the police in another locality. Any victim could report an incident to police headquarters.

8. **Mr. Shany** said that he would appreciate clarification as to why it would be necessary to amend the Constitution in order to abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

9. With regard to the question of the legislatively mandated denial of bail, he asked whether the reasoning behind the 2006 decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the case of *The State v. Khoyratty* could also apply to terrorism cases. He would appreciate a response to his earlier request for examples of the types of prohibited clothing or objects covered by the State party's amended counter-terrorism legislation, as well as clarification as to how those provisions were applied without engaging in discriminatory practices.

10. On the issue of human trafficking, he would like to know what measures the State party was taking to address the concerns identified by the United States Department of State about shortcomings in the areas of services for adults, shelters for victims, coordination, assistance and the slowness of the judicial process. There were also concerns that the fact that the National Human Rights Commission had received no reports of human trafficking potentially reflected a low level of awareness of the complaints procedure.

11. The Committee had received reports of migrant workers living in harsh conditions and of foreign labourers having to pay a sizeable fee in their home country before coming to work in Mauritius. It would therefore be helpful to know what measures the State party was taking to monitor living conditions and the recruitment process for migrant workers.

12. It would be useful to know why the system under which people suspected of having committed an offence were initially charged on a provisional basis had not been abolished. Information would be welcome on the status of the draft police and criminal evidence bill and on the level of evidence required to justify a lawful arrest. If bail was granted under the provisional charges system, on what basis could it be denied? There were concerns that the practice of charging people on a provisional basis could unjustly harm their reputation and that charges were sometimes brought without sufficient supporting evidence. In that regard, it would also be helpful to know whether steps had been taken to review articles 5 (1) (k) and 5 (4) of the Constitution. There were concerns that persons who were denied or could not afford to post bail remained in detention for lengthy periods of time. It would be useful to know whether the problem was widespread and what criteria were used to set bail.

13. Were there plans to extend the use of video recordings to all interviews, rather than using them only in high-profile cases? Further information would be welcome on the use of pretrial detention in the State party. He would like to invite the delegation to provide information on the impact of the establishment of a specialized division of the Supreme Court in terms of expediting criminal proceedings and reducing the use of pretrial detention, particularly for persons who were ineligible for bail or financially unable to post bail.

14. He would appreciate more information on the number of cases in which DNA evidence had been used to exonerate a defendant. Having done away with its biometric database pursuant to a Supreme Court judgment, did the State party have any plans to develop new legislation in that regard? Although the State party had indicated that it did not conduct surveillance or intercept personal data, it appeared that the Government was considering allowing the interception of data exclusively for the purpose of combating cybercrime. Had those powers been introduced and, if so, within what legal framework? On a related note, with regard to section 25 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, further information would be appreciated on provisions relating to the maximum length of time that data could be retained and on the legal safeguards and framework governing data access.

15. **Mr. Politi** said that he welcomed the establishment of a specialized police complaints division within the National Human Rights Commission and would like to know how many complaints had been lodged between 2011 and 2015, what types of

violations they concerned and how many investigations had been initiated during that period. Further information would be welcome on the available remedies, the video recording of confessions, and the specific mandate and budget of the police complaints division. The State party had indicated that, in cases where a person had been unlawfully detained and tortured, compensation would be awarded “not on account of the torture, but on account of the unlawful arrest”. What was the reasoning behind that policy and what level of compensation was awarded in such cases?

16. He would appreciate information on the investigations conducted into deaths in detention, including the reported death of Iqbal Toofany, and their outcomes. On a related note, it would be useful to learn what the outcome had been in the two cases of suicides by persons in custody in 2016 that had been referred for disciplinary action and what the findings were in the case of suicide that, in its written replies (CCPR/C/MUS/Q/5/Add.1), the State party had said was still under investigation. Information would be appreciated on the mandate, budget and human resources of the recently established Independent Police Complaints Commission. Was it now fully operational?

17. With reference to the concerns raised by the Committee against Torture in paragraph 14 of its concluding observations on the third periodic report of Mauritius (CAT/C/MUS/CO/3), he would like more information on the conditions in the Beau Bassin, Petit Verger and GRNW prisons. Given that the number of inmates in the Beau Bassin prison had fallen only slightly between February 2015 and November 2016, the problem of prison overcrowding did not appear to have been solved by the opening of a new high security prison in Melrose. He would like to know what measures had been taken to ensure the separation of remand and convicted prisoners and to reduce the number of persons in pretrial detention. He would appreciate statistics on the number of foreign detainees in Mauritian prisons, the number who had been repatriated and the average duration of the repatriation process.

18. Lastly, he would welcome more information on the nature, timing and extent of civil society participation in the reporting process; the criteria that were used to select civil society representatives to participate in that process; and any other efforts that had been made to raise public awareness of the Covenant and the Optional Protocols thereto.

19. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that he would appreciate disaggregated statistics on the number of judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials who had received human rights training through the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies in the previous three years and more detailed information on the content of that training. He also wished to know how many judges and prosecutors had been appointed in the previous three years, how those persons had been selected and what mandatory initial training they had received.

20. He wondered whether the hearings of the Commission of Enquiry on Drugs Trafficking were still ongoing; what measures would be taken to prevent suspects in drug cases from being detained on a provisional charge for an excessive length of time; and whether the police and criminal evidence bill addressed that issue. In addition, he would like to know whether the State party planned to amend its legislation to reinstate remission for persons convicted of offences under the Dangerous Drugs Act and whether steps had been taken to amend section 31 of that Act, which provided that suspects could be remanded in custody for 36 hours without access to legal counsel.

21. It was unclear whether the juvenile justice bill was still under consideration by the Attorney General’s Office, how the juvenile justice system would be changed if that bill were passed and whether the bill provided for the establishment of specialized courts and judges and the appointment of specially trained investigators.

22. He would also appreciate clarification as to whether the issue of children being tried in the absence of a legal representative or guardian had been addressed; whether such children had access to legal counsel; what results had been achieved so far under the strategic plan on rehabilitation youth centres for 2015-2025; whether the amendments to the Juvenile Offenders Act and the Reform Institutions Act had been enacted; and whether a decision had been reached on the minimum age of criminal responsibility. He would welcome information on the number of boys in correctional youth centres and the number of girls in rehabilitation youth centres, as well as on the complaints mechanisms that were

available to those children. In addition, he would like to know whether a correctional youth centre for girls had been set up.

23. Noting that the lack of legislation on asylum procedures and statelessness had resulted in violations of the principle of non-refoulement, he asked whether the Government planned to establish a comprehensive legal framework to ensure access to basic assistance and fair, efficient procedures for refugees and asylum seekers and to provide them with safeguards, including the right to appeal. He wished to know whether the State party was considering acceding to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto and whether it planned to ratify the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. He would like to know whether there were plans to establish a government agency that would receive and screen asylum seekers, trafficking victims and other persons in need of international protection; whether an effective process of appeal against deportation orders had been established; and, if so, whether that process had a suspensive effect.

24. Lastly, he wondered when the Government planned to abolish the travel restrictions that had been imposed on migrant workers living with HIV/AIDS and whether the delegation could provide statistics on the number of persons subject to those restrictions and on the consequences of those restrictions, disaggregated by failure to find employment, loss of employment and repatriation.

25. **Ms. Brands Kehris** said that her questions on the political participation of women at the national level, including in the National Assembly and as government ministers, had not been fully answered. She asked whether the State party planned to amend the anti-discrimination provisions contained in the Equal Opportunities Act and the Constitution in order to harmonize them and establish an open-ended list of prohibited grounds for discrimination. Did the exception provided for in section 16 (4) (c) of the Constitution mean that foreigners were not protected against discrimination of any kind in either the public or private spheres?

26. It would be useful to know how many cases had been investigated and prosecuted under the sections of the Criminal Code listed in paragraph 49 of the State party's replies to the list of issues and how many of those prosecutions had resulted in sanctions, as well as whether the State party planned to review its legislation, including the Criminal Code, to ensure full compliance with article 19 of the Covenant.

27. Noting with concern that there was only one State-owned national television network, she asked what obstacles were preventing a private television network from being established; whether the Government was considering privatization; and whether there were plans to ease restrictions on foreign broadcasting to promote media pluralism. In the light of reports that the media regulator was staffed by representatives of ministries and the Attorney General's Office and chaired by a person appointed by the President, she wished to know how the independence of that regulatory agency was guaranteed and what measures would be taken to strengthen the independence of media oversight.

28. Lastly, noting that a bill on freedom of information was being drawn up as part of the Government Programme 2015-2019, she would be interested to learn what progress had been made in that regard; whether the bill would establish an independent oversight and complaints mechanism; and how soon the bill would be adopted.

29. **Mr. de Frouville** said that his questions on abortion had not yet been answered. The delegation's response regarding section 250 of the Criminal Code, which established penalties for sodomy, required further clarification: it was unclear why the issue was considered a sensitive subject and whether it had been debated in the press or discussed in the course of public consultations. With respect to the case involving the ill-treatment of a transgender person by the police, the delegation's suggestion that the victim could have filed a complaint about police brutality with the police was not a satisfactory response. He would welcome further comments on the case, including clarification as to whether the State party had been aware of the allegations.

30. He would appreciate information on the work carried out to date by the ministerial committee set up in January 2016 to examine the question of electoral reform. What measures had been taken to ensure that all communities were equally represented in the civil service and in high-level and other government posts? Since the State party had so far provided few details in that regard, he wondered whether equal representation was a sensitive subject. He would be grateful for a description of the prevailing social system in Mauritius, including an indication of the extent to which it was meritocratic.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

31. **Mr. Dhalladoo** (Mauritius) said that a number of answers would be provided in writing. He wished to underline the fact that Mauritius was a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multireligious country. Respect for different cultural practices was therefore vital, and certain issues were highly sensitive.

32. **Ms. Goordyal-Chitto** (Mauritius) said that former Chief Justice of Malta, Vincent De Gaetano, had taught a human rights training course for legal professionals at the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies. The case of Liyakkat Polin, which concerned the issue of whether time spent in prison on remand should be counted as time served, was no longer being pursued before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, with the parties having decided to explore other remedies. Regarding the possibility of abolishing the death penalty, the Constitution could be altered only in accordance with article 47 thereof.

33. In *The State v. Khoyratty*, the Supreme Court had declared a provision of the Dangerous Drugs Act to be unconstitutional. The question of whether the Court's reasoning in that case could be applied mutatis mutandis to the Prevention of Terrorism Act was hypothetical, as no case had been brought in relation to the latter law. If one were, it would be for the Court to rule on the matter. When the Prevention of Terrorism Act had been amended, the concerns of the public had been taken into account, and it had not been the legislators' intention to infringe on religious liberties.

34. In 2016, Mauritius had been removed from the Tier 2 watch list for trafficking in persons maintained by the Department of State of the United States of America. Working sessions had been convened with representatives of the United States authorities, to whom it had been explained that it was sometimes easier to prosecute trafficking offences under the Criminal Code or the Child Protection Act. Determined efforts were being made to eliminate trafficking; a draft national action plan had been prepared and an interministerial committee had been set up to address the issue.

35. The use of the provisional charges system had originated under British rule, and change could not occur overnight. However, the issue was to be dealt with in the police and criminal evidence bill. There was a need to build on existing capacity before the current practice of video recording police interrogations in high-profile cases involving serious crimes could be expanded to include a wider range of offences. The Assizes Court sat every day during its regular terms, and there were two judges to facilitate and expedite criminal proceedings. Judges were recruited by the Judicial and Legal Service Commission from within the Attorney General's Office or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and received in-house induction training. There were currently no plans to review legislation pertaining to the collection of biometric data.

36. In the Government's view, there was no potential for conflict between the Covenant and domestic legislation. The Constitution was given a generous and purposive interpretation, and it was recognized that all domestic laws should be construed so as to give effect to the Covenant.

37. The Dangerous Drugs Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which contained provisions on incommunicado detention, had inbuilt safeguards designed to ensure that the human rights of suspects were respected. Persons on remand were held in the same facility as convicted prisoners only in a very limited number of cases when no alternative course of action was available, often because they could not be held in a detention centre any longer. The Transfer of Prisoners Act had already been applied on several occasions to repatriate foreign inmates. Persons who had committed an offence under the Dangerous Drugs Act could be denied bail, but courts had a margin of discretion in that regard. The Commission

of Enquiry on Drugs Trafficking, which was chaired by a former Supreme Court judge, would consider the question of admission to bail.

38. The juvenile justice bill remained under consideration by stakeholders. The child protection and care bill would address the possible establishment of juvenile courts and matters related to the age of criminal responsibility. Child victims had access to legal counsel through the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, while child offenders were guaranteed representation under the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act. The Juvenile Offenders Act was under review.

39. Owing to financial and geographical constraints, the Government had no immediate plans to ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the Protocol thereto or the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, or to set up an agency tasked with screening asylum seekers. Asylum seekers were not returned to their countries of origin where there were substantial grounds for believing that they would be in danger of persecution or that there was a real risk of harm. Instead, efforts were made to find a suitable third country. Deportation decisions could be contested judicially in accordance with the Deportation Act.

40. The comments that had been made during the interactive dialogue about expanding the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Constitution would be conveyed to the authorities. One ground that was under consideration was disability, and a disability bill was being finalized.

41. In line with the Government Programme 2015-2019, a bill on media ethics and freedom of the press had been drafted and was being examined by the Prime Minister's Office. A freedom of information bill had also been drawn up and was under consideration by stakeholders. Although government officials sat on the board of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, safeguards were in place to ensure that the Authority could operate in an independent manner and that persons aggrieved by a decision of the board had access to legal remedies.

42. As to the case involving a transgender person named Giovanni, who had allegedly been insulted, humiliated and brutalized by the police, she did not have precise information to hand, but would communicate the Committee's concerns to the authorities.

43. The ministerial committee on electoral reform was working hard on a number of complex, sensitive issues that would require time and extensive consultations in order to resolve.

44. **Mr. Gopaul** (Mauritius) said that the inquiry into the death of Mr. Iqbal Toofany while he was in police custody had been completed and the case file has been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for further advice. Since the promulgation of the Police Complaints Act of 2012, complaints concerning police brutality had been referred for investigation to the Police Complaints Division of the National Human Rights Commission. The following statistics were available for the period from 2014 to 15 October 2017: 2,177 cases had been reported; 1,875 cases had been resolved; 311 cases were pending; 2 cases had been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; 5 cases had been referred to the Discipline Forces Service Commission; and 1 case had been referred to the Attorney General's Office for the processing of compensation. The National Assembly had already made provision for the budget of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, and its support staff had been identified. The Commission would become operational as soon as its members had been nominated by the President of the Republic.

45. Private digital online television outlets were operational and widely consulted. The social media were also very popular, especially among young people. The National Assembly's deliberations had been broadcast live on national television since 2016.

46. There was no overcrowding in detention facilities since the operationalization of Melrose Prison. With regard to the question of suicides in prisons, the Prime Minister's Office and the State Law Office had received a report from the National Preventive Mechanism Division recommending, in particular, that cell security should be strengthened. The recommendations had been transmitted to the Commissioner of Prisons, and the Prime

Minister's office and the State Law Office were closely monitoring their implementation in cooperation with the Prison Department.

47. Mauritius was recognized as having one of the world's most progressive laws on HIV/AIDS. While HIV/AIDS was not deemed to constitute a disability, persons living with HIV/AIDS were in some circumstances entitled to a disability pension. Discrimination against such persons was explicitly prohibited, and the HIV and AIDS Act of 2006 provided protection for their rights and privileges. It also provided for the establishment of an enhanced prevention programme and a national mechanism for testing and counselling. The Civil Status Act, the Immigration Act and the HIV and AIDS Act had all been amended in March 2008 to allow Mauritians to marry foreigners living with HIV/AIDS. Owing to the country's small size and the fact that it was so densely populated, access to the country for foreign students and workers living with HIV/AIDS had been regulated. However, Mauritius was currently drafting its second-generation Decent Work Country Programme with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the elimination of HIV/AIDS-related travel restrictions was being discussed.

48. As noted in the written reply to question 26 of the list of issues, there was no legal requirement for the Public Service Commission or the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to make appointments on the basis of candidates' membership in a given community or ethnic group. The Disciplined Forces Service Commission was guided by the following principles in the performance of its functions: a responsible attitude; efficiency; unrelenting and quality service; respect for the Constitution; integrity and independence; fairness and equity; team spirit; and innovativeness. While recruitment was based on merit, action was also taken in support of minorities. In July 2016, the Government had agreed to implement the recommendation of the Truth and Justice Commission that an anti-discrimination unit should be established to combat the use of racist language and to initiate discussions regarding the contribution of minorities to society. Steps were also being taken to create more stable social and economic conditions for minorities and to implement a housing scheme for members of minority groups and persons living in poverty.

49. Since 2011 the Government had been working with the National Development Unit, the National Human Rights Commission, the Ombudsperson for Children and the Equal Opportunities Commission to raise awareness of human rights and the provisions of all ratified international human rights treaties throughout the country. From August 2011 to the end of 2014, some 4,160 participants from NGOs, women's associations and vulnerable groups had attended awareness-raising sessions. The National Human Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission, in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, had launched a human rights education programme for young people in about 35 centres throughout the country. Some 2,000 young people had benefited from the programme, which focused on basic human rights, ratified treaties, the Constitution and human rights institutions. Material on human rights was also being incorporated into school curricula at all levels of education. Information on human rights was also broadcast by the media.

50. The Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Justice, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), planned to issue an updated compendium of the concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies in December 2017. The National Human Rights Commission was providing technical support for the establishment of a human rights documentation centre at the National Library of Mauritius. The authorities were also working with OHCHR and the United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator on the publication of a five-year digest of human rights statistics.

51. Consultations on the preparation of periodic reports were conducted with all stakeholders. As there were so many NGOs, the Mauritius Council of Social Services was usually requested to submit a list of registered NGOs that dealt with specific issues. In 2016, a standing technical interministerial committee had been set up, with technical assistance from OHCHR, to prepare periodic and follow-up reports for treaty bodies.

52. **Mr. Shany** asked how bail was set and whether it was affordable for persons in pretrial detention. With regard to question 17 of the list of issues (CCPR/C/MUS/Q/5), he

asked whether the practice of using detention as a means of thwarting a future risk still existed. It was to be noted that the Supreme Court had stated that the authority granted to police officers under section 5 of the Constitution did not absolve them from their duty to exercise such authority in a reasonable and non-abusive manner. With regard to the death penalty, he failed to understand why an amendment to the Constitution was required in order to refrain from imposing the death penalty.

53. **Mr. de Frouville** said that he understood that the State party did not intend to repeal or amend article 250 of the Criminal Code, which dealt with sodomy, but clarification would be appreciated concerning the criteria used to determine the degree of sensitivity surrounding that topic. Was that determination based on opinion polls, a parliamentary debate or solely on impressions regarding the cultural or religious sensitivities of certain communities?

54. **Mr. Politi**, noting that the case file on Mr. Iqbal Toofany had been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, said that he would like to learn more about the results of the investigation into the cause of his death. He would also welcome information on the two cases concerning suicides of persons while in custody that had been referred to the Discipline Forces Service Commission for appropriate disciplinary action and specifically on their outcomes.

55. **Ms. Brands Kehris**, noting that a bill on freedom of the media had been drafted several years previously, asked why it was still pending and when it was likely to be enacted by the National Assembly.

56. **Mr. Gopaul** (Mauritius) said that the death penalty had not existed since the promulgation of the Abolition of Death Penalty Act in 1995. All death penalties had thereafter been commuted to life sentences. Mauritius had not yet signed the Second Optional Protocol to the Convention because it understood that Section 4 (1) of the Constitution, which stated that no person should be deprived of his life save in execution of a court sentence, would first need to be amended, and such an amendment was not currently politically feasible. If the prior amendment of the Constitution was not required, then Mauritius could accede to the Second Optional Protocol.

57. The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions had not yet released the findings of its investigation into the case of Iqbal Toofany. A report on the disciplinary action taken in the two cases of suicide just mentioned had been submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

58. **Mr. Dhalladoo** (Mauritius) said that he wished to assure the Committee that the delegation had taken note of all its observations and that the Government would give them due consideration within the parameters of the needs and cultural rights of Mauritius, which was a multiracial and multicultural country. Responses would be submitted in writing to the questions that the delegation had been unable to answer in the course of the interactive dialogue.

59. **The Chair** said that, while the Committee was aware of the cultural diversity of the State party and the sensitivity of some issues, it was important to underscore the universality of human rights. The interactive dialogue had been a constructive exercise, and the Committee had taken note of the numerous advances that had been made, such as the enactment of the Equal Opportunities Act, the establishment of the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Independent Police Complaints Commission, and efforts to bring about electoral reform. The Committee's remaining concerns regarding a number of issues would be reflected in the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.