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Summary record of the 12th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 17 February 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu

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

Consideration of reports *(continued)*

(a) Reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant
(continued)

Fifth periodic report of Rwanda (E/C.12/RWA/5; E/C.12/RWA/Q/5;
E/C.12/RWA/RQ/5)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Rwanda joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Rwanda**, introducing his country's fifth periodic report (E/C.12/RWA/5), said that the report had been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and coordinated by the National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up, which was headed by the Ministry of Justice.
3. In 2023, Rwanda had further refined its governance framework by aligning the schedules of presidential and parliamentary elections to enhance efficiency and reduce electoral costs, thereby creating conditions for the effective implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.
4. At the institutional level, the Rwanda Forensic Institute, which had been upgraded in 2023, had strengthened its accountability mechanisms and enhanced its services, including those that helped to combat fraud and embezzlement.
5. Rwanda had made significant strides in strengthening its justice system. The Court of Appeal had been established in 2017 to deal with a backlog of cases, and an appeals tribunal had been established in 2024 to hear matters relating to refugee and asylum claims. Economic, social and cultural rights were enshrined in the Constitution.
6. During the reporting period, the ambitious Vision 2020 had been completed, and the implementation of Vision 2050 had begun. Building on the long-term strategic Visions, the first National Strategy for Transformation had yielded significant progress, as evidenced by the annual growth of the gross domestic product by an average of 7 per cent and the rise of per capita income to US\$ 1,040 by 2024. Life expectancy had increased to 69.9 years, and 96 per cent of the population had access to financial services. More than 1,600 kilometres of national roads and 4,100 kilometres of feeder roads had been constructed, and tourism revenues had nearly doubled since 2017, rising to US\$ 620 million in 2024.
7. In the area of healthcare, 7 new hospitals and 12 new health centres had been constructed, while 23 hospitals and 12 health centres had been upgraded or expanded. In addition, 58,567 community health workers provided comprehensive services in 14,837 villages. Approximately 93 per cent of the population was now covered by the community-based health insurance system. All health facilities were now paperless.
8. In 2023, the Government had partnered with BioNTech to set up a vaccine manufacturing facility that would have the capacity to produce up to 100 million doses of messenger RNA vaccines annually. Trials of new therapeutics for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and certain cancers would be conducted through the facility, and the vaccines it manufactured would be distributed to other member States of the African Union on a not-for-profit basis.
9. Between 2013 and 2024, 333,146 cows had been distributed to the equivalent number of households through the Girinka (One Cow per Poor Family) Programme.
10. **Mr. Emuze** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would welcome information on how the 2015 constitutional amendments giving priority status to the Constitution and organic laws above international human rights treaties had affected the State party's commitment to international human rights standards and whether the amendments allowed for the Covenant to be overridden in favour of domestic law. He would also like to learn about any training programmes for judges, law enforcement officers and government officials on the application of the Covenant. The delegation might provide examples of cases in which the Covenant had been invoked in domestic courts.
11. It would be useful to know whether the selection process for the National Commission for Human Rights was conducted by a committee appointed by the President and whether

commissioners required clearance from the Office of the Prime Minister to undertake official travel outside the State party. He wished to know whether the Government had accepted the recommendations made to it by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and what measures it was taking to ensure that the Commission functioned effectively and independently.

12. He would be grateful for details of any measures that had been taken to guarantee that defenders of economic, social and cultural rights could conduct their work without undue restrictions on their freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association and to protect them from harassment and intimidation, enforced disappearances and unlawful killings. The delegation might respond to reports that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) required a recommendation letter from the relevant district authorities prior to registration. He would welcome details of the legislative amendments on the registration and operation of opposition parties, including whether there were any obstacles that prevented such parties from promoting economic, social and cultural rights.

13. He would be curious to find out when the State party intended to finalize a national action plan for business and human rights, as well as what steps it was taking to put in place a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for human rights due diligence in business and to set out in law the legal responsibility of companies that were domiciled within the State party's jurisdiction with regard to violations of economic, social or cultural rights committed in the context of their operations, both in the State party itself and in other countries.

14. It would be interesting to learn about the measures that were in place to ensure that the State party met its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.

15. He wondered how the Government was addressing the stark inequalities in income and wealth, how it planned to improve the redistributive effect of its fiscal policies and what it was doing to increase the budgetary allocations for social spending on areas covered by the Covenant. It would be useful to know about the measures in place to combat corruption, particularly in public procurement and State-owned enterprises, as well as about the challenges that anti-corruption bodies, including the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Auditor General, faced in maintaining their independence and effectiveness.

16. It would be helpful for the delegation to comment on reports of persistent structural inequalities that affected, in particular, members of the Batwa community, women and girls, persons living in poverty and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and to indicate how the Government intended to tackle those inequalities. More specifically, he wished to know how the State party planned to address the lack of disaggregated data on the situation of members of the Batwa community and what steps it was taking to combat poverty, high infant mortality, malnutrition and lower educational outcomes among that community. Details would be welcome regarding the barriers that the Batwa community continued to face in obtaining land titles and the measures that were in place to prevent the forced displacement of members of that community from their ancestral lands and to ensure that they received adequate compensation if their land was expropriated. He wondered how the authorities ensured that members of the Batwa community were consulted on decisions that might affect them, with a particular focus on matters concerning their traditional land and territories.

17. He would like to know more about the steps that were being taken to increase women's representation in local administrations and the private sector, address the gender pay gap, combat discrimination against women and stereotypes that led to women bearing a disproportionate burden in terms of unpaid domestic and care work, and improve women's equitable participation in the labour market.

18. Lastly, he wished to know how the Gender Monitoring Office and its Gender Management Information System had contributed to tracking gender equality initiatives and how the Government worked with NGOs to combat gender-based discrimination, violence and harmful stereotypes.

The meeting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 3.40 p.m.

19. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the 2015 constitutional amendments had not impacted the upholding of international human rights standards, including those set out in the Covenant. In court, lawyers tended to cite the Constitution, and rarely invoked the Covenant directly, simply because the entirety of the Covenant's provisions were replicated within the Constitution itself. Ongoing training was provided to the judiciary and legal professionals, including by the Institute of Legal Practice and Development, on the invocation and application of international human rights agreements in the courts.
20. A rigorous selection process was in place for the appointment of commissioners to the National Commission for Human Rights. Pursuant to a presidential order, the members of the selection committee, which was independent, were drawn from civil society and academia.
21. When commissioners wished to undertake official travel outside Rwanda, they were obliged to follow the same process as government officials and submit to the Office of the Prime Minister, for information purposes only, a travel clearance document. Given the confusion that the name of the document appeared to cause, it had been decided that responsibility for travel clearance for commissioners would be transferred to the President of the Commission.
22. The right to peaceful association was recognized in the Constitution. No complaints of violations of that right had been received.
23. As the Committee had correctly observed, NGOs were required to obtain a recommendation letter from the local authorities in order to establish themselves in a given district. The purpose of the letter was to illustrate the contribution that the NGO intended to make to meeting the district's priorities and development goals.
24. He was unaware of any obstacles to the promotion of human rights by opposition groups. Like many other countries, Rwanda had established rules for the registration of political parties. Those rules had been tried and tested and did not amount to the suppression of opposition parties.
25. The Government recognized the importance of upholding human rights in the context of business. In 2024, it had organized a national dialogue on a national action plan for business and human rights and a National Conference on Business and Human Rights. At both events, the Government had consulted stakeholders, including businesses and civil society organizations. A first draft of the national action plan had been produced and was under review. It was hoped that the Cabinet would adopt the plan by July 2025.
26. Rwanda was on course to meet the objectives it had set itself under the Paris Agreement, including with regard to curbing carbon emissions from agriculture. The Government had taken steps to create green jobs and to support businesses that wished to adopt environmentally friendly practices. It had also launched an initiative under which young people were paid to plant trees.
27. The Government had invested heavily in areas that were important for social equality, such as the health sector. Thus, the community-based health insurance system had been extended to cover treatment for diseases such as cancer, which previously had been unavailable for persons on low incomes. Another significant intervention for bridging the income gap had been the Girinka Programme.
28. A policy of zero tolerance for corruption had begun to deliver successes. In 2024, Rwanda had improved its score in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index and had duly risen from forty-ninth to forty-third in the global ranking, making it the third-best-performing country in Africa.
29. Regarding the Batwa community, it was important to note that the Government's policy was that no one should be left behind. Unlike in some neighbouring countries, members of the Batwa community in Rwanda did not live separately in a particular place or designated area. For historical reasons, Rwandans of different ethnicities could be found in all parts of the country. Members of the Batwa community spoke the same language and faced the same issues as the general population. The Government sought to uphold the economic, social and cultural rights of all Rwandans without distinction. Measures to

improve land registration had yielded some success, particularly in terms of empowering communities and preventing and resolving legal disputes. Rwandan laws on expropriation were similar to those of other countries. Persons whose lands were expropriated – which might be necessary for developmental reasons – would receive fair compensation.

30. The Government had taken steps towards achieving gender equality. Women held over 63 per cent of seats in Parliament and were well represented at the various levels of government and in leadership roles in public institutions. The Constitution required at least 30 per cent of posts in decision-making bodies to be held by women. The high level of women's representation in decision-making bodies had empowered women to drive change, with cascading effects for gender equality in multiple policy areas. The Gender Monitoring Office systematically monitored respect for gender equality in various spheres and tracked the country's performance; it also published periodic reports that identified areas of weakness for the Government to act upon.

31. The Government recognized the specific nature of gender-based violence and the need to treat it differently from other crimes, providing victims with medical treatment and psychological support while simultaneously gathering evidence that could later be used in court. In keeping with that approach, Rwanda had developed the Isange One-Stop Centres, which provided holistic support to victims of gender-based violence. The centres were staffed by medical practitioners, psychologists, legal professionals and a member of the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, whose role was to collect evidence that could be used to prosecute perpetrators.

32. Discrimination against any group was not tolerated. Measures had been put in place to ensure that victims of discrimination could obtain prompt redress, including through legal action against persons who committed acts of discrimination.

33. **Ms. Saran** (Country Task Force), recalling that, under article 2 (1) of the Covenant, States parties must take steps, to the maximum of their available resources, to achieve the full realization of Covenant rights, said that she wished to know what kind of resource constraints the State faced in respect of the proportion of the budget allocated to social spending. She wondered what challenges the Government had encountered when dealing with development partners.

34. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** (Country Task Force) said that the State party's replies to the list of issues ([E/C.12/RWA/RQ/5](#)) contained figures indicating a high rate of spousal violence. She wished to know what steps had been taken to tackle cultural norms that perpetuated spousal violence, and how the State supported victims so that they were willing to report abuse and seek assistance without fear of stigmatization.

35. **Mr. Hennebel**, recalling that States parties had extraterritorial obligations under the Covenant, said that he wished to know what measures the Government had taken to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian organizations to communities affected by the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By the same token, he wished to know how the State party ensured that its actions did not hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid or otherwise exacerbate the situation of the civilian population in areas where armed groups operated. He would like to know what framework governed the State party's relations with armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the *Mouvement du 23 mars*, and whether the State party provided any form of support for such groups. He wondered whether the Government had put in place any preventive or punitive measures so that Rwandan actors did not become involved in activities that violated economic, social and cultural rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It would be useful to know what mechanisms had been put in place to prevent and remedy violations such as forced labour in mines controlled by armed groups, the destruction of essential infrastructure and the obstruction of humanitarian aid. Lastly, he would welcome information on measures to combat impunity in the context of the armed conflict, including measures to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of human rights violations.

36. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken**, noting that civil society participated in the Treaty Body Reporting Task Force mentioned in paragraph 7 of the State party's periodic report, said that he would like to know whether all Rwandan civil society organizations were invited to participate in the drafting of reports. He would also be interested to know whether the Task

Force was a permanent or an ad hoc body and whether it was mandated to follow up on the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms.

37. The Committee would be grateful for an indication of whether the Government would consider acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, given its importance for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. In the light of recent comments by the President of Rwanda, who had claimed not to know whether Rwandan troops were operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he would like to know what measures the Government had taken in response to reports that members of the Rwandan armed forces were participating in the conflict, and how the State party ensured that its armed forces did not provide assistance to armed groups operating in other countries.

38. **Mr. Windfuhr** said that he wished to know what steps had been taken to combat the illicit mineral trade, in which gold, tantalum, tin and tungsten extracted from mines under the de facto control of armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were brought into the State party and subsequently exported. He would like to know whether any steps had been taken to ensure the regular and mandatory disclosure of revenues obtained from the trade in minerals or to establish mechanisms for the recovery of assets and revenues.

39. **Mr. Emuze** said that he would be grateful if the delegation would comment on allegations that the Government was responsible for unlawful killings and enforced disappearances and had imposed restrictions on the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association and expression. In addition, he would like to know what had been done to prevent harassment, intimidation and reprisals committed against the staff of human rights organizations. He would be interested to know what had been done to ensure the independence of the National Commission for Human Rights and the transparency of the process of selecting its members.

40. The Committee would appreciate information on how the State party planned to improve the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by Indigenous Peoples, who historically had been marginalized. In particular, it would be useful to learn about the State party's plans for addressing the lack of data disaggregated by ethnic origin, which made it difficult to assess the enjoyment of Covenant rights by persons belonging to the Batwa community and other ethnic minority groups. How did the State party plan to solve problems that affected minority groups, such as high rates of poverty and infant mortality, shorter life expectancy, elevated incidences of disease and malnutrition, lower school attendance and poorer educational outcomes?

41. **A representative of Rwanda** said that Rwanda faced specific economic challenges owing to its status as a densely populated, landlocked country. The Government understood those challenges and had learned to prioritize needs, coordinating its efforts with development partners. In the sphere of human rights, the Government's approach was to take measures in priority areas that would have positive knock-on effects. For example, the Government had decided to invest heavily in compulsory education, as failing to do so would present the country with multiple challenges in other areas. For example, over 70 per cent of petty theft and violent offences had been committed by individuals who had dropped out of school before completing six years of compulsory primary education. The Government and development partners were investing in school feeding programmes in order to help children from poor families remain in education.

42. The Government had learned that it could not rely solely on resources from development partners, which were sometimes reduced for surprising reasons related to the situation in the partner country. There had also been instances in which development partners had required the Government to remove subsidies. The Government kept that reality in mind and aimed to ensure the sustainability of its own financing mechanisms in order to be able to address the country's priorities as it saw fit.

43. The apparent rise in the number of cases of gender-based violence, including marital rape, was due to the introduction of improved data collection methods, not to a worsening of the situation. Nevertheless, stigmatization of victims still occurred, which the authorities were striving to remedy through awareness-raising and training in interviewing techniques for police officers. In addition, efforts had been made to create safe spaces for victims, for instance one-stop centres spearheaded by the Office of the First Lady and usually located in

district hospitals, where victims had access to a range of services, from clothing to counselling, and witness and victim protection units within prosecution services.

44. He was not in a position to respond to any of the questions related to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, Rwanda had its own challenges to deal with and could not address issues in other territories. Rwanda had not, thus far, seen an advantage in acceding to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court but was open to reviewing its position should circumstances change.

45. Every effort was made to include civil society organizations in decision-making and the preparation of reports. The Ministry of Justice, for example, periodically met with such organizations outside the capital. The particular context of Rwanda made it difficult to set up permanent bodies, but the Government would explore the possibility of establishing a multidisciplinary body for reporting to treaty bodies since the matter had been raised a number of times.

46. Rwanda had been the first country in the Great Lakes region to commit to the nationwide implementation of a due diligence and traceability system, with support from the Tin Supply Chain Initiative and the RCS Global Group, and had signed memorandums of understanding with the European Union in the area of human rights due diligence. Those initiatives had had a positive impact on ensuring that mining activities in Rwanda were carried out lawfully and with respect for the human rights of miners.

47. Whenever the authorities sought to investigate allegations of enforced disappearance of human rights defenders, those who had reported the cases contended that the relevant information was protected. Organizations were welcome to monitor government efforts to address such allegations, but unless they provided evidence, there was little the authorities could do. There was zero tolerance for threats against human rights defenders, whose significant role in ensuring respect for human rights was recognized by the Government.

48. Given the country's context, no distinction was made between ethnic groups; everyone was considered Rwandan. Government interventions, in particular for historically marginalized groups, which should be considered to include women, were guided by the belief that no one should be left behind. That approach had borne fruit, as demonstrated by the progress achieved in access to healthcare, education, clean water and electricity.

49. **Ms. Saran** said that she was interested in hearing about recent measures the State party had taken to address unemployment and labour underutilization and to guarantee access to work and in receiving up-to-date statistical data for the past five years on unemployment and underemployment, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and geographical area. She would welcome information on any major obstacles the State party faced in addressing employment challenges and on steps it was taking to ensure that the skills taught were relevant to the labour market. She would also welcome information on specific measures and policies to promote the integration of women in the labour force and the access of historically marginalized groups, refugees and asylum-seekers to the labour market and on steps taken to enforce laws banning discrimination in the workplace, especially on grounds of sexual orientation, to encourage employers to adopt anti-discrimination measures, to remove systemic barriers to the employment of persons with disabilities and to engage young people with disabilities in self-employment and microenterprise programmes.

50. The Committee was eager to hear how workers, especially women and persons with disabilities, were helped to transition from the informal to the formal sector, how the State party ensured that the principle of equal pay for equal work was implemented in practice, what the time frame was for the establishment of a minimum wage and what measures were being taken in the interim to ensure decent wages and favourable conditions of work. The Committee also wished to hear whether the State party had updated its National Policy on Occupational Health and Safety, how it implemented the Labour Code and the Ministerial Order on occupational health and safety, whether labour inspections were carried out and what action was taken when violations of labour laws were observed.

51. Information would be welcome regarding the steps taken to carry out rights awareness programmes targeting domestic workers, employers and the broader community, to establish safe systems for domestic workers to report workplace violence, ensuring timely resolution

of cases and appropriate support, to ratify and domesticate the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), to provide confidential and accessible health services for domestic workers and to strengthen the enforcement of regulations prohibiting the employment of minors as domestic workers.

52. She wished to know what steps the State party had taken to remove legal barriers to the enjoyment of the right to form trade unions and the right to strike, such as restrictive registration criteria, the length of the registration process and the requirement to go through arbitration before calling a strike, how discrimination against trade union members and interference in trade union activities were prevented in law and in practice and how the trade union rights of persons with disabilities were protected.

53. Lastly, she invited the delegation to describe any proposals to ensure that contributory and non-contributory social security schemes included as large a proportion of the population as possible, particularly the most marginalized and disadvantaged in the informal sector, for instance by expanding the community-based health insurance system to cover specialist health services, medication, assistive devices and other aids needed by persons with disabilities.

54. **A representative of Rwanda** said that the Government was aware of the unemployment issue and saw the country's youthful population as an opportunity. Accordingly, it was striving to enable young people to thrive in the labour market, for instance through the adoption of a law to facilitate the financing of start-ups and investment in technical and vocational education and training. The measures being taken also included special consideration for women, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups.

55. A frequent, yet largely invisible, form of gender-based discrimination in the labour market consisted of employers attempting to ascertain the likelihood of female candidates requesting maternity leave by asking personal questions during the interview process. To address that type of conduct, particularly in the private sector, all employees were required to contribute to the Rwanda Social Security Board, which helped offset the cost of staff absences for employers. The matter of whether to introduce incentives for private sector businesses to refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour, whether on gender, disability or other grounds, was under discussion.

56. No one in Rwanda faced discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, and he was not aware of any stigma faced by LGBTQI persons in the workplace. Any violations in that regard could be reported to the Ministry of Justice, either directly or via civil society organizations. Almost all State institutions were required to ensure that at least 30 per cent of their workforce was composed of women, and compliance with that quota was closely monitored. It was important to stress that 30 per cent was a minimum quota and that the ultimate goal was to achieve gender parity.

57. Frameworks and mechanisms were already in place to deal with any existing issues of discrimination in society. A seat in the Chamber of Deputies was reserved for a person living with a disability, with the incumbent being elected by the representative organizations of persons with disabilities. Thanks to the activity of the elected representative and to close interaction with those organizations, the Government had gained a much deeper understanding of the challenges such persons faced and the concerns they had.

58. Rwanda had a large informal labour sector in which it was difficult to capture reliable data and statistics about workers. Action was being taken to formalize the sector by organizing workers into cooperatives, which had a role similar to trade unions and helped to protect workers' rights. A number of cooperatives had come into being in recent years. It was important, however, to ensure that action to regulate informal work did not have unintended consequences such as deterring employers from hiring workers. For that reason, the Government also sought to make employers aware of the link between business and human rights and to convince them that protecting workers in a safe and secure working environment was in their own interests. The Rwanda Mines, Petroleum and Gas Board inspected all mining sites to ensure that protocols for the safety of workers were being duly enforced. Despite those efforts, however, informal and illegal mining activities continued to take place, which had sometimes led to incidents where miners were trapped underground.

59. The minimum wage was a requirement under the law, and discussions with stakeholders were currently ongoing to set an appropriate level for that wage. The strict enforcement of government labour policies had led to a tangible reduction in occupational hazards, and new mechanisms had been developed that workers could use to report such hazards. Employers found to be in violation of occupational health and safety regulations were liable to heavy penalties. In 2023, the Ministry of Labour had issued an order prohibiting the employment of children in domestic work. Other ministerial orders addressed matters such as the health and safety of informal workers, including domestic workers, as well as salary, leave and healthcare entitlements. Once rights had been codified in a law, labour inspectors could act to ensure that those rights were respected in practice.

60. The Government would review its practices with regard to trade union registration in the light of the comments made by the Committee. The right to strike was a constitutional right protected under the law; anyone who sought to impede the exercise of that right would be treated as violating the Constitution and penalized accordingly. No complaints of discrimination on the grounds of trade union membership had been received. If such complaints were made and verified, they would be dealt with according to the law.

61. **Mr. Hennebel** said that he wished to reiterate his question concerning the extraterritorial implementation of the Covenant. The question he had raised about the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not concern actions being undertaken by the authorities of that country so much as the potential involvement of the Government of Rwanda in events that occurred outside its borders. The Committee would be interested to hear, then, about any mechanisms and instruments in place in the State party to ensure respect for economic, social and cultural rights, including in situations of armed conflict in extraterritorial settings.

62. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee wished to know what action was being taken to ensure that all working mothers, including those in the informal sector, could effectively enjoy their entitlement to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave. She would be interested to hear whether extended maternity leave was available for mothers who gave birth to a child with a disability. She wondered if there were any plans to extend the duration of maternity leave and to promote paternity leave.

63. The Committee looked forward to hearing details about the sanctions imposed by the National Child Development Agency against employers who violated child labour laws and about the outcome of the new national child labour survey. It would also be helpful to know what human and financial resources had been made available to facilitate access by labour inspectors to all workplaces and what measures had been taken to support victims of child labour.

64. She remained concerned by the high levels of poverty in the State party, which had been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and by inflation. In that connection, the Committee would appreciate detailed information on the implementation and results of the social protection programmes designed to eradicate extreme poverty by 2024, as well as on other measures designed to alleviate poverty among specific groups such as persons with disabilities, children and persons belonging to historically marginalized communities.

65. Reports indicated that levels of malnutrition and stunting in the State party were high and that a fifth of the population was affected by food insecurity. In the light of that, she wished to know what obstacles were preventing small-scale farmers from increasing and diversifying production and what policies had been put in place to facilitate their access to materials, technology and markets. She wondered if any action was being contemplated to incentivize the production of more nutritious food and to expand food assistance programmes for vulnerable communities.

66. She would appreciate it if the delegation could inform the Committee about policies aimed at ensuring affordable homes, including for persons on low incomes. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the national budget had been earmarked for the construction of social housing. She wished to know if there were any plans to ensure that vulnerable persons, including those with disabilities, had access to housing and whether any rent-control legislation had been introduced. She wondered what was being done to provide

greater legal protection against persistent problems such as insecurity of land tenure and forced evictions.

67. In the light of the fact that many homes still lacked running water and sanitation, the delegation should inform the Committee about any investments or public-private partnerships to improve water-management infrastructure. She also hoped to hear about any steps to ensure that access to clean water remained affordable for the entire population and about action to reduce gender inequalities, given that inadequate sanitation had a more serious impact on women and girls. The Committee would welcome more information about any studies conducted to identify the communities most exposed to the risks of climate change and about any adaptation strategies to help such communities diversify their income and reduce their reliance on climate-vulnerable activities. Had any specific food resilience strategies been put in place?

68. She would welcome more information about plans to allocate greater human and financial resources to the healthcare sector with a view to improving the accessibility, availability and quality of both physical and mental healthcare services, particularly in rural areas and for historically disadvantaged communities. The Committee hoped to hear about measures being taken to monitor the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and to evaluate the effectiveness of the steps taken to combat them, including in the light of the socioeconomic inequalities that affected the incidence of such diseases.

69. Lastly, she hoped to learn about any strategies to increase the number of midwives in remote communities and to improve transport and referral systems for obstetric emergencies. She would also appreciate information about any investments in infrastructure and equipment for the care of mothers and their newborn infants. The delegation might explain what action had been taken to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services and contraceptives, to reduce teenage pregnancies and to help young mothers complete their education and improve their quality of life.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.