



**International Convention on the
Elimination of All Forms of Racial
Discrimination**

Distr.: General
17 September 2008
English
Original: French

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Seventy-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1883rd MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 4 August 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. DAH

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION
SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE
CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (*continued*)

Nineteenth periodic report of the Russian Federation CERD/C/RUS/19;
HRI/CORE/1/Add.52/Rev.1; list of issues, document without symbol distributed in
the Committee room, in English only)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the delegation of the Russian Federation took places at the Committee table.*

2. Mr. TRAVNIKOV (Russian Federation), before replying to the questions put by Committee members at the previous meeting, said that the Russian Federation was in deep mourning following the death, on Sunday, 3 August 2008, of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The writer had sought throughout his life to ensure respect for the principle of tolerance and to combat all forms of racism and exclusion, including those suffered by many oppressed population groups.

3. Recalling that, at the previous meeting, several experts had wondered about the reasons why, at the time of the Soviet Union, there had been practically no manifestation of extremism, intolerance or xenophobia, and that that no longer seemed to be the case, he said that all the surveys regularly conducted by newspapers tended to show that the Russian population was not particularly concerned about the ethnic origin or skin colour of other people in the country. However, the past 20 years had been marked by radical economic, political and social changes which had shaken the system of values of Russian society and wiped out traditional points of reference. Such disenchantment combined with a general drop in the standard of living in the 1990s had led among the majority of Russians to a mood of withdrawal and frustration which had been reflected, in a number of cases, by the rejection of others. The State had been constantly developing education policies to change that attitude but it continued to play only a secondary role in that regard as stereotypes were very often fuelled by family and friends. Children born in the mid-1990s had grown up in a world whose values had radically changed and had been the main channels through which xenophobic theories and racist and nationalist propaganda had spread. The authorities were faced with unprecedented difficulties in combating a phenomenon sustained by very young people. Russia was convinced that the solution did not lie in punishment but in prevention, education and social integration.

4. There was a strong consensus in Russian society around the idea that extremism should be actively resisted. A large number of measures had been adopted in education and several expert forums regularly analyzed the problems encountered. Increased recourse to public bodies and to law-enforcement services and the increasingly active role played by NGOs might give the impression that manifestations of racism were now on a scale never seen before in the Russian Federation, but that image was false. The question of racism seemed to be taking up so much room at present because the public authorities and society as a whole were redoubling their efforts to fight that scourge and because more substantial public funding had been allocated to all those actively contributing to those efforts. Moreover, there was an increase in the number of cases concerning acts of racial or

religious discrimination brought before the country's criminal and civil courts and of convictions for such acts.

5. In response to the concern expressed by some Committee members about the absence in Russian legislation of a single definition of racial discrimination reproducing the terms of article 1 of the Convention, he acknowledged that fact but stressed that, in the Russian Federation, all social relations were codified by specific legal standards which explicitly condemned any manifestation of racism and that the principle of non-discrimination applied to all rights recognized by the Constitution and in law. The Russian Federation was guided in that regard by article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which stipulated that "the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status".

6. Several legal provisions simultaneously protected the rights and freedoms recognized by the Russian Constitution and explicitly prohibited discrimination. Articles 2 and 3 of the Labour Code prohibited employment-related discrimination, while federal electoral legislation also contained provisions prohibiting any agitation calculated to incite hatred and social, racial, national or religious enmity, and also propaganda for social, racial, national, religious or linguistic superiority (CERD/C/RUS/19, para. 110).

7. In addition, article 1 of the Family Code prohibited any restraint on rights in marriage or family relations on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds (*ibid.*, para. 19); article 5 of the Education Act guaranteed all Russian citizens the opportunity to receive an education irrespective of sex, race, nationality, language or origin, in particular (*ibid.*, para. 15); and article 17 of the Principles of Public Health Legislation guaranteed health care for all, irrespective of race, ethnic or other background (*ibid.*, para. 16). Consequently, the Russian Federation considered that article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was fully applied in its domestic law and that there was no legal gap in that regard.

8. Russian legislation prohibiting discrimination was constantly being improved and was perfectly adapted to the realities of the country. On the question of judicial protection against racial discrimination, he said that the Russian Federation applied the principle of presumption of innocence and that the burden of proof was on the prosecution.

9. With regard to the acquisition of citizenship, the Russian Citizenship Act prescribed a general and simplified procedure to that end (*ibid.*, para. 113), subject to certain conditions: one of the parents of the applicant must be Russian and reside in the territory and the applicant must have lived or reside in a State member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIE). A simplified procedure for acquiring citizenship had also been introduced for persons born in one of the member States of the CIE with Russian citizenship, which they had renounced, or for persons married for at least three years to a Russian citizen who could not work or who had children who could not work. In addition, persons permanently residing in the territory of a member country of the former Soviet Union as at 6 February 1992 automatically had the right to acquire Russian citizenship, except for those who had declared the following year that they did not wish to do so.

10. In June 2006, additional provisions had been adopted to enable Russians living abroad to resettle in the country. The aim of the public programme approved by the President of the Russian Federation was to encourage Russians but also other nationals to settle in under-populated Russian regions. The Government proposed financial assistance to those wishing to settle in such regions along with a permanent residence permit. Some 28,000 persons had already expressed interest in that programme.

11. The Presidential Council for Promoting the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights (ibid. para. 30) had been set up in 2004 to monitor the situation in regard to racial discrimination. The Council analyzed the most acute problems arising in that area and reported directly thereon to the President of the Russian Federation, with whom its Chairperson was in direct contact. Each year, the Council received some 300,000 complaints, which it considered on a fully independent basis. In order to allow the Council to discharge its mandate correctly, it had been allocated a budget of some \$6.5 million.

12. The Social Forum of the Russian Federation established in 2006 (ibid. para. 31) was tasked with actively combating all forms of racial discrimination and intolerance. It offered a single platform for cooperation between civil society and the public authorities, including local authorities. The Forum maintained close contact with federal executive bodies and supported NGOs through subventions.

13. The media played an important role in combating racial discrimination but they also spread racist and xenophobic ideas. That problem was considered to be extremely sensitive by the Russian Government which constantly endeavoured to strike a balance between penalizing the authors of articles promoting extremist ideologies and defence of the right to freedom of expression in the media. The Russian Federation, which deemed it unacceptable to use freedom of expression to disseminate and legitimize an ideology based on racism and racial discrimination, had entered no reservation to article 4 of the Convention.

14. Mr. ZHAFYAROV (Russian Federation), addressing the question of racism on the Internet, said that, as at 1 July 2008, 94,334 media outlets, including more than 75,000 print media, were listed in the country. Since 2004, the Office of the Procurator-General included a central executive body responsible for monitoring media compliance with legislation. One of its priorities was to prevent the use of the media to incite to national or religious hatred and religious intolerance. Since 2004, 12 warnings had been issued to newspapers for abuse of freedom of expression, eight of which concerned articles inciting to national or religious strife. In 2005, of the 15 warnings issued, 12 concerned articles expressing hatred of certain ethnic groups. In 2006, 16 warnings had been issued, and 24 in 2007.

15. The Office of the Procurator-General was responsible for ensuring that the media complied with legislation. It accordingly analyzed all publications containing information that might breach anti-discrimination legislation or inciting to racial and religious hatred and requested a judicial investigation in cases where offences had been found to have been committed. In the first half of 2008, the Office of the Procurator-General had taken more than 400 measures against publications that had violated the provisions of the Act to counter extremism (ibid. para. 82).

16. The question of the propagation of extremist ideas via the Internet raised different problems. According to experts, more than 1,000 extremist sites

disseminated ideas based on racial superiority and national hatred or enmity through the Russian-speaking network. As, however, such sites were often based in a foreign country, the Russian authorities found it very difficult to institute proceedings against those who operated them and to demand that they be closed. The Russian Parliament was currently considering a proposal by the Office of the Procurator-General to regulate the activities of Internet access providers who disseminated ideas based on racial or religious hatred. The question was, however, a delicate and complex one, as it turned around the necessary balance between freedom of expression in the media and the prohibition of the dissemination of racist and xenophobic ideas.

17. Mr. TRAVNIKOV (Russian Federation) said that the Cossacks were not an ethnic group but a multi-ethnic and multi-denominational socio-cultural community to which all Russian citizens had the right to belong if they so desired. Cossacks accordingly included not only Russians and Ukrainians but also persons belonging to other ethnic groups, such as Nagaibaks, Evenks, Buriats, Kalmyks and Bashkirs, along with representatives of various religions, including Orthodox, Muslim and Buddhist. There were currently reported to be some 500 or 600 Cossacks in the Russian Federation.

18. The Cossack communities collaborated closely with the autonomous national cultural entities, particularly at the regional level, and participated in the elaboration of measures to strengthen inter-ethnic relations. One of the important features of the Cossack status was that, under federal law, they had the right to occupy certain posts in the civil service and to discharge certain responsibilities. Under agreements with the local or regional authorities, Cossacks were responsible in particular for the maintenance of law and order and the conservation of natural resources. To that end, nearly 140 Cossacks were recruited each year by the public authorities.

19. The Russian Cossacks were usually tolerant people, but sometimes extremist individuals might use the name "Cossack" for personal ends, like the head of the Cossack radical movement, Sarafanov, who in 2006 had been sentenced by the Krasnodar District Court to an eight-month prison term for incitement to racial hatred.

20. As for the current situation of the Meskhetian Turks in the Russian Federation, 75,000 members of that ethnic group were estimated by experts to be living scattered through 26 regions in the Federation. Most Meskhetian Turks were Russian citizens and had no intention of emigrating. Those who wished to return to live on the lands of their ancestors in Georgia had settled in the territory of Krasnodar because of its proximity to Georgia. However, the Georgian authorities having opposed their repatriation, a programme enabling Meskhetian Turks living in the territory of Krasnodar to emigrate freely to the United States of America had been carried out from 2004 to 2007. Under that programme, 12,000 Meskhetian Turks had obtained refugee status and had settled permanently in the United States. According to official statistics, that group of emigrants was composed of 40 per cent stateless persons, 59 per cent Russian citizens and 1 per cent foreigners. In 2007, a law on the repatriation of Meskhetian Turks had been adopted in Georgia, but the conditions to be met were very strict. The Russian authorities were willing to give all necessary assistance to those who wished to return to Georgia but, in view of the complexity of the task, they would be grateful for any assistance given by international organizations and the Committee.

21. Under the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples Act, "repressed peoples" designated those peoples and communities that had been persecuted and deported in the 1930s and 1940s, including Chechens, Ingush, Russian Germans, Crimean Tatars, Cossacks and "Kulaks" (rich peasants).

22. A variety of terms were used in Russian legislation to designate groups of persons. In the Constitution there were no fewer than seven basic terms: "multinational people" (i.e. a single nation composed of several ethnic groups); the "people" (in the sense of population or ethnic group); "indigenous minority"; "ethnic minority"; "nationality" (in the sense of ethnic group); and "national minority". As if there was no definition of those terms, they had to be interpreted in the light of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe and other international instruments. The concept of indigenous minority had to be distinguished from that of national minority, the indigenous minority being a particular type of national minority which, in relation to other groups, enjoyed a specific legal status and rights.

23. Mr. ZHURAVSKY (Russian Federation) said that the Ministry of Regional Development, which was responsible for framing ethno-cultural policy and regulations on inter-ethnic relations, had been established in 2004. The interdepartmental and advisory structures existing before that time had been attached to the new Ministry in 2006. In accordance with the National and Cultural Autonomy Act, an Advisory Council for autonomous national cultural entities had been set up within the Ministry. The Council collaborated closely with the Interdepartmental Commission for cooperation with ethnic voluntary associations, which was composed of representatives of eight federal ministries and included four working groups responsible respectively for monitoring the activities of law-enforcement bodies and their relations with associations, collaborating with regional authorities, and addressing problems of national minorities, culture, education and the media.

24. The Ministry of Regional Development also included a national committee for the implementation of the programme of action for the Second International Decade of Indigenous Peoples (A/60/270), an interdepartmental commission for matters relating to Russian Germans and an interdepartmental working group to study the question of the ratification by the Russian Federation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The body responsible for coordinating the activities of all the advisory and interdepartmental commissions was the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations whose main tasks consisted in implementing public policy on ethno-cultural issues, promoting ethno-cultural development of peoples in the Russian Federation, harmonizing and monitoring inter-ethnic relations, protecting the rights of national minorities and indigenous minorities, collaborating with Russian Cossacks, and developing and implementing federal programmes concerning inter-ethnic relations. Each year, the Department published analyses and statistics by region on associations representing ethnic or religious minorities.

25. The Department of Inter-ethnic Relations employed 31 persons. Its task was to distribute public subventions, particularly those allocated to the programme for the promotion of the socio-economic development of Russian Germans, which received 350 million roubles in financing annually, and to the programme for the sustainable development of indigenous minorities in the North, for which 600 million roubles

were earmarked each year. In all, the Department distributed 1.2 billion roubles in subventions annually, or more than US\$50 million.

26. From 2005 to 2008, the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations was involved in the organization of more than 600 events, including the fifth Congress of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East, held in Moscow in 2005, the International Forum of Peoples of the Volga in 2006, the seminar organized in 2006 in Strasbourg by the Council of Europe on international legal safeguards for the protection of national minorities and the fifth World Congress of Finno-Ugric Peoples, held in Khanty-Mansiisk in June and July 2008.

27. On the question of the settlement of inter-ethnic conflicts in the Russian Federation and the role played in that connection by the Ministry of Regional Development, he said that, following incidents in the city of Kondopoga, in Karelia, the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations had made recommendations to the regional authorities on inter-ethnic conflict prevention and settlement mechanisms, which had been addressed to all regional bodies and to the autonomous national cultural entities. Guided by those recommendations, the regional authorities had succeeded in preventing inter-ethnic conflicts on several occasions, particularly in February 2007, in the city of Novoaleksandrovsk (Stavropol Territory), and in March of the same year, in Olonets District (Republic of Karelia). The Department took measures immediately whenever it received warnings of risks of inter-ethnic conflict from regional authorities and non-governmental organizations.

28. With regard to the situation of Roma living in the Russian Federation, he said that between 2006 and 2008, representatives of the Department of Inter-ethnic Relations had travelled to several regions including Tula, Novgorod, Tver and Samara and to Krasnodar Territory to hold consultations, in particular with representatives of the federal narcotics services, local Roma associations, regional officials and representatives of local authorities. In the regions of Novgorod and Tula, those consultations had resulted in agreements between the local authorities and the Roma who had been expelled or whose houses had been razed to the ground. In particular, those whose houses had been destroyed had been rehoused or had received a plot of land on which to build a new home.

29. Concerning the expulsion of Roma from the village of Dorozhnoe, in the region of Kaliningrad, already in 2002 a judge had ordered the demolition of 46 houses built illegally by Roma in that village and the families concerned had been given an opportunity to appeal against that decision. The expulsions and the demolition work had not begun until 2005. The authorities had proposed to rehouse the inhabitants in other districts in the region, but some families had refused to move.

30. As for the indigenous minorities in the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East, the Government was giving special attention to those groups in view of the particular difficulty of preserving their way of life and traditions in the extreme climate conditions prevailing in those regions. However, population statistics showed that the measures taken by the public authorities had borne fruit: the indigenous population in those regions had risen from 156,000 in 1979 to 197,500 in 1989, then to 244,000 in 2002, an increase of 17 per cent between 1989 and 2002. That made a sharp contrast with the discouraging population trends throughout the country.

31. A programme for the economic development of the indigenous minorities of the North had been launched by the Ministry of Regional Development, which had earmarked for its implementation 102 million roubles in 2005, 205 million in 2006 and 200 million in 2007 and 2008 respectively. From 2009 onwards, 600 million roubles would be allocated each year to the regions where those minorities were living. The aid distribution would be supervised by the Ministry of Regional Development, which had set itself the goals of reducing the child mortality rate, improving the employment rate in the traditional living areas of those minorities and increasing their income. Regional authorities were also expected to devote part of their budget to that end and, in all, 1 billion roubles a year should be going towards improving the economic situation of indigenous minorities.

32. Regarding fishing quotas, they applied only to rare species; there were no quotas that had to be respected by indigenous minorities for other species. The concept of indigenous land did not exist in the domestic law of the State party but, in accordance with legislation and the Constitution, it was required to do what was necessary to preserve the traditional way of life of the indigenous minorities. The Ministry of Regional Development was updating the list of regions of the North classified as traditional living areas of the indigenous minorities, whose boundaries should be defined in that document. The proposed list should then be approved by Parliament.

33. The delegation shared the concerns of the Committee members about the transparency of the agreements concluded between big companies and indigenous communities for the exploitation of natural resources in their traditional living areas. The allocation of landed property was the responsibility of the regional authorities, which were required to ensure that the interests of the indigenous minorities were not harmed. It was common, however, for agreements to be concluded between companies and indigenous communities, which provided for various kinds of compensation to the people concerned (financial compensation, building of workshops, purchase of material, etc.). That method was often used by such companies as Rosneft, Lukoil, Gazprom or Neftegaz, which had set up special departments in charge of relations with the indigenous minorities, including a large number to provide infrastructure for them, including schools, health centres and fish processing factories. In order to ensure that the minorities concerned were duly compensated, the Ministry of Regional Development and several indigenous associations had jointly prepared two bills dealing respectively with methods to determine the losses sustained by indigenous minorities through company purchase of their land and modes of compensation for damage caused to the natural environment of the indigenous minorities. There were two regions where areas had been declared Territories of Traditional Nature Use: the Khantys-Mansis Autonomous District and Khabarovsk Territory.

34. In the regions of the North where the indigenous population was rather dense, there were 664 schools attended by 76,000 children, where 23 indigenous languages were taught. Special training was provided to teachers working in those schools.

35. The participation of minorities in the conduct of public affairs was a reality. For example, the President of the State Duma of Iamalo-Nenets District was Nenets, although that minority represented only seven per cent of the population of that district. Likewise, the President and Vice-President of the State Duma of Khantys-Mansis District were respectively Khanty and Mansi, although those

minorities accounted for only two per cent of the population. In that district there existed an assembly composed of representatives of the minorities, which had been established in 1996 along the lines of the Sami Parliament.

36. Mr. TRAVNIKOV (Russian Federation) said that his country was working not only to improve the living conditions of the small indigenous peoples of the North but also to help them preserve their traditional way of life. Every year, despite strong international pressure, the Russian Federation spared no effort to maintain whale fishing quotas and thus to enable those peoples to retain one of their main means of subsistence. Where Chechnya was concerned, he pointed out that the problem of displaced persons, which was now settled, did not concern only Chechens but also Russians and Ingush. The situation in the region had improved significantly, as most of the housing had been rebuilt and the infrastructure repaired.

37. Concerning the problem of the behaviour of law-enforcement services towards minorities, he said that identity checks and questionings took no account of race, gender or ethnic group. In the event of abuse of power, law-enforcement officials received very heavy administrative sanctions and could be prosecuted in serious cases. In any event, the Russian Federation made every effort to develop the awareness of law-enforcement officials on issues relating to racism and intolerance rather than emphasizing sanctions and punishment. As for the Declaration adopted following the Volga Forum, a core instrument establishing the principle of non-confrontation between civilizations, Committee members would find all relevant information on the Internet.

38. Ms. ZUEVA (Russian Federation) said that more than 300,000 persons had returned of their own free will to Chechnya since the end of the conflict. The State had put in place an effective support system for the return of displaced persons, offering in particular guaranteed re-housing and the payment of cash compensation. Among examples of successful cooperation between States, the Russian Federation had collaborated with Georgia in ensuring the return of more than 320,000 Chechens who had taken refuge in that country. Return operations had taken place under the supervision of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which had found no flagrant violation of human rights. Article 14, paragraph 4, of the Russian Citizenship Act had allowed more than 220,000 citizens of the former Soviet Union to obtain Russian citizenship in 2007. The 2007 law on migratory flow accounting had been adopted in order to control migratory flows more effectively and facilitate registration procedures for new migrants. It was estimated that there were some 3 million lawful immigrants in the Russian Federation. Under the new procedures introduced by the law, foreigners were required simply to complete a questionnaire to inform the Federal Migration Service of their arrival. It fell to reception services, including housing services, to carry out the necessary formalities with the immigration services for the registration of the new migrants within three days after their arrival on Russian territory.

39. Ms. PETROVA (Russian Federation) said that all children had the right to receive compulsory primary and secondary education, irrespective of the status of their parents in the territory. Non-registration of parents could not be an impediment to the exercise of the right to education. Specific teaching materials had been developed for Roma children, whose education was required to be supported by local authorities in different ways. Given that the prior agreement of parents was required for Roma children to be placed in special classes, the establishment of

ethno-cultural classes had been highly instrumental in improving tolerance between the various ethnic groups.

40. With regard to the 20 cases of aggression against foreign students, the Russian Federation had swiftly reacted by setting up an interdepartmental council, composed of representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior, to study each case and find suitable solutions. Generally speaking, foreigners could study in excellent conditions in the Russian Federation, which remained a leading host country for foreigners wishing to pursue higher education.

41. The Ministry of Education promoted mother tongue education. Already, 239 languages were used in schools and the number of children receiving education in their mother tongue was steadily increasing. As for the alleged difficulties encountered by Georgian children in some schools, they had not been substantiated and the children concerned did not appear to be having any problem in studying in their mother tongue. The law on public support for youth and student associations had been very instrumental in reducing manifestations of extremism and promoting healthy, positive behaviour among young people and students. Some 100,000 youth associations received support from the public authorities. Establishments providing Islamic instruction could be duly accredited and deliver State diplomas. Educational materials had been designed for Islamic instruction in the regions concerned.

42. The CHAIRPERSON, speaking on behalf of all the Committee members, paid tribute to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, a figure of huge international stature whose death was a loss for all humanity, and joined the Russian Federation in mourning him.

43. Mr. de GOUTTES said that he had been very struck by the analysis made of the causes of the upsurge in racism and xenophobia in the State party, particularly among the younger generation, which had attributed to a loss of values and bearings in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. For that reason, the State party should give particular attention to the teaching of tolerance, inter-ethnic understanding and respect for human rights, both for young people and for law-enforcement officials and media professionals.

44. In Russian legislation, the burden of proof was always on the prosecuting party, whether in criminal or in civil proceedings. Recalling that the Committee was in favour of the burden of proof being reversed in civil cases, particularly in regard to acts of racial discrimination that could not easily be proved, he inquired about the intentions of the State party in that connection.

45. Mr. THORNBERRY wished to know to what extent the programmes for indigenous peoples were designed and implemented in cooperation with their beneficiaries and whether there was any possibility of responsibility for educational programmes being gradually transferred, wherever possible, to the peoples and communities concerned. He was also curious to know more about the rather unfortunately named "laboratory to socialize the Roma" and whether mastery of the Russian language was one of the criteria for assignment to a special class reserved for Roma.

46. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES said that he was not sure that he had understood the real nature of the Cossack associations. He wondered in particular whether they were peaceful groups composed of aficionados of the martial arts belonging to various ethnic groups or paramilitary groups supported by the Government, in other

words, groups of persons comparable to what in other countries would be regarded as militia groups constituting a threat to State security.

47. Mr. MURILLO MARTINEZ wished to know what role was played by political parties in promoting racial hatred and whether some of them used nationalistic rhetoric. He also inquired whether the State party was taking advantage of the meeting in October 2008 of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference to launch a national discussion on the issue of racial hatred, preferably with the involvement of young people, who were particularly affected by that phenomenon.

48. Mr. KEMAL welcomed the substantial resources earmarked for the reintegration of internally displaced persons, which should eventually allow stability to be restored in the region. He would particularly appreciate knowing what efforts had been made by the Russian Federation to preserve the language and culture of those persons. He also wished to know whether the State party protected indigenous peoples living in areas whose valuable natural resources were exploited by companies that flouted the rights of those peoples and whether, in the event of conflict, they were able to institute legal proceedings and to receive free legal assistance for that purpose. Lastly, he wondered whether indigenous communities were involved in activities to preserve their traditional environment, particularly its wildlife such as the Siberian tiger.

49. Mr. PROSPER asked for the State party to include in its next periodic report statistics on crimes motivated by racial hatred, namely their number, the percentage of them that had led to judicial proceedings and resulted in convictions, and the number of educational programmes implemented by the State party.

50. Mr. TRAVNIKOV (Russian Federation) said that as there was proportionally a larger number of young people who joined racist and xenophobic movements, the authorities had cooperated with non-governmental organizations in focusing their action on the new generation and combating their prejudice and intolerance born of ignorance and fear. He was aware of the central role to be played by education and training in that regard.

51. Under the legal system in force, the burden of proof was always on the victims, but they were granted free legal assistance financed by the State and provided by lawyers' associations and non-governmental organizations, which he thanked on behalf of the Russian authorities. Even particularly vulnerable small indigenous peoples who did not have the means to defend themselves could benefit from such assistance and assert their rights against the large groups that exploited the natural resources of the areas where they lived. In cases of conflict, the central authorities recommended that they seek acceptable solutions to their disputes. No significant project for the exploitation of natural resources was carried out without the representatives of the small indigenous peoples concerned being consulted beforehand by the central and regional authorities.

52. The Cossacks were neither a militarized group nor an illegal armed militia, but a specific socio-cultural group which made a cult of military prowess and was particularly proud of the exploits of its ancestors. The only Cossacks to be armed were those who had joined the ranks of the army of the Russian Federation, within which they formed a majority in certain special military units. The State financed certain Cossack associations, just as other associations received similar financial

assistance. Cossacks sometimes participated in law-enforcement operations under agreements with local and regional authorities, but they were armed only when they performed such functions.

53. The Russian authorities were very vigilant and systematically and immediately punished any manifestation of intolerance or racism on the part of political parties. Indeed, they had recently banned a political party already represented in Parliament on the grounds that it had broadcast a racist television announcement.

54. Ms. PETROVA (Russian Federation) said that, since 2007, school curricula had been designed by the competent authorities at the federal level, while a third of them were developed following consultations between student representatives, parents and civil society. The indigenous communities were thus involved in the design of those curricula, thereby helping to ensure the preservation of their language and culture. A group of experts specifically concerned with indigenous languages within the Russian Academy of Education was currently preparing draft federal standards in education and various schools taught indigenous culture, history and languages. The Government provided subventions for the preparation of school textbooks and for the establishment of special educational structures, like mobile schools, so that the small indigenous peoples could always have access to education despite their nomadic way of life.

55. Mr. ZHAFYAROV (Russian Federation) said that Russia was a multi-ethnic State, which meant that no political country could afford to make inappropriate statements on interracial relations, whether in its statutes or in its electoral programme. It was true, however, that there was currently an alarming upsurge in xenophobic feeling which was exploited by certain parties; they thereby became liable to receive a warning from the body responsible for monitoring political parties, or even to being banned in the event of a recurrence of unacceptable statements.

56. He said that he would communicate subsequently to the Committee statistics on criminal offences connected with racial discrimination committed in his country, noting that the increase in the number of such offences, which had risen to 250 at the end of the first half of 2008, as against 63 for the whole of 2007, was due in particular to the very recent implementation of the new provisions adopted in 2007, under which racial motives were taken into account in a significant number of violent offences (vandalism).

57. Mr. TRAVNIKOV (Russian Federation) said that his country was participating actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference and that the Russian Federation was drawing on its in various ways for amendments to its legislation.

58. Mr. SICILIANOS, Country Rapporteur, welcomed the fruitful dialogue established with the Russian delegation, which had replied precisely to questions on no fewer than 22 different topics. The Committee had duly noted its replies, concerning in particular the causes of racism and discrimination in the State party, access to citizenship, the institutional framework, the issue of media and freedom of expression, the Cossacks, the need to condemn incitement to racial hatred, including on the Internet, immigration, national minorities, the Roma, measures in support of disadvantaged groups (a formulation the Committee preferred to "affirmative action"), fishing quotas, the small indigenous peoples of the North, displaced

persons, the civil registration of children, and extremism among young people. The Committee would take into account all those replies when preparing its concluding observations at the end of the current session.

59. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the Russian delegation for its replies and invited it to communicate in writing information that might help the Committee to form a yet more precise idea of the implementation of the Convention in the Russian Federation. She invited the State party to continue the dialogue with the Committee and to submit its next reports with the same regularity.

60. *The delegation of the Russian Federation withdrew.*

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.