



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventy-fourth session

### Summary record of the 40th meeting\*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 29 September 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Crăciunecan-Tatu

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### Consideration of reports (*continued*)

- (a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

### *Third periodic report of Brazil (continued)*

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\* No summary record was issued for the 39th meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports (continued)**

**(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (continued)**

*Third periodic report of Brazil (continued) (E/C.12/BRA/3; E/C.12/BRA/Q/3; E/C.12/BRA/RQ/3)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Brazil joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation of Brazil to continue replying to the questions put by Committee members at the previous day's meeting.
3. **A representative of Brazil** said that policies were developed on the basis of data that reflected reality. Consultations were held under the racial equality programme with a view to gathering data from various research institutions to inform equality policies. The Ministry of Racial Equality held regional consultations that were designed to improve access to federal services, and meetings took place throughout the country to ensure that various populations, including Afrodescendent and traditional communities, could contribute to policies aimed at combating racial discrimination.
4. **A representative of Brazil** said that a working group had been established to update the programme on young people and rural development with a view to ensuring that young people could be involved in shaping food policy.
5. There was a system in place for reporting slave labour, the elimination of which was a government priority. Between January and May 2023, more than 1,200 persons had been rescued from slavery-like conditions following labour inspections. There were plans to hire an additional 900 labour inspectors.
6. Councils for social participation had been established in response to requests from civil society. The Ministry for Women had an ombudsman's office specifically for women and organized programmes of activities throughout the country to broaden access to rights and encourage participation in policymaking. In the aftermath of the high-profile and politically motivated femicide of Maria Bernadete Pacifico, the ombudsman for women had recommended the inclusion of a gender perspective in the actions of the relevant bodies and awareness-raising regarding violence against human rights defenders. Following an outcry about police killings, consultations had taken place with Indigenous women who had suffered police violence. Recommendations had subsequently been sent by the ombudsman to local justice bodies and the protection networks.
7. **A representative of Brazil** said that there had been an alarming rise in pollution that was affecting the health of Indigenous Peoples. The Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health had been involved in discussions on the Minamata Convention on Mercury, to which her country was a signatory. Partnerships had been developed with educational and research institutes on public health and clean-up efforts. The lands affected by pollution were monitored on an ongoing basis and there had been investigations into mercury contamination. A working group had been established to develop and coordinate monitoring activities for polluted areas. Projects to monitor the presence of toxins in drinking water were being carried out in Indigenous territories. A range of measures had been put in place to identify and notify the public about mercury poisoning, ensure access to specialized health care and raise awareness of the issue of pollution, all with a view to improving the health of Indigenous Peoples.
8. **A representative of Brazil** said that retirement benefits and benefits for persons with disabilities were administered by the National Social Security Institute, which was well-staffed. The Institute had offices in 1,500 municipalities as well as mobile units that visited Indigenous communities that were only accessible by boat. Welfare and retirement benefits were granted to 38 million families per year, and the total amount paid was 800 billion reais (R\$). Those benefits prevented people from falling into extreme poverty and hunger. The process for obtaining benefits was entirely digital, but applications could also be made by telephone or at the Institute's offices. There were plans to hire new staff for the Institute, and

current staff were offered bonuses for going above and beyond their duties. There were also plans to introduce telemedicine services for the granting of disability benefits.

9. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Rural Environment Registry was an interministerial effort that would contribute to managing public digital infrastructure in a transparent and interoperable manner.

10. Thousands of children had been removed from situations of child labour following labour inspections and been provided with social and educational assistance. Welfare councils and prosecution services were also involved with a view to ensuring accountability.

11. **A representative of Brazil** said that the intersectoral programme to eliminate child labour that had been in place since 2011 covered social work with families and social and educational services for victims of child labour. Efforts to prevent and eradicate child labour had been stepped up starting in 2013. Various strategies had been developed and guidelines were in place with a view to effectively protecting children, preventing the stigmatization of victims and educating people about the risks of child labour.

12. **A representative of Brazil** said that a programme for older persons had been established at the local level with the relevant agencies. Human rights training was provided to anyone working with older persons and action was taken to prevent violations of their rights and encourage their social participation. Similar training would also be offered to the public and community leaders. There were plans to launch a programme to monitor the situation of older persons and consult with them to identify violations of rights and obstacles to gaining access to rights. Work would be undertaken with government bodies and non-governmental organizations to develop and implement solutions to those problems.

13. A plan of action on homelessness would soon be launched to address the issues of housing, institutional violence, labour, income, health, food security and citizenship. The Housing First plan aimed to ensure immediate access to safe, individual community housing with support and assistance. There was an intersectoral committee on homelessness in which civil society participated.

14. The My House, My Life (Minha Casa, Minha Vida) Programme, as the most significant housing investment programme in the country, aimed to provide 2 million homes by 2026. Low-income families and homeless families would be included in that programme. Housing precarity had increased for families of African descent. Evictions had been suspended during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

15. The Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship had 10 councils for public consultations. Measures were being implemented to ensure gender equality and the participation of different racial groups in those bodies.

16. **A representative of Brazil** said that significant efforts had been made starting in 2003 to address hunger and poverty. Much progress had been made, but the impact of the economic and political crises had negatively affected poverty and food security indicators from 2015 onwards. After a reduction in poverty in 2020 owing to emergency income transfer programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the figures had worsened again in 2021.

17. The second report by VIGISAN had shown that, in 2021 and 2022, around 125 million people had been living with some degree of food insecurity. Food security programmes shut down in 2019 had been reinstated under the current Administration along with a range of bodies for the social participation of various groups. The National Council for Food and Nutritional Security had been reinstated, and the Sixth National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security would be held in 2023. The Food Acquisition Programme, launched in 2003, contributed to reducing hunger and poverty through the purchase of produce from family farmers by the Government and had resources to buy food for community kitchens, which fed the most vulnerable in society. The National School Food Programme allocated 30 per cent of its resources to buying produce from family farms, thus improving access to healthy food for the 40 million pupils attending public schools. That programme had been replaced in 2021 but relaunched in 2023 with a series of innovative measures to facilitate the participation of Indigenous Peoples, Quilombola, traditional and Afrodescendent communities, women and people involved in agricultural reform. A plan covering the period

from 2024 to 2027 would provide Indigenous communities with food that was in line with their dietary habits, giving preference to food that they had produced themselves.

18. **A representative of Brazil** said that the right to health for all was enshrined in the Constitution. Since the current Administration had taken office, efforts had been made towards achieving universal health coverage. The main achievements in 2023 had been related to food security, primary health care, mental health and sexual and reproductive rights. Efforts to improve health coverage included the deployment of 4,500 new family health teams and a US\$ 7.4 billion investment in primary health care. A programme was in place to increase the numbers of doctors in rural and economically disadvantaged areas. A new health-care funding model had been introduced in 2019 under the “Brazil Prevents” Programme with the guiding principle of increasing access to primary health-care services.

19. Work was ongoing to increase the number of beneficiaries of the Family Grant (Bolsa Família) Programme and the Continued Benefit Programme, who currently numbered 64 million. Most of the beneficiaries of that programme were people of African descent.

20. Following a drop in vaccination rates starting in 2014 and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, US\$ 30 million had been allocated to improving vaccination coverage, and vaccination campaigns had been stepped up. The Federal Court of Auditors had adopted measures to hold the previous Administration to account for actions that had contributed to a shortage of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Strategies were being developed to improve responses to emerging public health risks. The number of strategic health monitoring units had been increased from 55 to 180 and the number of epidemiology units in hospitals had been increased from 238 in 2022 to more than 800. A public health emergency unit had been established within the Ministry of Health, and there were plans to set up a national centre for epidemic intelligence to detect future public health threats.

21. The Government had established the Better at Home (Melhor em Casa) Programme to provide home-based health-care services to persons with reduced mobility, particularly older persons. With respect to mental health, 33 psychosocial care centres had been opened, 55 new therapeutic residence services had been established and 159 additional beds in general hospitals had been allocated to the provision of mental health care. Elsewhere, vocational training was being provided as part of a psychosocial care programme that had been specifically set up for Indigenous communities.

22. Improving sexual and reproductive health was one of the core priorities of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry was taking measures to improve access to contraception and legal abortion and to address the prejudice encountered by women who underwent abortions. As part of its commitment to establishing comprehensive rights-based health care for women, Brazil had left the Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women’s Health and Strengthening the Family. The Government recognized the need to develop a policy on abortion that would address the health, safety and security concerns of women and health-care professionals alike. As well as responding to the health-care needs and respecting the human rights of women, any measures developed under that policy would also be based on scientific evidence and would comply with all relevant legislation.

23. **A representative of Brazil** said that a large number of legal cases concerning the repossession of land had been suspended by the Federal Supreme Court during the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal actions generally pitted the interests of big landowners and large corporations against those of landless and socially vulnerable rural workers. The injunction on proceedings had come to an end in late 2022, putting many thousands of people at risk of eviction. In order to reach an agreement between the parties, the Federal Supreme Court had ruled that all such cases must be heard in mediation chambers that had been specially set up in courts throughout the country. At the same time, the Government had taken a number of measures to promote mediation and land conflict settlement in Indigenous, rural and urban areas. Specific government departments tasked with conflict mediation related to agrarian and Indigenous land had been created, while the National Institute for Rural Settlement and Agrarian Reform was working with the Ministry of Cities to help resolve conflicts concerning urban land. The Government ensured that any evictions that did take place complied with international standards, as well as with the regulations set out by the Federal Supreme Court and the recommendations of the National Human Rights Council. On a related note, a

national committee to combat violence in rural areas had been established by the Ministry for Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture in August 2023. Composed of representatives of 14 different ministries and public bodies, the committee's principal purpose was to take action to resolve the most complex land conflict cases in rural areas.

24. **Ms. Rossi** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee would like to know what measures the State party was taking to guarantee effective access to safe, non-punishable abortion, particularly for poor women of African descent. She also wished to know whether any measures were being taken to increase the range and quality of health-care facilities and services available for women seeking an abortion and what specific measures the State party was taking to reduce the number of deaths caused by unsafe abortions. It would be useful to hear what action the State party was taking to ensure that women, including those who had carried out their own abortions, had access to post-abortion services without discrimination and were not subjected to abuse or persecution. She wished to know whether any specific legislative steps had been taken towards decriminalizing abortion and whether the State party planned to amend existing regulations restricting access to medications for safe abortion, including misoprostol and mifepristone. The Committee would also welcome further information on the measures taken to reduce teenage pregnancies. In that regard, she wished to know what human, technical and financial resources had been allocated to improve the provision of sex education and what steps had been taken to ensure that comprehensive sex education was incorporated into all school curricula.

25. The delegation should indicate whether the State party had made any plans to revise its criminal legislation on drug possession, in particular the somewhat vague provisions on determining whether drugs were for personal use or not. She wished to know whether there were any plans to reinstate a national policy on harm reduction that would include cross-cutting measures and services adapted to the needs of different groups in accordance with their race, class, gender and other social characteristics. There had been allegations of human rights violations at the so-called therapeutic communities where medical attention and treatment were provided for drug users and persons with mental health problems. It would be helpful to know what measures had been taken to ensure that those communities were monitored and that all such allegations were investigated, perpetrators were punished and victims were granted adequate redress. She also wished to know whether measures had been taken to implement the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to provide psychosocial support to Afro-Brazilian women and communities that found themselves in perpetual mourning for murdered children and to families who constantly experienced militarized police violence in their homes and neighbourhoods without warning or warrant. More generally, she would be interested to hear what steps had been taken to review all policies facilitating the use of violence and lethal force by law enforcement officials in Afro-Brazilian communities.

26. Recently, serious human rights violations had been committed as a result of the State party's implementation of a development model built around agribusiness and the exploitation of natural resources. She therefore wished to know whether the State party intended to pursue that model and whether it would continue to implement it with the same vigour. It would be helpful to know which public body was responsible for authorizing the use of pesticides and whether there were any plans to review the list of authorized substances. An indication of the Government's position concerning the use of glyphosate, which the World Health Organization considered to be a probable carcinogen, would be of particular interest.

27. **Mr. Windfuhr** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be interested to hear how successfully the Ministry for Agriculture and Fishing and the Ministry for Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture managed to coordinate their work, given that they might not necessarily see eye to eye on issues such as agricultural policy and access to land. It would also be useful to know whether the Government had any plans to address the threat that climate change posed to agriculture in the State party. He would like to know what specific steps were being taken to address the concerns regarding the harmful effects of pesticides that had been expressed by communities who lived in the immediate vicinity of fields used for intensive agriculture activities.

28. He would also welcome further information on the measures being taken to address the situation of insecurity in many favelas that often resulted in inhabitants fleeing their homes to escape drug-related violence.

29. **Mr. Nonthasoot** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to know whether the Government planned to take any action to reduce the disproportionately high number of people of African descent who were imprisoned for drug-related offences. The Committee would also welcome updated information about the reform of criminal legislation on drug possession. Furthermore, it would be useful to know to what extent harm reduction programmes were being used as to reduce the number of drug users in the criminal justice system and whether those programmes were available at the regional and state levels.

30. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that, in view of the spread of false information in the State party during the COVID-19 pandemic, he would be interested to hear what measures the Government was taking to ensure that people in the State party were provided with accurate scientific information.

31. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** said that the Committee would welcome further information on the specific measures being taken by the State party in relation to care. For example, she wished to know whether any action was being taken to reduce the gap between paternity leave and maternity leave. Given that cardiovascular disease and diabetes were among the leading causes of death in the State party, she would also be interested to know what cross-cutting solutions had been developed to combat non-communicable diseases and their risk factors.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.05 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.*

32. **A representative of Brazil** said that the maternal mortality rate had risen to more than 100 deaths per 100,000 live births within the previous year. The Government was addressing that situation by improving access to primary health care and prenatal care, particularly for women of African descent and women living in rural areas. It had also set the goal of doubling the number of people with access to long-acting reversible contraception methods, including contraceptive implants, which were currently only available for a limited section of the population. The Ministry of Health was in the process of revising its programme for women's health, which included services for maternal health care, contraception and abortion, and representatives from state, municipal and federal administrations would soon meet to adopt the budget for the next cycle of the programme.

33. With respect to mental health care and support for drug users, the “therapeutic communities” were administered by the Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and the Fight against Hunger. A dedicated department for mental health had recently been created within the Ministry of Health and would soon be tasked with overseeing all aspects of public policy on mental health.

34. **A representative of Brazil** said that children were taught to care for their physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health as part of the primary school curriculum. By the age of 13 or 14 years, they were able to compare contraceptive measures and understood the role of contraception in preventing early pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections. Sex education had also been established as a cross-cutting theme in secondary education, meaning that it was addressed in classes on various subjects. The Ministry of Education was in the process of preparing two information booklets on sex education for teachers, one of which dealt specifically with the issue of sexual violence against children.

35. **A representative of Brazil** said that, in February 2023, in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and in response to the decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case concerning *Ximenes-Lopes v. Brazil*, the National Council of Justice had adopted a resolution establishing procedures for dealing with the specific needs of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities who were in police custody or who had been deprived of their liberty or received alternative sentencing.

36. Abortion was a particularly polarizing issue in Brazil. In September 2023, an action challenging the constitutionality of the criminal legislation on abortion had been brought before the Federal Supreme Court at the behest of its president, who had declared herself to

be in favour of decriminalizing abortions performed in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. On announcing the action, she had stated that the current legislation violated women's rights to freedom, including reproductive freedom, self-determination, intimacy and dignity. Bills on the decriminalization of abortion were also being debated in congress.

37. **A representative of Brazil** said that an interministerial working group composed of representatives of 20 government agencies had been set up in 2023 to draft a national care policy and a national care plan. The new instruments would be aimed at strengthening care services for children, young people, persons with disabilities and older persons, among others, as well as improving conditions for paid and unpaid care workers. The working group was currently conducting research into existing policies, programmes and services. The policy and plan would be developed using an intersectoral and participatory approach and would take into account considerations of gender, class, race, ethnic group, age, disability and geographic location. The instruments were scheduled to be delivered in 2024 and their implementation would be monitored until 2026.

38. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Government was firm in its conviction that regulated, socially responsible agribusiness was not incompatible with family farming and the production of healthy food. It had recently committed to investing nearly R\$ 80 billion in the biggest family farming plan in the country's history. Under the plan, the Government would provide families with technical assistance and would guarantee prices and a certain level of public purchases. Specific policies had also been put in place to promote the participation of minority groups and women, who were considered to be key stakeholders in family farming.

39. **A representative of Brazil** said that a psychosocial programme had been implemented to support the family members of victims of police violence. A project had been set up to assist individuals who had suffered violence at the hands of State actors, providing them with mental health care and support in their fight for memory, truth, justice and reparation. The project also focused on training experts in upholding human rights and strengthening good practices in psychosocial care.

40. A specific programme for young people of African descent, one of the aims of which was to protect them from violence, had been established under the Multi-Year Plan for 2024–2027. Some 20 ministries would be involved in implementing the programme, and a budget had been earmarked for the relevant institutional activities and measures to promote access to justice for young people of African descent.

41. **A representative of Brazil** said that the maximum maternity leave entitlement was 180 days. In certain cases, men could take up to 20 days' paternity leave. The National Congress was currently considering a bill that would enable persons with childcare responsibilities, whether biological parents, adoptive parents or other guardians, to share parental leave, thereby preventing such responsibilities from falling solely upon women.

42. **A representative of Brazil** said that programmes would be implemented to provide resources and equipment to community centres for children and adolescents at risk of violence or living in remote areas. The centres ran extracurricular and play activities and provided digital education.

43. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Federal Supreme Court had decided to prohibit the imprisonment of pregnant women and mothers with children under the age of 12 years.

44. **Ms. Oliveira** (Brazil) said that the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship had signed a cooperation agreement with the National Council of Justice, with a view to ensuring the uniformity of inspections conducted in prisons to prevent torture, guaranteeing accountability and implementing any necessary changes.

45. **A representative of Brazil** said that R\$ 3 million would be granted to enable civil society organizations tackling drug-related issues to work with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Racial Equality to reflect on how to ensure the effectiveness of drug policy and identify responses to the drug problem.

46. Work had resumed under a technical committee to consider alternative ways for the Government to improve the health of people of African descent.

47. **Mr. Abashidze** (Country Task Force), noting that the municipal, state and federal authorities were each responsible for specific stages of education, said that he would like to know whether municipalities and states were permitted to set their own education budgets and, if not, what steps the Government had taken to ensure that education establishments nationwide received equal funding. He wondered what measures, if any, were taken at the federal level to address the weaknesses in education infrastructure in certain regions. It would be useful to hear whether teachers' salaries varied from region to region and, if so, what steps were being taken to address those wage discrepancies.

48. He would appreciate an explanation of the extent to which families were expected to be involved in ensuring the realization of children's right to education, and a description of the rights and obligations of families in the education sphere. He wished to know whether families with same-sex parents had the same education-related rights as other families. It would be useful to learn whether the State party intended to maintain the special education classes provided for in Decree No. 10502/2020 or take steps to establish a fully inclusive system. In that connection, he would welcome details of any public funding earmarked for the implementation of inclusive education and any policies formulated to that end. He wished to know whether the Youth and Adult Education Programme had been able to reach young people, adults and older persons in rural areas who lacked access to education.

49. He would be interested to hear about any measures planned to eradicate functional illiteracy, which remained widespread. The delegation might explain why many rural, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous children dropped out of education after completing primary school and describe the steps taken to tackle the issue.

50. He wished to be informed of the results of the most recent assessment of the quality of education, conducted using the basic education development index, and whether the desired scores had been achieved.

51. He would like to know whether the State party intended to develop a strategy for updating, monitoring and evaluating its human rights education policy.

52. He wondered whether the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities and the National Plan for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities of African Descent ensured fulfilment of the immediate needs of Indigenous Peoples by addressing aspects such as the further demarcation of territory, compensation, consultation mechanisms and the protection of cultural property. He wished to know how the State party planned to increase the effectiveness of Act No. 10639/2003, which sought to raise awareness of Afro-Brazilian culture and identity.

53. He would appreciate information on the levels of Internet access in rural areas, on the steps taken to address the obstacles preventing children in rural areas from receiving an education during the COVID-19 pandemic and on what had been done to tackle the challenges that had already been identified prior to the pandemic.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.*

54. **A representative of Brazil** said that programmes had been developed to improve the school infrastructure in Indigenous communities, ensuring that such schools had adequate access to drinking water and sanitation facilities, and to provide initial and in-service training to Indigenous teachers.

55. The Government sought to promote a human rights culture by mainstreaming human rights education into all levels of the curriculum. It was currently assessing the national curriculum guidelines on human rights education; the results of that assessment should be released in December 2023 and would help the Government to improve its policy in that regard.

56. The Government was committed to reversing the rise in hunger and, for the first time in five years, had increased the funding earmarked for the National School Food Programme to approximately R\$ 5.5 billion. The Programme would deliver food to more than 40 million

children in State education and special education establishments, including in Indigenous and Quilombola communities.

57. The Ministry of Education was working closely with the relevant autonomous national bodies, providing them with R\$ 250 million to build day-care centres, schools and sports grounds across the country. The Government had ordered the resumption of unfinished building work in 3,500 schools and hoped to create approximately 450,000 new jobs in the State education system. A programme had recently been launched to connect more than 100,000 educational establishments to the Internet by 2026.

58. The percentage of illiterate 7-year-olds had risen from 39.7 per cent in 2019 to 56.4 per cent in 2021. A new children's literacy programme had been launched in June 2023 with a view to tackling that rise. All states and 96 per cent of municipalities had signed up to the programme. A department responsible for continued education and literacy among young people and adults had been re-established. The Ministry of Education was working with civil society organizations and state and municipal governments to develop a national pact aimed at improving the qualifications and literacy of young people and adults.

59. A programme had been established to give individuals the opportunity to receive an education outside of traditional school hours. Its objective was to improve students' academic results, increase their chances of attending university and obtaining a formal job and ensure realization of their social rights. The Government hoped that 3.2 million students would be enrolled in the programme by 2026. All states and 82 per cent of municipalities had signed up to the programme.

60. A quota system, which was reviewed every 10 years, had been established to facilitate access to university for students of African, mixed, Indigenous or Quilombola descent. The Government was currently examining the possibility of offering grants to such students to discourage them from dropping out of school at a young age. It had significantly increased the number and value of the grants available to vulnerable university students and students wishing to study at postgraduate or doctoral level.

61. **A representative of Brazil** said that the current Government had suspended Decree No. 10502/2020 following concerns that it might undermine the right of students with disabilities to an inclusive education by segregating them into special classes.

62. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Ministry of Culture had been reinstated in 2023 and was responsible for upholding cultural diversity, promoting Indigenous culture, popularizing books and reading and encouraging the participation of all communities in the development and implementation of cultural policies. It had a record budget of more than R\$ 10 billion and had invested R\$ 2 billion of that money during the Ministry's first 100 days of existence.

63. In 2020, the National Congress had adopted a law releasing emergency funding worth R\$ 3 billion to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative sector. That funding would be made available each year up to 2027 and had been used to provide an emergency income to cultural workers and subsidies for cultural spaces and companies.

64. Federal and state bodies were required to promote the participation in cultural projects of women, people of African descent, Indigenous Peoples, Quilombolas, nomadic peoples, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Those bodies could do so by establishing quotas or organizing activities tailored to the needs of specific groups. The Ministry of Culture was working to support those efforts, ensure that all groups enjoyed equal treatment and opportunities and provide compensation for any incidences of discrimination or marginalization.

65. The Ministry of Culture had just launched a competition as part of which prizes of up to R\$ 30,000 would be awarded to initiatives for the promotion and preservation of popular and traditional culture. Other prizes were awarded for projects on Indigenous culture or cultural diversity and for cultural projects working with older persons, persons with disabilities, persons with psychological disorders and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

66. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Ministry of Racial Equality had organized a range of activities to preserve the memory of Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous and Quilombola communities.

67. The Governments of Brazil and the United States of America worked together under the Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality. In January 2023, the President had approved a law designating 21 March as the national day for Afro-Brazilians, with a view to increasing the visibility of, and respect for, the traditions of that group.

68. A dedicated secretariat had begun work to determine the needs of Quilombola, traditional, Afrodescendent and Roma communities and identify solutions to the problems that they faced, with a view to formulating policies to support them.

69. A working group to combat “religious racism” had been established by decree and had begun work in May 2023. Its objectives included the analysis of that form of racism against traditional Afrodescendent communities and the development of policies to guarantee religious freedom. It had already examined complaints of racial violence against followers of Afro-Brazilian religions in order to determine its economic and social impact.

70. An interministerial working group had been established in 2023 to protect the Valongo Wharf archaeological site in Rio de Janeiro, which had been one of the main points of disembarkation for enslaved Africans arriving in Brazil. The aims of the working group were to maintain the site’s World Heritage status and to recognize and preserve African history and memory.

71. The Government had also implemented a project for the registration of *terreiros* (Afro-Brazilian religious temples), thus granting them formal status and enabling their participation in cultural initiatives. Part of the national policy for Quilombola territorial and environmental management was dedicated to ancestry, identity and cultural heritage. The objectives of the policy included strengthening the identity of Quilombolas, highlighting their stories, ancestry, way of life and culture, protecting their holy places, ensuring the environmental sustainability of religious practices and conducting research on their cultural heritage, with their consent and participation.

72. **A representative of Brazil** said that an entire generation of young people had benefited from the Family Grant (Bolsa Família) Programme, which was now 30 years old. By allowing children to go to school and eventually enter higher education or join the labour force, the Programme had contributed to overcoming intergenerational poverty and had enhanced social mobility. All beneficiary families received a guaranteed minimum income of R\$ 600; they also received an additional R\$ 150 for each child up to the age of 6 years and R\$ 50 for children aged 7 to 18 years. Beneficiary families were required to meet certain conditions: for example, children were required to attend school and pregnant women to undergo antenatal check-ups. The changes in the Programme had been designed to make the system fairer for larger families.

73. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would welcome further information on the issue of human rights education and, in particular, the question of how the authorities could reach those segments of society that were extremely hostile to the human rights agenda and resistant to new ideas.

74. **Ms. Lee** said that extreme inequality was a long-standing problem in the State party, and the Family Grant Programme, despite its important role in lifting people out of poverty, did not seem to have had a significant impact on reducing inequality. She would be interested to know whether the State party had analysed the root causes of economic inequality and taken specific measures to address them. What were the expected impacts of such measures?

75. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he would appreciate an explanation of the State party’s institutional framework for implementing the recommendations issued by human rights treaty bodies and other mechanisms. He would be interested to know what steps had been taken to combat disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

76. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he would be grateful if the delegation could address the questions raised concerning the use of pesticides and family farming.

77. **Ms. Rossi** said that she would be interested to know the current status of Constitutional Amendment No. 95 of 2016, which had introduced a ceiling on public spending, and whether the Government had reverted to a previous law as the basis for the allocation of resources. It would be useful to know what steps were being taken to establish liability for the deaths that had occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether the Government planned to adopt a policy on reparations for victims. She wondered whether there was any political will to shift the focus of the National Drug Policy, which was currently centred on public security, towards health and harm reduction.

*The meeting was suspended at 5.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.30 p.m.*

78. **Ms. Oliveira** (Brazil) said that the causes of inequality in Brazil included the lack of a consistent agrarian reform policy and the failure to regularize access to land and housing over a period of many years. In the 2024 budget, the Government proposed to increase funding for health, education and social assistance, recognizing the need for robust investment in those areas. The President had recently launched a programme to accelerate growth that included investment in socioeconomic development. The Government also aimed to reform the tax system, including through measures to tax the wealthiest, to tax offshore assets and to improve tax collection mechanisms.

79. **A representative of Brazil** said that all federative entities were involved in the implementation of the National Education Plan, a new version of which was under development for the period 2024–2034. One example of financial solidarity between the different levels of government was the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Enhancement of Education Professionals, which received resources from federal, state and municipal authorities and had an estimated revenue of R\$ 263 billion in 2023. In 2012, a coordinated action plan had been adopted to provide greater flexibility in the transfer of resources for education from the Federal Government to the states, the Federal District and the municipalities. To address the issue of low pay, the Government had established a national wage floor for education professionals.

80. Regarding human rights training for hostile segments of society, the Government was well aware that supporters of the political group that had been defeated in the 2022 general elections had not renounced their views – indeed, they had attempted to mount a coup d'état shortly after the new Government had taken office. The Government placed democracy above all other values and recognized the importance of human rights education for its preservation. The National Plan for Human Rights Education would be updated to take into account developments in Brazilian society, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Education was committed to including the National Guidelines on Human Rights Education in the basic and higher education curricula.

81. **A representative of Brazil** said that, following the events of 8 January 2023, the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship had set up a working group to combat hate speech and extremism, whose mandate included proposing public policies on human rights education. The working group had considered issues such as religious intolerance, the spreading of fake news, and misogyny and gender-based violence. In July 2023, the working group had published its final report, containing a set of strategies and recommendations for combating hate speech and extremism in various fields. Following on from that work, the Ministry planned to establish a permanent forum to discuss, coordinate and support activities and projects to combat hatred.

82. Regarding the implementation of treaty body recommendations, the Government was in the process of concluding a cooperation agreement with Paraguay, under which it was envisaged that Brazil would establish its own recommendations monitoring system within two years.

83. Constitutional Amendment No. 95 had been repealed and replaced with a new fiscal framework. Every year, limits would be placed on primary expenditure, adjusted for government revenue and inflation. The new framework aimed to avoid excessive spending during periods of rapid growth and to prevent paralysis of the public sector when the economy slowed and revenues diminished. It thus guaranteed the adequate funding of public services, with due oversight, while balancing social and fiscal responsibility.

84. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Government had launched several programmes to incentivize family farming, one of which envisaged the provision of credit, technical assistance and education for young people living in rural areas. The aim was to ensure decent conditions of work so as to encourage the children of rural workers to take up farming and provide continuity. Funding for the National Programme for the Strengthening of Family Farming had been increased, low-interest credit lines had been established for rural workers and agricultural machinery had been purchased for small-scale farmers. Agreements had been signed with higher education institutions to increase the number of courses provided under the National Programme for Education in Agrarian Reform.

85. **A representative of Brazil** said that the Federal Court of Auditors was investigating irregularities in the use of government resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. A parliamentary commission of inquiry had investigated the federal government response to the pandemic and had published its report. Act No. 14128 of 2021 provided for the possibility of compensation in the event of the incapacitation or death of health professionals as result of COVID-19 during the national public health emergency.

86. Brazil had 472 centres that provided psychosocial assistance for drug users. The Government did not intend to introduce compulsory admission or other measures that might violate the rights of patients; nor would it adopt measures that were not backed by scientific evidence. A harm reduction policy had been reintroduced and would be discussed during the fifth National Conference on Mental Health, to be held in December 2023.

87. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that it was very encouraging to hear that the State party was working with Paraguay to develop a recommendations monitoring system. The constructive dialogue had demonstrated the State party's commitment to implementing the Covenant and had been enriched by the strong engagement of civil society organizations.

88. **Ms. Oliveira** (Brazil) said that the dialogue had provided an opportunity to review her Government's policies through a human rights lens, reflect on the constant challenge of promoting economic, social and cultural rights in Brazil, examine in detail the Government's work in different areas and contemplate new possibilities. Although an exercise in accountability before the international community, the review would ultimately benefit the Brazilian people.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*