



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 October 2025

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Seventy-eighth session

Summary record of the 37th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 12 September 2025, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Saran

Contents

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

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

Seventh periodic report of Colombia (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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

Consideration of reports (continued)

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

Seventh periodic report of Colombia (continued) (E/C.12/COL/7; E/C.12/COL/Q/7; E/C.12/COL/RQ/7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Colombia joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Colombia**, resuming her delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting, said that the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace recognized that corruption and the inefficient use of public resources undermined public trust and deepened inequalities. The Government had therefore introduced social control mechanisms within the framework of its implementation of the Agreement with a view to ensuring respect for public resources nationwide. There was ongoing monitoring of compliance with commitments made in the Agreement, including spending of public resources allocated to the ministries for implementation. Progress in implementing the Agreement was measured through the integrated post-conflict information system. The framework for implementation of the Agreement had been updated to add new indicators and adjust existing ones, thus ensuring independent oversight and accountability. A quarterly report was published highlighting progress and challenges. The National Public Ethics Commission, the Secretariat for Transparency of the Office of the Presidency, the Attorney General's Office and the Office of the Counsel-General all played a role in the investigation and punishment of acts of corruption. Standardized tender documents for public procurement and the use of the electronic public procurement system had been strengthened to ensure greater traceability and citizen oversight of contracts. The Attorney General's Office and the Office of the Counsel-General had initiated disciplinary and criminal proceedings in landmark cases involving infrastructure, healthcare and education contracts. The Office of the Comptroller-General had adopted a strategy to involve civil society in audits and preventive monitoring.
3. Regarding poverty and inequality, in response to the policy recommendation of the National Planning Department and the Regional Renewal Agency, the Collegiate Unit for Administration and Decisions had designed a new methodology for the allocation of royalty resources that sought to ensure that resources reached the territories most in need. A methodological and legal framework had been consolidated to prioritize and allocate resources for peace. The new approach aimed to correct historical inequalities and worsening poverty and to direct research towards closing socioeconomic gaps through public tenders with detailed criteria, thus ensuring equal opportunities throughout the country. A law passed in 2025 provided for affirmative action measures for rural and peasant women and fisherwomen, including a special land allocation programme.
4. **A representative of Colombia** said that the National Department of Statistics conducted a periodic survey on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market based on a representative nationwide sample, which provided disaggregated data on their situation. With regard to social security guarantees for persons with disabilities, progress had been made through the recent addition of the solidarity pillar to the pension system, which provided a basic monthly allowance for both persons with disabilities and caregivers who did not have another source of income. The National Disability Council was working with the Ministry of Health and the Office of the President to produce an updated disability policy for the period 2025–2035 that incorporated the country's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
5. **A representative of Colombia** said that the 2020–2025 National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons remained in force. Work was currently under way with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a new strategy. The Ministry of the Interior coordinated the National Strategy, which had six areas of focus that covered prevention, support for victims and prosecution of trafficking cases. The police, the Attorney General's Office and Migration Colombia worked together to dismantle criminal networks,

guarantee access to justice and trace assets linked to trafficking. A child protection compact partnership had been concluded with the United States Department of State. In addition, a protocol for identifying and protecting victims of labour and sexual exploitation had been developed. Lastly, the Pink Alert Committee had been established to plan and implement strategies for the immediate search for and location of missing children, adolescents, young people and women, with a gender-based approach.

6. **A representative of Colombia** said that an ambitious land reform strategy was currently being implemented involving the long-term redistribution and formalization of millions of hectares of land to peasant farmers, including land that had been owned by drug traffickers. The Government also planned to establish agrarian courts, which would help guarantee access to justice and the justiciability of the rights of rural inhabitants. The Government had made a particular effort to guarantee access to public information on land reform policy. An official land reform tracker was accessible to civil society, oversight bodies and international organizations to check progress on the redistribution of land. Redistribution policies were having a clear impact in reducing disparities between urban and rural areas and had reduced the multidimensional poverty rate in rural areas from 27.3 per cent in 2022 to 24.3 per cent in 2024. Significant progress had been made in terms of titling lands for ethnic communities, and 14 peasant reserve areas had been established, primarily focused on ethnic and community family farming. In addition, 2024 had been declared the year of ethnic and community family farming. Land reform policy was based on three pillars: fair, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, financing and agricultural risk management, and innovation and energy transition. Considerable efforts had been made to recover and protect agricultural land through the creation of special protection areas for food production. The Intersectoral Food and Nutritional Security Commission was currently formulating the public policy for the progressive realization of the right to food. Livestock production and agricultural production had increased significantly, particularly products such as rice, fruit, cassava, vegetables, bananas and coffee. As a result, food prices had fallen considerably, which would contribute to food security for all Colombians.

7. **A representative of Colombia** said that the “Zero Hunger” programme was structured around four areas and involved comprehensive action throughout the country, bringing together measures that had previously been dispersed across separate programmes. The Government had allocated 36 billion Colombian pesos (Col\$) for the provision of direct cash transfers aimed at improving access to food. Between 2022 and 2025, a total of 33 million food parcels had been delivered throughout the country. The programme also aimed to strengthen production systems and had introduced a logistics system to facilitate access to food in isolated areas. As a result of measures taken under the programme, the national mortality rate for children under 5 years as a result of malnutrition had decreased from 10.78 per 1,000 live births in 2022 to 6.16 per 1,000 in 2024. Greater efforts were still required to collect statistical data on nutritional status.

8. **A representative of Colombia** said that the National Planning Department implemented various strategies aimed at reducing poverty, decreasing inequalities and improving human well-being, without relying exclusively on economic growth. The Department had led the drafting of a document on the National Care System which sought to recognize, redistribute and reduce the disproportionate burden of unpaid work, especially for female carers. One of the key focus areas had been strengthening universal social protection. The Department had worked to consolidate a cash transfer scheme that guaranteed a safety net for households in extreme and moderate poverty without depending on the formal labour market. The National Development Plan promoted alternative processes aimed at generating sustainable sources of income in cultural and creative sectors.

9. From an economic transformation perspective, the Department had promoted reforms that prioritized the redistribution of resources and fiscal justice. The progressive tax reform approved in 2022 included the elimination of regressive tax benefits and the introduction of tax increases for high-income and high-net-worth sectors, allowing for increased investment in social programmes. One of the main advances had been the consolidation of a comprehensive social protection system. Priority had been given to schemes such as the citizen’s income, which guaranteed a basic income for the most vulnerable households, based on the principles of social justice and territorial equity. The Government had also sought to

ensure that essential public services such as healthcare, education and housing were focused on attaining universal access and reducing structural problems, for example through the fund for overcoming population and territorial disparities. In view of all those efforts, the visit to Colombia by the Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty in 2024 had been very timely.

10. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government High-level Forum on Gender had organized a gathering for the implementation of the gender perspective in the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, with a view to directing resources towards women and LGBTQI persons in rural and urban areas. Measures were being taken to ensure the participation of female victims of the conflict in the special constituency for peace, overcoming security and financial barriers. The redistribution of resources was not limited to economic transfers but sought to also transform the structural conditions of inequality that had fuelled the conflict.

11. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government was working with local authorities to guide local planning based on the criteria of sustainability, risk management, cultural diversity and adaptation to climate change. The Neighbourhoods of Peace programme had been created to take coordinated action in informal and rural settlements with solutions for housing, infrastructure, community management, social cohesion and reconciliation. A range of housing solutions was being promoted to respond to the housing deficit, including improvements to urban and rural housing, new rural housing with community participation, self-management and self-build housing with technical assistance, and subsidies for new and second-hand urban housing. The Government had issued four decrees that consolidated a regulatory framework incorporating the principles of adequate housing and including criteria for a differentiated approach that prioritized rural populations and victims of the conflict. As a result of those efforts the housing deficit had been reduced by 3.6 percentage points in 2024 nationwide and 4.28 percentage points in rural areas. The Government continued to work to reduce disparities between urban and rural areas. To that end, it had adopted a comprehensive approach that combined regulatory, operational and financial strategies. The rural housing subsidy had been adjusted for hard-to-reach areas.

12. With regard to the right to water and sanitation, the Government was investing in infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce losses, as well as programmes to close the gap between urban and rural areas by strengthening rural providers. The Government had issued a decree setting the minimum amount of drinking water per person at 50 litres per day, and corresponding guidelines were being drawn up for local authorities. There had been an increase in coverage of 1.1 percentage points since 2022, and 90 per cent of the population had had access to drinking water in 2024.

13. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development had made significant efforts to develop technical and regulatory guidance tools that strengthened the exercise of environmental authority in its work to control and monitor the use of water resources. It also sought to raise awareness among users about the importance of planning water use and promoting collective action to protect that resource. Decrees had been issued in relation to the programme for efficient water use and conservation. There was now a more robust regulatory framework that encouraged, for example, the use of wastewater for productive activities, thereby reducing pressure on natural bodies of water. Technical guidance, such as the 2018 guide to efficient water use and conservation, served as an important reference for environmental authorities, users and the general public. Through a resolution adopted in 2021, the Ministry had regulated the use of wastewater, encouraging the use of natural resources as part of a circular economy model, contributing directly to the transformation towards more sustainable development.

14. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government was implementing judgment No. T-302 of 2017 of the Constitutional Court, concerning the rights of children from the Wayúu Indigenous community in La Guajira, as a priority. In that regard, it had established a special mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of public policies by Decree No. 147 of 2024. The mechanism was composed of representatives of national and local authorities, oversight bodies and civil society organizations, and it included a protocol for the participation of the Wayúu community and a provisional plan of action containing urgent measures with verifiable targets.

15. **A representative of Colombia** said that the National Environmental Licensing Authority had taken steps to ensure the preventive evaluation of extractive and energy projects that might affect equitable, safe and sustainable access to water, with the timely and effective participation of communities. Operators were required to conduct rigorous environmental impact studies in order to identify, characterize and assess possible impacts on surface water and groundwater.

16. **A representative of Colombia** said that, to improve access to water in La Guajira, the Government had launched the Wüin Ülees plan, which envisaged the construction of pipelines and the adoption of social support measures for local communities. The State had invested Col\$ 393 billion in 271 projects, of which 241 had been completed, benefiting some 135,000 people in 438 Indigenous communities.

17. **Ms. Rossi** (Country Task Force) said that she would be grateful if the delegation could provide the Committee with disaggregated data on child poverty. She would appreciate information on the National Mental Health Policy and the associated challenges in terms of its coverage, human resources and strategies for implementation. She would be interested to know what had been done to address high rates of mental illness among Afrodescendent, Indigenous and peasant communities, as well as a reported increase in suicides. She would be glad to receive up-to-date information about the situation of persons with disabilities living in institutions and about strategies for deinstitutionalization, particularly of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities and persons with autism. It would be useful to know how the State Party ensured the rights of women deprived of liberty, including the rights to water and to sexual and reproductive health.

18. The adoption of the National Drug Policy, informed by the recommendations of the universal human rights system, was welcome. In that regard, she wondered whether the Government intended to establish a national framework for the progressive rollout of harm reduction services, backed by public funding. She would be grateful for clarification regarding reports that funding for the Policy and harm reduction programmes was limited.

19. In respect of the right to food, she would like to know what was being done to promote the sale, distribution and use of native seeds in the country. She would be interested to know what steps had been taken to implement judgment No. T-247 of 2023 of the Constitutional Court, in which the Court recognized the genetic contamination of maize crops and the adverse impact of genetically modified maize.

20. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee had been informed that the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, a paramilitary group, had recently made a serious threat against the feminist organization Sisma Mujer on account of its advocacy for female human rights defenders and its work on gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence in the Montes de María region. He wished to know whether the State Party had responded promptly to the threat and had taken immediate measures to safeguard the lives and the work of members of human rights organizations in that region.

21. The Committee would be interested to learn what indicators the State Party used when calculating the multidimensional poverty rate, whether the methodology it applied was aligned with that of the United Nations system, and how the information gathered was used.

22. According to the replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/COL/RQ/7), over 292,000 *amparo* remedies had been sought in 2023. He would be grateful if the delegation could describe the nature of that legal remedy and explain why most cases related to the right to health. He would be interested to know how many petitioners had obtained relief and the number of cases in which the courts had ordered urgent measures.

23. **Ms. Pérez** said that she would be interested to know what budget had been allocated for the implementation of the National Care System and whether persons with disabilities had been included in its design and evaluation. She would be grateful for up-to-date information on the uptake of parental leave. She wondered whether the 2020–2021 national time-use survey – which had revealed a significant gender gap, with women spending on average twice as much time as men doing unpaid care work – would be conducted regularly. Lastly, in the light of reports of a new campaign for the fumigation of drug crops using

glyphosate, she wished to know whether that measure would have any impact on the ongoing crop substitution programme.

24. **Mr. Windfuhr** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to know whether Decree No. 684 of 2024, which pertained to the system for progressively guaranteeing the right to food, had been adopted with the proper consultation of all relevant actors. He wondered what progress had been made in establishing binding regulations on business and human rights, and what difficulties the State Party had encountered in its efforts to regulate business investment. It would also be interesting to know the State Party's priorities in the fight against climate change and whether the Government planned to seek international or regional support for its efforts.

25. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government had made a historic investment in hospital infrastructure, focusing on public hospitals in rural and remote areas, in order to ensure the availability, affordability and quality of healthcare. In 2024, it had increased the health budget by 12.9 per cent compared with the previous year. A structural reform of the health system was under way, with a view to ensuring financial transparency and the allocation of resources based on local health needs. The reform would eliminate health insurance providers (*entidades promotoras de salud*), which currently managed health system resources and determined the service to be provided based on the patient's income level – a system that generated significant health inequities. The reform would create integrated regional health networks, improve conditions for health workers and strengthen public health governance and citizen participation. The relevant bill had been approved at first and second reading and was currently before the Senate. While the reform had provoked some controversy, the Government remained committed to moving away from a situation in which profits were prioritized. Additional resources and competences would be transferred to the departments and municipalities from 2026, giving local authorities greater autonomy to organize health service provision.

26. Progress had been made in closing gaps in access to health in rural areas, notably under the National Rural Health Plan. Trillions of pesos had been invested in the formation of basic health teams and in the delivery of health infrastructure and transport projects in hundreds of municipalities. The Government had not taken a general decision to resume glyphosate fumigation, although the President had made a statement on a specific measure to address a difficult security situation that had arisen in one part of the country.

27. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Colombian Agricultural Institute had adopted robust regulations on the production, storage, use, exchange and sale of native seeds. The regulations were designed to strengthen local systems for the protection and production of seeds by peasants and farmers and to ensure the food sovereignty and autonomy of communities. The regulations recognized the principle of coexistence, meaning that they allowed for interaction between the native and commercial seed systems, while protecting traditional uses.

28. Regarding the country's drug policy, it should be noted that various ministries were working to develop a regulatory framework for alternative uses of coca leaf. A decree was being drafted that would establish a system of authorization for coca production for medical, scientific and industrial uses. The system would ensure strict oversight and traceability and would require growers to register with the National Drug Council. All projects would be carried out in partnership with municipalities where illicit crops were currently grown, ensuring their participation throughout the value chain and the fair distribution of the proceeds of activities. The new system would not apply to ancestral and traditional uses of coca leaf by Indigenous communities, which were already protected under the Constitution, the International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) and the case law of the Constitutional Court.

29. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government had advocated for a change in drug policy at the international level, including before Vienna-based institutions and the Human Rights Council. By prohibiting coca leaf under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the international community had criminalized and stigmatized the Indigenous and campesino Peoples of the Andean region and violated their rights. Colombia therefore supported the initiative of Bolivia for the review and reclassification of coca leaf under that

Convention. The Government also welcomed the Committee's important work in preparing a future general comment on the impact of drug policies.

30. The paramilitary group responsible for the threats against Sisma Mujer was more generally known as the Clan del Golfo. The group had named itself Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia in reference to Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a popular leader assassinated in 1948. As the group's activities went against everything that Mr. Gaitán had stood for, the Government avoided the use of that name, considering it an affront to the dignity of the victims of human rights violations.

31. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Government emphatically condemned threats against human rights and political organizations. It recognized that defenders of women's rights were particularly vulnerable to such threats and was putting in place the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders at the local level. The threatening pamphlet had been immediately forwarded to the relevant authorities, and communication had been established with Sisma Mujer and other women's organizations in the Montes de María region.

32. **A representative of Colombia** said that Act No. 2292 of 2023 contained innovative provisions that allowed female heads of household who had committed offences to carry out activities in the public interest instead of serving a term of imprisonment. In adopting the new law, the Government recognized the need for a differentiated approach. Efforts had also been made to adapt infrastructure and improve the oversight of detention, while the Ministry of Justice had adopted an inter-institutional protocol on persons deprived of their liberty with illnesses incompatible with imprisonment. Protocols had been put in place for ensuring the sexual and reproductive rights of female prisoners.

33. **A representative of Colombia** said that persons in a situation of income poverty were unable to meet the cost of a basic basket of goods and services, while those in extreme poverty lacked resources to access a basic food basket. Multidimensional poverty was a broader measurement, composed of 15 indicators in five dimensions, namely education, health, employment, conditions of children and youth, and housing conditions and access to basic services. Persons experiencing deprivation in respect of at least one third of the indicators were considered to be in a situation of multidimensional poverty.

34. **A representative of Colombia** said that many Latin American countries had instituted a remedy of *amparo* in order to protect fundamental rights. In Colombia, the equivalent remedy, known as the *acción de tutela*, had been introduced in 1991 in line with the demands of human rights organizations, despite fierce opposition from certain quarters. The fact that hundreds of thousands of such remedies were sought each year reflected the failure of State institutions to satisfy citizens' demands for justice. Frequent use of the remedy in respect of the right to health illustrated the difficulties faced by the health system in providing certain services.

35. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** (Country Task Force) said that a 2024 report issued by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had noted various challenges facing the Colombian education system, including poor educational outcomes, significant regional disparities in school enrolment rates, high dropout rates and declining scores under the Programme for International Student Assessment. She would be interested to learn how the State Party intended to address those challenges and what results, if any, the implementation of the Special Plan on Rural Education had thus far yielded. She also wished to know whether the Ministry of Education had implemented recommendations made by the Ombudsman in 2024 and to what extent the Ombudsman's recommendations were binding on State institutions.

36. She wondered what steps the State Party was taking to fully implement the Victims and Land Restitution Act of 2011, including the provisions that safeguarded the right to education of victims of the armed conflict. She would be grateful for statistics on the enrolment of foreign migrant children in Colombian schools. She also wished to find out how the State Party was addressing the obstacles that prevented such children from attending school, including those relating to transportation, documentation and the availability of places in schools. It would be helpful to know what steps the State Party was taking to improve the quality of primary and secondary education and distance learning; ensure the

safety of children on their way to school and prevent the misuse of school infrastructure by armed groups; and implement the Ten-Year Plan for the Protection of Indigenous Languages, the National Development Plan for Indigenous Languages and the language mediation protocol agreed with the Nukak people. Updated statistics on Internet access in rural areas would be appreciated.

37. **A representative of Colombia** said that the delegation would be grateful for the Committee's guidance on how to further promote the paradigm shift taking place in Colombia, in which national policies were being increasingly influenced by the worldview and knowledge systems of ethnic groups, with, for example, the Constitutional Court having recognized the cultural rights of rivers in a 2016 decision. Guidance from the Committee on how to make room for culture in humanitarian operations and increase the capacity of social and cultural organizations during times of crisis would also be appreciated.

38. To promote children's right to culture, the Government had invested more than Col\$ 184 billion in programmes that had brought more than 4,000 artists, keepers of traditional knowledge and musicians into schools. The Government's efforts, which had involved more than 500 arts organizations, had reached over 308,000 children, including those from Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palenquero and Roma communities and those living in areas benefiting from local development programmes and areas affected by the armed conflict. The delegation would welcome guidance from the Committee on how the role of artists, musicians and protectors of the country's tangible and intangible heritage could be further enhanced.

39. More than Col\$ 7 billion had been invested in the National Development Plan for Indigenous Languages to support measures to strengthen and revitalize such languages, with an emphasis on the preservation of the knowledge systems and spiritual practices of Indigenous Peoples. The groups with which the Government was working under the Plan included 34 Indigenous Peoples who were in imminent danger of extermination. Three chapters on ethnic perspectives, prepared following consultations with ethnic groups, had been included in the 15-year National Culture Plan. In addition, more than Col\$ 1.2 billion had been invested in the "Cuisines for Peace" programme for the protection of knowledge associated with traditional cuisines.

40. The Government would welcome the Committee's support in efforts to change the classification of the coca leaf under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and to destigmatize its use. The Government was seeking to have the use of the coca leaf and the recognition of the related systems of knowledge included in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

41. **A representative of Colombia** said that the number of children in early education had increased by 900,000, to 2.7 million. A total of 271 grades had been added in primary and secondary schools in rural and remote areas, and 545 teaching posts had been created. The active searches conducted to identify children not in school had resulted in the enrolment of more than 5,400 students.

42. The evaluation system for teachers' promotions and raises had been redesigned, taking into account factors such as local ties, experience and the challenges of teaching in difficult environments. More than 80,000 teachers had received salary increases in connection with their leadership roles as agents of social change and peacebuilders. Under the strategy to promote holistic education through the use of teacher-mentors, support had been provided to over 90,000 teachers and over 9,000 school leaders.

43. More than 435,000 persons had benefited from 8,755 newly built or renovated school facilities. School laboratories and libraries had received 23,744 items of technological equipment, and furniture had been provided for 14,222 school facilities. School retention rates had increased as a result of the School Meals Programme, which had a coverage rate of 80.3 per cent, and the delivery of food parcels during school breaks. The programme was operated with the involvement of Afro-Colombian and Raizal communities.

44. Innovative programmes had been introduced to eliminate traditional barriers to entry to higher education by, for example, helping students transition directly from secondary to

higher education or allowing them to obtain technical qualifications or begin working towards university degrees while still in secondary school. More than 902,000 students had benefited from the “I Can Study” programme for free university education and 127 projects had been carried out to improve university infrastructure, with an investment of Col\$ 1.47 billion.

45. The country’s pioneering Indigenous Education System recognized the principles, values and worldviews of Indigenous Peoples and ensured that their cultural and territorial identities were respected in education. The Government’s Policy for Comprehensive School Risk Management and Education in Emergencies was intended to safeguard students’ right to education during natural disasters and in the context of the armed conflict. State institutions gave significant weight to the recommendations of the Ombudsman’s Office in carrying out their duties, although they were not legally binding.

46. **A representative of Colombia** said that article 44 of the Constitution addressed the rights of children and recognized that their rights had primacy over the rights of others. Instruments in place to support children’s rights included the National Policy for Children and Adolescents 2018–2030 and a policy to support and strengthen families. Information about the national action plan to implement the Safe Schools Declaration, which Colombia had endorsed in November 2022, would be provided in writing. The 30 recreational houses that had been established in 19 departments under the Comprehensive Programme for Opportunities for Children and Adolescents, which had been implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2012 to 2018, continued to be operated by the municipalities in which they were located. The houses provided safe spaces where some 4,000 children between the ages of 6 and 17 years spent their free time playing sports and taking part in cultural and educational activities.

47. **A representative of Colombia** said that regulations such as the rules on temporary protected status for Venezuelan migrants were in place to help with the transition to a regular migration status. By July 2022, more than 1.5 million temporary protection permits had been approved and almost 1.2 million had been delivered. Migrant students did not need to have official Colombian documents to register in the Integrated Enrolment System. Of the 611,314 students with Venezuelan nationality registered in the education system in 2024, 35 per cent had been identified with a number assigned by the Ministry of Education, indicating that they did not have identity documents valid in Colombia. Circular No. 038 of 21 November 2023 had provided updated guidelines for ensuring that migrants had access to early, primary, secondary and higher education. There was also specific guidance on welcoming migrant students and promoting an inclusive educational environment. In 2024, some Col\$ 31.5 billion had been put towards supporting the inclusion of migrants. The Policy for Comprehensive School Risk Management and Education in Emergencies provided for the implementation of protocols to safeguard migrant students’ right to education through more flexible administrative requirements and teaching strategies that facilitated the cultural, linguistic and social integration of such students. The Government would continue to apply and expand the Victims and Land Restitution Act to safeguard the right to education of displaced persons and victims of the armed conflict.

48. **A representative of Colombia** said that, under Act No. 1448, children who were victims of the armed conflict, including those who had been forcibly displaced, and came from families with limited resources were entitled to free education at State-run preschools, primary schools and secondary schools. Decree No. 525 of 2025 provided for humanitarian assistance for victims of conflict-related lockdowns. In 2024, the resources made available to the Higher Education Fund for Victims, which was managed by the Colombian Institute for Student Loans and Study Abroad and offered educational loans for undergraduate study to victims of the armed conflict, had increased from Col\$ 98 billion to Col\$ 105 billion. Educational programmes had been developed to take account of the specific needs of displaced persons, awareness-raising campaigns had been run in displaced communities regarding the programmes available, and the Government had formed partnerships with educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and international agencies to increase the availability of such programmes.

49. **Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu** said that she wished to know how the Special Plan on Rural Education had contributed to reducing gaps in educational metrics between urban and rural

areas. She wondered whether the Ministry of Education had implemented any of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman's Office, and if so, in what way. It would be useful to receive geographically disaggregated statistical data for the previous five years on access to education for children from Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. She also wondered what measures the State Party had taken to ensure access to education during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in particular for those communities.

50. **Mr. Bouzid** said that he wished to know what specific action the Government intended to take to ensure equal access to quality inclusive education for children and young people with disabilities, in the light of reports that they faced exclusion from mainstream education.

51. **Ms. Chen** said that information provided by the State Party showed that from 2004 to 2012, the enrolment rate of primary schools had decreased year by year. She wondered why that was and what measures had been taken to improve the situation. She would also appreciate information, including statistical data, on the results of the "Families in Action" and "Youth in Action" programmes, in particular with regard to school attendance.

52. **Ms. Rossi** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in the World Health Organization (WHO) review of the classification of the coca leaf under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and in the related voting process of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. She also wondered whether the delegation could comment on reports that the company responsible for the La Colosa gold mining project in Cajamarca was seeking to disregard the results of a popular consultation rejecting the project and that the regulatory framework for such consultations had been weakened by a 2018 decision of the Constitutional Court, in which it established that municipalities did not have the competence to prohibit the exploration and exploitation of subsoil resources, even through popular consultation.

53. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he wished to know whether the State Party had specific legal provisions that criminalized the recruitment of children and adolescents into armed groups and whether there were specific policies for the reintegration into the education system of children and adolescents who had been forcibly recruited.

54. He wished to learn whether teachers' salaries were competitive, how they compared with the average or minimum wage and whether there was a career development plan for teachers. He also wished to know whether there were teachers working on an unpaid basis and, if so, how many.

55. **A representative of Colombia** said that article 130 of the National Development Plan emphasized the need to increase resources for ensuring equality and equity in access to higher education for persons with disabilities. To that end, a standing financial support mechanism had been established to provide full subsidies for the higher education of at least 115 persons with disabilities on a regular basis. In addition, the establishment of the Indigenous education system marked an important step in establishing differentiated mechanisms for access to all levels of education. Support for ethnic communities had included 47 projects with a total investment of Col\$ 57 billion in early education, expanding coverage to 14 territories and 77 municipalities and enabling the enrolment of 3,600 students in the 2024/25 school year. As part of broader efforts to close gaps in access across all levels of education, higher education opportunities had also been provided to 23,000 young Indigenous people, 21,000 young people from communities of persons of African descent and 135,000 young victims of crime.

56. **A representative of Colombia** said that work was being carried out with Indigenous Peoples and the Palenquero, Raizal and Roma communities to protect their linguistic heritage, in coordination with the Ibero-American Institute of Indigenous Languages, the Andean Community and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization. The groups concerned played a leading role in those efforts.

57. All work on the destigmatization of the coca leaf was done in collaboration with the communities concerned. The issue had been raised at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and a

road map had been established to advance recognition of the creative and popular economies associated with the coca leaf in the country.

58. Preventing gender-based violence was a cornerstone of the Government's cultural policies relating to women. Work was being conducted with women deprived of liberty and measures were being taken to combat violence arising from prejudice, particularly against transgender persons.

59. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Special Plan on Rural Education was organized into five components. The first focused on comprehensive early childhood services in rural areas, aiming to ensure universal coverage for children up to 6 years old. The second addressed quality educational strategies from preschool to high school, seeking to strengthen education across those levels. The third emphasized enrolment, well-being and retention in education in rural areas, promoting better conditions for students through improved infrastructure, meal programmes, transportation and dormitories. The fourth centred on inclusive and quality higher education, designed to expand access and retention for rural youth through innovative and flexible regional initiatives. The fifth component targeted institutional strengthening, intersectoral coordination and partnerships, with the goal of tailoring strategies to local needs and promoting innovation in the use of information and communications technologies.

60. Under that framework, significant progress had been made. The rural early childhood education strategy had benefited 1,554 children in 10 certified local education authorities, with training and support provided to 133 teachers. Between June 2024 and June 2025, the support programme for improving rural educational trajectories had strengthened the capacities of 32 education secretariats and 34 teacher training colleges. Twelve processes with Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities had been promoted to design early education strategies, and the mobile rural early childhood education strategy had reached 10,410 children in the most remote regions of the country.

61. The integrated secondary and higher education systems had enabled the re-enrolment of 3,815 children and young people in remote rural areas in 2024, with the creation of 545 new temporary teaching positions for 2025, and had strengthened technical agricultural secondary education in 75 institutions. In terms of infrastructure, 894 facilities across 163 rural schools had been renovated with an investment of approximately Col\$ 68 billion. The rate of comprehensive early childhood care in rural areas had risen to 52.6 per cent in 2024, and the rural School Meals Programme continued to be strengthened, benefiting 210,106 students in rural areas.

62. Significant progress had been made in reducing the dropout rate. The year-on-year dropout rate had fallen from 3.93 per cent in 2023 to 3.63 per cent in 2024, translating into a reduction in potential dropouts from 286,083 in 2023 to 256,733 in 2024. That improvement reflected the impact of strategies for student retention, with a generalized decline in the dropout rate in 62 per cent of certified local education authorities. However, important challenges remained in some remote rural regions, where armed conflict had caused continuous interruptions and higher dropout rates, reaching 13.5 per cent in secondary education in conflict areas compared with a national average of 6.5 per cent in 2018.

63. **A representative of Colombia** said that, in the municipality of Tumaco, technological equipment worth almost Col\$ 1.5 billion had been delivered to the Maragrícola campus of the University of Nariño, benefiting about 1,000 students per semester, while net coverage of rural upper secondary education had increased by 16.6 per cent in 2024, with 22,978 students enrolled across 74 municipalities. In the Department of Chocó, 100 per cent coverage had been achieved under the School Meals Programme, showing the national Government's commitment to children and young people in underserved territories. Strengthening educational continuity programmes and adjusting academic measures to the needs of displaced populations and those in conflict-affected areas was a fundamental part of the Government's approach to addressing and overcoming the crisis in those territories.

64. **A representative of Colombia** said that, during the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Indigenous Peoples had been consulted regarding the reclassification of the coca leaf. In January 2025, a consultation had been held in Mitú at which the observations and comments

of Indigenous communities on the process had been heard in full. Recently, Colombia had submitted relevant information to WHO, including all the information obtained in those consultations. As part of the process, on 20 October 2025, there would be a session at WHO in which Colombia would participate as a concerned State; the format also allowed interventions by civil society organizations and other interested stakeholders, and it was hoped that representatives of Indigenous Peoples would participate.

65. **A representative of Colombia** said that the Ministry of Education was taking measures to prevent forced recruitment and violence against children, adolescents and young people affected by armed conflict under the Policy for Comprehensive School Risk Management and Education in Emergencies, adopted by Resolution No. 65/19/2025, which aimed to safeguard the right to education and the integrity of school communities by addressing risks linked to the internal armed conflict. The Ministry was part of the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of Forced Recruitment, Sexual Abuse and Violence against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations, coordinating efforts and early prevention pathways. Within that framework, 24 schools in high-risk areas such as Nariño, Norte de Santander and Guaviare had been prioritized for institutional support.

66. Between 2022 and 2025, over 80,000 teachers had received promotions or salary increases, supported by an unprecedented investment of Col\$ 2.1 trillion from the general revenue-sharing system. Of the 103,000 teachers who had applied for an increase, 75 per cent had been granted one, reflecting fair recognition of their work. In addition, 126,000 teachers had benefited from salary improvements under a new decree. The 2024 reform of the pedagogical bonus for public teachers and school leaders set the benefit at 24 per cent of their salary, at an estimated cost of Col\$ 398.5 billion. Promotions and reassignments approved for 79,196 teachers in 2024 represented an additional Col\$ 606 billion. Overall, education spending had risen significantly, from Col\$ 45.3 trillion in 2022 to Col\$ 63.1 trillion in 2025, enabling the hiring of more teachers and expanding opportunities.

67. Progress was also being made in ensuring access to education for and the retention in school of Afro-Colombian and Indigenous children and young people. After 18 years of consultation, the Special Indigenous Education System had been formally established through Decree-Law No. 04/81/2025. Enrolment of Indigenous students had increased from 246,194 students in 2021 to 285,244 students in 2025. Fourteen agreements had been signed with ethnic communities to strengthen early childhood education through culturally relevant approaches, and the Álvaro Ulcué Chocué Fund had provided support to 18,789 Indigenous students in 2023 and 2024. For Afro-Colombian students, progress included adoption of a professionalization statute for ethno-educators and the establishment of the Black Communities Fund, benefiting 26,659 students.

68. Both Indigenous and Afro-Colombian students also benefited from broader programmes. The integrated secondary and higher education system had enabled 3,815 rural children and young people to return to school in 2024, while the “I Can Study” education subsidy programme had reached 25,039 Indigenous persons. The School Meals Programme had achieved 80.26 per cent coverage in 2024, benefiting 5,838,083 students. In addition, the Citizenship, Reconciliation, Socioemotional and Climate Change Education Strategy, which incorporated an anti-racism component, promoted inclusive and culturally relevant curricula and ensured that access to early childhood education was free from discriminatory admission practices.

69. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he wished to thank the delegation for its willingness to engage in constructive dialogue. He also recognized the contributions of civil society organizations and the Ombudsman’s Office. He wished the State Party success in implementing the recommendations that would result from the review process.

70. **A representative of Colombia** said that he wished to reiterate his Government’s gratitude for the Committee’s invaluable work. The Committee’s analysis would be carefully considered and its observations and recommendations would help the Government to continue advancing towards the fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights for the people of Colombia.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.