



# Economic and Social Council

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

### Summary record of the 47th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 5 October 2023, at 10 a.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*)

### *Fourth periodic report of Armenia (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports (continued)**

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

*Fourth periodic report of Armenia (continued) (E/C.12/ARM/4; E/C.12/ARM/Q/4; E/C.12/ARM/RQ/4)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Armenia joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation to reply to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting.
3. **A representative of Armenia** said that the health-care system was currently having to cope with the needs of over 100,000 Armenians from the Nagorno-Karabakh region who had been displaced and were seeking refuge in Armenia. Almost all were in a poor state of health since they had faced food shortages for 10 months. The situation had been exacerbated by an explosion at a fuel depot in Stepanakert, which had claimed the lives of over 100 people and left more than 300 severely wounded. All the victims were receiving treatment in Armenian medical establishments. The Ministry of Health was currently organizing the emergency evacuation of those most severely affected, coordinating the work of emergency medical teams from partner countries to support overburdened health-care workers and distributing humanitarian aid received from donors.
4. The Government had embarked on a major health-care reform to establish a State-funded universal health insurance system and provide quality health care to all by 2027. At present, Armenia had one of the highest rates of out-of-pocket health expenditure in the region. Since health care accounted for a smaller share of the national budget than in other countries with similar levels of income, the Government aimed to increase the proportion of gross domestic product spent on health to 4 per cent by 2027, ensure more sustainable financing and improve access to affordable, high-quality health care for all. The comprehensive insurance scheme would cover medication for the most common diseases identified among the population. Premiums would be fixed and full coverage would be provided free of charge to children, pensioners, persons with disabilities and those on low incomes. The Government had made a commitment to subsidize almost 30 per cent of premiums for the working population and would increase subsidies in the future, as the financial situation allowed.
5. Substantial resources were being directed towards strengthening and reviewing the primary care services model, focusing on the efficient delivery of services and the introduction of a proper hospital referral system, along with the optimization of hospital capacity. Eliminating the need for out-of-pocket payments would encourage people to seek medical care when needed, potentially preventing complications; and the promotion of preventive care would help reduce costs. Working conditions for health-care professionals were being improved and infrastructure was being built or renovated to make services more accessible. The Ministry of Health had developed a strategy to improve quality of care by utilizing performance indicators, collecting data through the electronic health system, establishing a licensing system for medical institutions and providing in-service training for health-care workers. It was developing protocols and clinical guidelines to standardize approaches to health care. Cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and various partner countries was essential to ensure access to the expertise and resources needed for the successful implementation of the reform.
6. The Ministry of Health had begun implementing measures, including a training programme for primary health-care staff, under the Action Plan and List of Actions for Maintaining and Improving Mental Health for 2023–2026 to improve the accessibility and quality of mental health services. Discussions were ongoing with WHO on the possibility of providing further training in that area. Psychologists had been recruited to work in schools throughout the country and a mental health coalition comprising over 40 stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and international partners, had

been set up to serve as an effective platform to treat the serious mental health issues caused by the large-scale military aggression by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh. Psychological support services were provided at entry points to Armenia, and long-term mental health care would be administered in cooperation with professional associations, NGOs and international organizations. The children's psychiatric unit at Avan Mental Health Centre had been the first inpatient ward for children in need of secondary care, and the National Centre for Mental Health Care was being renovated to enable the provision of modern, high-quality paediatric services.

7. The National Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention for the period 2022–2026 was built on the same principles as the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026, the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the WHO regional action plans for ending AIDS and the epidemics of viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections 2022–2030. Under the Programme, the scope and coverage of services were expanded to improve the response to the needs of key populations at risk of HIV exposure. The confidentiality of personal data, including HIV status, was protected by law, and an amendment to the law governing the provision of medical care had been adopted in 2020 to ensure medical privacy. Large-scale HIV prevention and early detection schemes had been in place for several years, providing community-based, anonymous and confidential HIV testing to the key populations. Preventive measures included counselling and awareness-raising, information on referral to diagnostic and treatment services, and the distribution of HIV prevention products. Persons who tested positive were referred to the National Centre for Infectious Diseases for confirmatory testing and enrolment in treatment programmes.

8. A working group consisting of civil society activists and persons representing key populations had been established under the Country Coordinating Mechanism against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to provide prevention, treatment, care and support services. Its work was focused on monitoring cases of human rights violations and discrimination against those populations, and reviewing the relevant legislation. In 2022, laws had been amended to allow key populations at risk of HIV exposure to donate blood. The working group had begun designing an electronic platform that would enable anonymous reporting and monitoring of confidentiality violations and cases of stigmatization of, and discrimination against, key populations in health facilities.

9. **A representative of Armenia** said that the minimum age for marriage was 18 years. However, marriage at 17 years old was possible with permission from the parents or guardians, or at 16 with permission from the parents or guardians and if the spouse was aged 18 years or over. The country's legislative and institutional framework was intended to prevent marriage between underage citizens.

10. The Government was committed to upholding the rights of national minorities. However, a balance must be struck between respecting minority cultures and traditions and upholding the country's laws. It was exceedingly difficult to identify underage marriages in the Yazidi community since many marriages went unregistered. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with Yazidi NGOs, had developed an action plan on the issue for the period 2022–2026, which envisaged a comprehensive analysis of the problem of early marriage. The plan provided for a mechanism to ensure effective law enforcement; training for judges; awareness-raising campaigns targeted at minority groups; and mapping of cases of early marriage, with compilation of the relevant statistics. Interdisciplinary committees would be created to raise public awareness of early marriage and ensure Yazidi girls' rights to education and health care. The action plan was currently in the implementation phase.

11. **A representative of Armenia** said that, in October 2022, the Labour Code had been amended to define forced labour in accordance with article 57 of the Constitution and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). The Code had been further amended to allow children to work only outside of school hours, in line with the requirements of the European Social Charter, ILO and other international bodies. It contained clear provisions on occupational safety for children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. The State labour inspectorate was responsible for enforcing the Code, and there were plans to establish an institute for dispute resolution. The incorporation of an article on sexual harassment into the Labour Code had been the first step towards ratifying

the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). Career guidance centres had been opened in schools as part of strategies and projects to reduce unemployment.

12. **A representative of Armenia** said that a number of boarding schools for children from vulnerable families had been closed and most of the children had since been reunited with their families. Child and family support centres had been established, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in the regions of Shirak, Syunik and Yerevan, to care for the children who could not return to their families. Each centre provided care, including 24-hour care if necessary, for up to 150 children between 0 and 18 years of age for periods of up to 6 months. In 2020, a programme had been adopted to reunite children with their families or, failing that, place them with foster families.

13. The expansion and development of day-care services was also of paramount importance. The six child and family support centres run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provided social, psychological, educational and legal services to around 600 children. Another 24 centres run by NGOs cared for around 3,500 children on a daily basis. More than 700 specialists working with children had received in-service training in 2023 alone.

14. **A representative of Armenia** said that, pursuant to the new Penitentiary Code adopted in July 2022, specific categories of prisoners, including juveniles, pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children under 3 years of age, could no longer be placed in solitary confinement or other kinds of disciplinary cells. The definition of domestic violence contained in the 2017 Law on the Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Victims of Violence within the Family and Restoration of Peace in the Family was fully in line with international standards. Its provisions also specified the bodies responsible for the prevention of violence and the protection of victims. After the law had been passed, the Government had adopted a series of secondary regulations to support victims, established the Council for the Prevention of Violence in the Family, introduced an awareness-raising strategy to prevent domestic violence and protect victims, and developed a training programme for public officials who dealt with cases of domestic violence. A series of mass awareness-raising and training programmes had been launched in cooperation with the Council of Europe Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals Programme, and the course on violence against women and domestic violence offered under the Programme had been translated into Armenian and given to judges, prosecutors, investigators and other legal specialists. Under recent amendments to the Criminal Code, motives of hatred, intolerance and hostility were classified as aggravating factors, and sexual offences incurred harsher penalties when the perpetrator was a close relative, partner or former partner of the victim.

15. **A representative of Armenia** said that, in 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had established support centres for victims of domestic violence in all regions of the country. The centres received funding from the State budget and provided social, psychological and legal support, counselling and career guidance. Two State-funded shelters, which provided safe living spaces and psychological and legal support, were available for victims and persons at risk of domestic violence. The shelters currently housed 45 women and 79 children. The Government had taken measures under a five-year action plan to expand the services, including shelters, provided to women at risk of violence and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had implemented support programmes in the provinces of Aragatsotn, Gegharkunik and Tavush.

16. An electronic information system was being developed to collect data and compile statistics on cases of domestic violence. Training on the registration system was provided to psychologists, social workers and other front-line staff in cooperation with local and international NGOs. Measures had been taken to prevent discrimination, enhance education and employment opportunities for women and combat sex-selective abortion.

17. **Ms. Lee** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know what measures had been taken to reduce air pollution by businesses and whether the fines or other penalties provided for were heavy enough to deter violations of environmental protection standards.

18. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be interested to hear what the impact had been of measures to promote breastfeeding as part of efforts to tackle child obesity and what further steps had been taken to address food insecurity, obesity and malnutrition. It would be useful to have updated information on child obesity levels. She

wondered what measures were being taken to protect water sources from pollution by the mining industry.

19. **Ms. Rossi** said that she would appreciate accurate and updated information regarding the situation of persons with disabilities and older persons who had been forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh and subsequently placed in institutional care. She wished to know what measures had been planned or adopted to ensure that displaced persons had access to community-based social services as an alternative to institutionalization; what proportion of the housing units made available to displaced persons were accessible to those with disabilities; whether the State party was providing financial support to ensure that displaced persons with disabilities had access to housing adapted to their specific needs; and whether disability and accessibility were taken into account when offering housing to the displaced population.

20. **A representative of Armenia** said that the food security strategy covering the next three year-period had been designed to ensure food availability, accessibility, affordability and sustainability, and included targeted action plans to improve nutrition and dietary habits. The Government had adopted the strategy in 2023 to respond to the shocks experienced by Armenia in previous years, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and military aggression by Azerbaijan in 2020, 2022 and 2023. The strategy aimed to increase the country's food self-sufficiency by establishing sustainable food systems.

21. Very strict penalties had been introduced for causing air pollution. Several mining companies were working with local and international experts to assess the risk to water sources, but no cases of water pollution caused by mining activities had been registered.

22. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that the Government was committed to supporting and meeting the needs of all persons forcibly displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. However, since the most recent attack had occurred only 10 days previously, the Government had had little time to implement the necessary measures to that end.

23. **A representative of Armenia** said that, according to the migration authorities, 12,000 persons over 65 years of age were among those forcibly displaced. Of those, around 160 were unable to care for themselves and were being accommodated in hotels, which covered all their basic needs. Throughout Armenia, approximately 1,200 older persons received home care, which was provided by NGOs with State funding. Day-care services were provided to older persons living in their own homes.

24. The immediate basic needs of displaced children with disabilities, including in terms of medication and assistive technologies, had been met. In the medium to long term, steps would be taken to ensure that they had accommodation that satisfied all their requirements. Deinstitutionalization and the provision of community-based services were two of the priorities under the complex programme for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities for the period up to 2027, which had been adopted in June 2023. The programme also laid down measures to improve access to education and the labour market through reasonable accommodation.

25. Residents of dormitories, temporary accommodation and caravans were the highest priority group for rehousing under the Government's unified social strategy for housing; the second priority group was those living in very poor housing conditions, and those living in poor housing conditions formed the third group. Of those in the first category, approximately one third lived in Yerevan, another third lived in other cities and the remainder lived in rural areas.

26. **A representative of Armenia** said that, in 2018, the Government had signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and, in 2019, the Constitutional Court had requested the opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law regarding the Istanbul Convention's compatibility with the country's Constitution. The Commission had concluded that no provision of the Istanbul Convention conflicted with the Constitution. However, ratification had fallen down the Government's list of priorities following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the acts of aggression by Azerbaijan against the Nagorno Karabakh Republic. There was also a backlash from certain groups of people who

were attempting to block the ratification process and spreading disinformation. In response, the Government had launched awareness and education campaigns in Yerevan and local communities with the support of its international partners, especially the Council of Europe. While the ratification process was ongoing, the Government was developing rehabilitation programmes and ensuring adequate compensation mechanisms for victims of domestic violence. The requirement for mediation between victims and perpetrators would be removed, provisions criminalizing stalking would be introduced and the definition of a “partner” would be expanded to bring domestic law into line with the Istanbul Convention.

27. Armenia was a party to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data and its additional protocols. The Data Protection Law set out the legal framework and general principles at the national level, and stipulated that data must be processed only for established legitimate purposes with the consent of the data subject. The Personal Data Protection Agency of the Ministry of Justice was responsible for monitoring compliance with the Law and instituting legal proceedings in case of violation. Medical information fell under a specific category of data, which must not be shared with any third parties except in the cases established by law to protect the life or health of persons, and such data must no longer be processed when the grounds for doing so ceased to exist. Further data protection provisions were contained in the Law on Medical Assistance and Benefits for the Population, according to which data could be shared without the patient’s consent in order to provide necessary medical care, ensure public health, prevent the spread of infectious diseases, comply with a court order and conduct military medical examinations. Information could also be shared with the police, prosecutors, courts and human rights defenders investigating suspected acts of violence. The unauthorized disclosure of medical secrets, including through public speeches, works or information and communications technologies, was punishable under the Criminal Code.

28. **A representative of Armenia** said that, under a programme that had been in place since 2018, refugees could receive rent subsidies for a six-month period. The programme had benefited 260 refugees and 92 families between 2018 and 2019, 99 refugees between 2020 and 2021 and 70 refugees so far in 2023. There was a temporary accommodation centre for asylum-seekers, which had received 33 persons in 2022, and an integration centre in Yerevan, which had housed 12 refugee families in 2022. Female asylum-seekers were prioritized in the provision of support such as shelter, financial aid and psychological assistance during asylum procedures.

29. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that, in the light of the current flow of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, the Government was focusing on emergency accommodation solutions but, in the near future, would look further at long-term solutions that would allow for the integration and right to return of refugees.

30. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** (Country Task Force) said that he wished to know the specific definition and scope of the term “children with special educational needs” as used by the State party. He wondered what specific programmes, strategies and methodology were in place to implement the inclusive educational system being introduced in general education schools, as well as the funding and annual budget allocated, how the funding had been used, and what impact the system had had on the quality of education for children with special educational needs. He also wished to know what educational psychology support was provided for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, how that support had improved academic performance and what training was provided to staff in mainstream schools on working with such children. He wondered how the organizations which had been made responsible for educational psychology support services in three *marzes* (provinces) had been selected and were monitored.

31. He would be interested to learn whether mainstream schools had adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of adults and children with disabilities and how much funding had been provided in that connection in recent years. He wished to know how much funding had been allocated for the renovation and reconstruction of schools in general. He would welcome information on the methodology used to calculate the reimbursement of transportation costs and food supplies for preschool and elementary grade students in general education schools, including the eligibility criteria, and the amounts recently granted. He wished to know how fully reimbursed university places were awarded, how the funding for

the reimbursement of tuition fees had been allocated in 2021 and 2022 and how student benefits were provided. He would appreciate data on school dropout, disaggregated by age and gender, particularly regarding children of the Molokan and Yazidi minorities. He would also like to know how the academic freedom of teachers was guaranteed while teaching standards were ensured.

32. He wondered what key challenges schoolchildren and their families had faced in transitioning to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether remote learning platforms developed at that time were still in use and how the Government planned to make up for and mitigate lost learning and other effects of school closures during the pandemic.

33. He wished to know how many general education schools offered classes in the languages of the Russian, Assyrian, Yazidi and Kurdish minorities, how many students received education in those languages and whether such education met the needs of the groups in question. He wondered whether the languages of the Assyrian, Yazidi and Kurdish peoples were, like Russian, taught from the 2nd to 12th grades of general education. He would like to know whether representatives of national minorities received their 12-year compulsory secondary education in their native languages or in Armenian. He wished to know if the Law on the Preservation and Use of Immovable Monuments of History and Culture and of Historical Environment provided for the protection of minority cultural identities. He wondered what measures were in place to protect the cultural heritage of historic mosques and churches that were in disrepair or had been destroyed and to preserve the names given to them by the historic peoples of Armenia.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.*

34. **A representative of Armenia** said that the first stage of transitioning to comprehensive inclusive education in general education schools had been completed in 2021. The system catered for persons with disabilities and children who required special measures to have their social or cultural needs met. Educational psychology centres determined the needs of individual students with disabilities so as to create a personalized learning plan, which was assessed at the end of the school year so that any necessary adjustments could be prepared. The budget for inclusive education was included in the general budget for education, but schools had been provided with additional staff, including teaching assistants and psychologists, and could apply for extra financial support for infrastructure. Educational psychology centres were located in specialized schools that had been reformed and now functioned as resource centres for inclusive education; in regions without appropriate specialized schools, that role had instead been entrusted to organizations with experience of working with children with special needs.

35. A programme was in place to build or fully repair over 300 schools and preschools by 2026, in line with technological and health and safety requirements; more than 100 educational establishments had already been partly refurbished. The budget for education had increased by 75 per cent compared to 2019, largely due to capital investment. Funding included direct budgetary investment and donor funding for construction and subsidies for refurbishment and repairs.

36. Transportation costs were reimbursed for teachers and students who worked and studied in schools outside their home towns on the basis of the number of days and the distance travelled. A pilot project was being developed to provide school buses for children. The number of fully reimbursed university places available was determined according to the State budget; they were assigned to students with disabilities, students from disadvantaged backgrounds or students belonging to national minorities who scored highly in exams. Grants were also available for such students regardless of exam results.

37. Statistics on school dropout included children who had temporarily moved away from Armenia, who were automatically considered to not be in education. However, recent figures had shown that school dropout among children living within Armenia was very low. A new information management system had been launched to identify children out of education, refer them to the relevant regional authorities and ensure their return to education. There was a joint group that dealt with specific cases of non-attendance and an interagency working group comprising representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Health.

38. The greatest challenge to education during the COVID-19 pandemic had been the lack of adequate infrastructure and equipment for large-scale remote education. With support from partners, computers and laptops had been provided to students who needed them, and a remote education platform had been developed. The platform was still used in remote and rural schools and in the case of teacher shortages. Educational films had also been produced during the pandemic and were still available.

39. Under domestic legislation, schools and special classes could be set up for children from national minorities, with the national minority language used as the language of instruction; from first to twelfth grade, between three and four hours a week was set aside for teaching in those languages. To overcome shortages of teachers who were fluent in minority languages, a voluntary certification system had been established that would allow teachers to increase their pay fourfold. In 2022, 11 teachers had completed the certification, and 7 of them were now receiving higher wages; a further 10 teachers had completed the course in 2023 and were awaiting their results.

40. The Government was concerned at potential damage to or destruction of cultural monuments in Nagorno-Karabakh; during the first war in Nagorno-Karabakh, hundreds of Armenian monuments had been destroyed, often irreparably. There were 25,000 registered monuments in the country; State and private funding was available for the preservation of the monuments of all ethnic groups on an equal footing and, since 2020, 20 monuments had been repaired and project documentation for a further 15 had been drawn up. More than 500 monuments needed urgent repairs, which would require high levels of funding.

41. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that Russian was not taught as a national minority language, but as a foreign language.

42. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he would welcome more information on the transportation programme for persons living far from schools or in remote areas. He wished to know how much State and private funding had been invested in repairing cultural monuments. He wondered whether the State party guaranteed that the cultural name of monuments was maintained. He also wished to know how cemeteries that required State support were attended to.

43. **Ms. Lee** said that she wondered whether section 74 (1) of the Labour Code, which required a vote by two thirds of employees before a strike could be declared, had been amended. She would also welcome information on what the State budget for social assistance had been during the previous five years.

44. **Mr. Abdel-Moneim** said that he would like to know how much the State received in terms of remittances from persons living abroad and whether it was mandatory to send such remittances. He was eager to learn how the State party planned to commemorate the upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, with regard to human rights education and the promotion of multilateral diplomacy.

45. **A representative of Armenia** said that there was a separate budget line for the reimbursement of transport costs for pupils and teachers. The pilot project for school buses was part of plans to reorganize general education schools and would use funding from the European Union. The budget for the restoration of monuments had increased steadily from year to year, and some €400,000 had been earmarked for 2024. The Government did not change the cultural names of monuments and was currently developing a register of monuments which would include three-dimensional images. The standard school curriculum had recently been revised and now prioritized gender policy, human rights and respect for diversity. Teacher training and revised teaching materials were being provided to ensure the full introduction of the curriculum by 2026.

46. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that his country prioritized the preservation of cultural heritage, including that of other cultures that had contributed to Armenian history.

47. **A representative of Armenia** said that remittances, which usually consisted of short-term income transfers, were not mandatory. Incoming remittances had amounted to \$340 million in 2023 and to \$530 million in 2022, or 2.7 per cent of gross domestic product. Over the previous 20 years, the annual income from remittances had varied between \$98.1 million and \$742 million.

48. **A representative of Armenia** said that section 74 (1) of the Labour Code had been revised as part of a package of amendments adopted in early 2023 following discussions with trade union members and ILO representatives. Discussions on a further amendment, which would allow trade unions to defend their members' interests in court, were ongoing, and so a further revision to the articles of the Code pertaining to collective protection was likely.

49. Work was being done to raise employer awareness in order to prevent breaches of employee's rights, and ILO-led initiatives were promoting social justice. Four pilot projects aimed at increasing the employability of recipients of unemployment benefits were being run.

50. **A representative of Armenia** said that social protection accounted for 7 per cent of the State budget. The amount allocated had risen by 13 per cent annually in recent years, from 529 billion drams in 2021 to a planned 745 billion drams in 2024. The budget for the reform of the social protection system had increased from 29 billion drams in 2022 to 39 billion drams in 2023, the targets being to provide food baskets for all those living in extreme poverty, reform social protection for persons with disabilities, reform child protection and provide social assistance for vulnerable families.

51. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that, despite regional trends towards declining multilateralism and violations of international law, Armenia would continue to contribute to effective multilateralism. His country prioritized the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly with regard to strengthening mechanisms for genocide prevention, on which it had introduced a number of resolutions within the Human Rights Council; mass atrocities, such as ethnic cleansing, in the region had raised questions as to how effective such mechanisms currently were.

52. **Ms. Lemus de Vásquez** said that the Committee appreciated the fact that, despite the current situation in the State party, Armenia had honoured its commitments under the Covenant by engaging in an interactive and enriching dialogue with the Committee.

53. **Mr. Gevorgyan** (Armenia) said that his country was ready to continue its path towards strengthening respect for human rights and multilateralism. Armenia would endeavour to continue the dialogue with the Committee and looked forward to receiving its concluding observations. The Covenant was an important reference point in Armenia and was one of the most important international instruments guiding the country's systematic protection of human rights.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*