



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 126th session

### Summary record of the 3624th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 11 July 2019, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Shany (Vice-Chair)

## Contents

Consideration of country situations in the absence of reports, pursuant to rule 71 of the Committee's rules of procedure (*continued*)

*Situation in Equatorial Guinea considered in the absence of a report (continued)*

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*Mr. Shany (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of country situations in the absence of reports, pursuant to rule 71 of the Committee's rules of procedure** *(continued)*

*Situation in Equatorial Guinea considered in the absence of a report (continued)*  
([CCPR/C/GNQ/Q/1](#) and [CCPR/C/GNQ/Q/1/Add.1](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Equatorial Guinea took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that allegations that the Bubi people of the island of Bioco were subject to discrimination, expropriation of property and restrictions to freedom of movement were baseless. As to their alleged underrepresentation in State institutions, it sufficed to look at the long list of Prime Ministers who had been members of the Bubi minority, including Cristino Seriche Bioko, Silvestre Siale Bileka, Ángel Serafín Seriche Dougan and Miguel Abia Biteo Boricó, to know that that was untrue. Currently, the president of parliament, the vice-president of the senate and several ministers and government officials were from the Bubi minority. Allegations of restrictions to freedom of movement were equally false, as the only barriers to free movement on the island of Bioco were customs checkpoints.
3. There was no expropriation of Bubi lands. Rather, the colonial era plantations owned by Spanish and Portuguese nationals had been nationalized by presidential decree following independence. All citizens were entitled to work the land on request and no such request had been rejected on grounds of ethnicity.
4. **Mr. Ondo Mcumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that there were few examples where the Covenant had been directly invoked in domestic court proceedings, as most of the rights set forth therein were equally protected under the Constitution and domestic legislation. In some cases, the texts were identical.
5. **Mr. Fathalla** said that the information provided by the State party in paragraphs 50–52 of its written replies ([CCPR/C/GNQ/Q/1/Add.1](#)) did not satisfy the Committee's concerns. He requested additional information on the alleged involvement of State party officials in acts of trafficking and any measures taken to protect women and children from sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced labour. It would also be useful to know whether the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified and, if not, when the State party intended to do so.
6. The State party's replies also remained silent about measures taken to prevent, combat and punish officers of the security forces who requested bribes to allow people to move freely in the territory. Reports before the Committee contained allegations of arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement, denial of entry into and departure from the territory, military checkpoints between towns and restrictions on the freedom of movement for members of opposition parties and the media. The State party had indicated that the restrictions were part of "security measures" and it would be helpful to find out why such measures were needed.
7. The delegation should also kindly comment on allegations that civil society activists, opposition members, journalists and foreign diplomats were subject to systematic Internet and telephone surveillance.
8. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that additional information was needed on the measures taken to guarantee the rights of persons deprived of their liberty. The Committee was gravely concerned over reports of arbitrary detention, bribery, prolonged pretrial detention, denial of access to counsel and denial of the right to be brought promptly before a judge. It would be useful to know whether there was a central register of prisoners and how citizens could access prison records and obtain information on the whereabouts of detained persons, especially in the light of numerous allegations of abduction and incommunicado detention. The delegation should also furnish information on the average duration of pretrial detention,

the number of persons held in pretrial detention, and the number of pretrial detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population. The delegation should further brief the Committee on the measures taken to ensure that all pretrial detainees had access to a lawyer and the right to release on bail and provide data that showed the extent to which those measures had been successful.

9. She enquired what had been done to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, guarantee the right to a fair trial and implement the principle of separation of powers. In its replies, the State party had explained that the nomination of judges, magistrates and judges were the sole prerogative of the head of State. Did the State party intend to change law and practice in that respect? The delegation should kindly provide disaggregated data on budget allocations for the judiciary over the past five years, describe the training provided to the judiciary, and share information on the procedure for the appointment and dismissal of judges and prosecutors. Detailed information on the composition of the Supreme Council of Judges, safeguards against government interference in judicial matters and the competencies of the President with regard to verdicts handed down by the Supreme Court would also be appreciated. In its written replies, the State party had indicated that the modalities for nominating court-appointed lawyers were being modified, in consultation with the Bar Association and the Ministry of Justice. It would be helpful to learn more about the composition of the Bar Association and the modalities to be applied in future.

10. The Committee was concerned that the appointment of judges in the State party reportedly depended on presidential approval. Did legislation specify the term of judicial tenure? She invited the delegation to shed light on the circumstances of the dismissal of chief justice Juan Carlos Ondo Angue by the President in 2018 and comment on the reported summary dismissal and subsequent reappointment by the President of the entire State party judiciary in 2015.

11. Was it true that military courts had been used to try civilians, and that judges and defence lawyers had been appointed by political or military authorities, although domestic legislation clearly stipulated that civilians must be tried in civilian courts and the jurisdiction of military courts was limited to offences set forth in the Code of Military Justice?

12. **Mr. Zimmermann** said that the Committee was gravely concerned by reports of severe curtailment of the freedom of expression and would welcome clarification regarding the State party's assertion that certain administrative hurdles to the enjoyment of freedom of expression had been overcome. He asked whether the restrictions imposed on the freedom of expression were clearly identified in State party legislation. Given the reported lack of legal protection and alleged impunity for harassment of journalists, it would be useful to obtain information on steps taken to remedy the situation. In the light of countless allegations of censorship, dismissal and arrest of journalists, confiscation or blockage of publications and barriers to registration of radio or television broadcasting companies, he wished to know what had been done to ensure a pluralistic media landscape, facilitate the work of journalists, bring State party law and practice into line with the provisions of the Covenant, and enable freedom of expression.

13. State party legislation reportedly contained a host of exceptions to the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and it would be useful to learn of the reasons. It would also be useful to learn about the reasons for the prohibition of peaceful assemblies of opposition groups, the denial of permits for demonstrations and strikes and the use of excessive force to disperse peaceful assemblies. Could the delegation elaborate on the training provided to law enforcement officials in regard to the conduct expected of them during such operations?

14. He invited the delegation to comment on the alleged obstacles placed in the way of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) wishing to operate in the country, State resistance against the establishment of human rights NGOs and the harassment and arrest of human rights defenders. The Committee would appreciate data on the number of proceedings instituted against human rights defenders and journalists, the charges laid and the sentences handed down. Specific information would be appreciated on the case of human rights activist Alfredo Okenve of the Center for Development Studies and Initiatives (CDSI), who

had reportedly been beaten and stabbed by plain-clothed members of the security forces in October 2018.

15. **Mr. Koita** said that it would be useful to learn of the outcome and impact on the democratic process of the 2014 national dialogue convened by the President, in which he had called on leaders from all political parties, including those living in exile, to come together with the aim of advancing democracy. The Committee would be interested to know how the delegation perceived the objections of some opposition groups to that process, their criticism of the President's call for early elections, and their questioning of parliamentary independence.

16. In the run-up to elections, some observers had noted that the election campaign of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) had been broadly covered in the media, while opposition parties had had little or no access to the media. The National Pact signed between the Government and political parties in 1993 with the aim of establishing the rules for a multiparty system stipulated that opposition political parties must have free, weekly national radio and television spots and he wished to know what had been done to date to give effect to the Pact.

17. He enquired whether the Government intended to implement the recommendations of the observer mission deployed on the occasion of the 2016 presidential elections, that was aimed at improving access for all parties and candidates to the media and public financing of election campaigns. What had been done to limit recourse to State funds to finance election campaigns of the ruling party?

18. The Committee was concerned over reports of arrest, harassment and prosecution of members of the political opposition, including: the arrest of Wenceslao Mansogo Alo, deputy head of the Convergence for Social Democracy Party, in February 2016; the repeated detention of presidential candidate Avelino Mocache; the barring of the leader of the opposition party "Citizens for Innovation" (CI), Gabriel Nse Obiang Obono, from running for president; and the arrest of several of his followers. In the run-up to the 2017 parliamentary elections, the police had allegedly dispersed opposition rallies, arresting demonstrators and opposition leaders. Certain opposition parties had boycotted the elections in protest. In the wake of the elections, on 26 February 2018, the Mongomo district court had dissolved CI, citing reasons of State security, and sentenced 21 of its members to 30 years' imprisonment. The ruling had later been upheld by the Supreme Court. He would appreciate if the delegation could comment on those events, indicate whether there had been any investigations and, if so, share the results. He asked whether the persons arrested had been released and what measures had been taken to de-escalate the situation.

19. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that the Committee would appreciate further information on the National Electoral Commission, particularly the guarantees of its independence, its budget and personnel, and the process for the appointment of its members. It would be useful if the delegation would comment on allegations of fraud and irregularities during the most recent presidential elections. He would be interested to know more about the status of political parties in the State party's legal and constitutional framework, and whether all political parties had their rights to participate in all electoral processes guaranteed.

20. He would be grateful if the State party could give an example of "isolated administrative areas", in which the content of legal provisions was not adapted to the full scope of the right to freedom of expression, as stated in paragraph 60 of the State party's replies. He also wished to know whether freedom of expression and the right to information were duly enshrined in the State party's legal order. The Committee would appreciate information on whether administrative or criminal sanctions were applied when civil servants refused to provide information to the public.

21. The State party should indicate whether civil society was free to take part in public decision-making processes, particularly constitutional reform, and whether it had any say in the management of the economic benefits derived from the exploitation of natural resources.

22. **Mr. Bulkan** said that the Committee had received reports that, prior to the announcement of the moratorium on executions, all prisoners on death row had been summarily executed. An NGO had alleged that, two weeks prior to the establishment of the moratorium, a number of citizens had been executed by firing squad, and that the bodies of four persons put to death by other means had not been returned to their families. He would appreciate a response from the delegation to those allegations.

23. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that he would like to know whether political office-holders must declare their assets before taking office. If so, he wished to know which body was responsible for assessing their claims, and whether there had been cases in which failure to comply with that requirement had led to political office-holders being forced to resign their posts.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.*

24. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that there was no slavery or forced labour in Equatorial Guinea. The Government made every effort, together with the diplomatic missions of other States, to address the issue of trafficked persons entering the territory. The Government was aware of no cases of the sale of minors within Equatorial Guinea. In 2002, Equatorial Guinea had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

25. The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) had called for freedom of movement between its member States at a very early stage. However, it would not be safe to implement such a policy while the requisite infrastructure, including machines for reading biometric passports, had not been established at all borders. As a small country of 1.2 million residents, Equatorial Guinea sought to guard against undocumented and uncontrolled freedom of movement, which posed a serious threat to its very survival.

26. Although checks were in place, journalists with proper accreditation were not barred from entering the country. Media workers might be prevented from filming in certain locations if people were not prepared for the intrusion. However, journalists who came to cover specific stories for established news outlets were permitted to enter the country unhindered.

27. Claims of restricted freedom of movement between municipalities were completely unfounded, as were allegations that minorities were prevented from travelling within the country. Members of opposition parties were obliged to inform the Government if they travelled to meetings and other gatherings, for their own protection, as per the agreements concluded between those parties and the Government.

28. The lines between opposition party members, NGO members and human rights defenders had become somewhat blurred, and the Government would appreciate the Committee's assistance to rectify that situation.

29. Checkpoints were in use throughout the State because, in a context of widespread regional instability, they represented the only means of ascertaining who was transiting through the country. The Government would be open to the Committee's suggestions regarding other ways to manage the flow of people.

30. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that cases of arbitrary detention that came to the Government's attention gave rise to legal and disciplinary action. Pretrial detention was imposed in accordance with the law, and for a duration commensurate with the gravity of the crime committed. As the number of detainees in pretrial detention was constantly fluctuating, the delegation could not give a precise figure of the number of persons currently subject to that measure.

31. Action had been taken to strengthen the capacities of the Supreme Council of Justice, which was one of the governing bodies of the judiciary, and efforts were under way to professionalize the judiciary and adopt measures to facilitate its work. While significant progress had been made in ensuring the independence of the judiciary, much remained to be done, and the Government would continue along the same path.

32. Members of the judiciary were appointed by the President in accordance with proposals made by the Supreme Council of Justice. The appointment of members by the President was a formality, since he was bound to respect the Council's choices. At no point could the President interfere in the work of the judiciary to change its decisions.

33. Equatorial Guinea had one of the most advanced systems for contracting legal professionals in the region. All citizens and foreign nationals who required legal assistance could obtain it from the Bar Association or the judicial body before which they were due to appear. The State had spent approximately 340 million CFA francs (CFAF) on the provision of legal assistance in 2018.

34. Juan Carlos Ondo Angue had been removed from his office as President of the Supreme Court as a result of grounded allegations of serious irregularities in the exercise of his duties. Allegations that he had been removed from office for reporting cases of corruption were being examined to see if they might give rise to legal proceedings.

35. The military justice system functioned strictly within the confines of the relevant legal framework and applied only to cases involving military agents acting in the exercise of their duties. The Government was not aware of any examples of civilian disputes that had been decided by the military justice system.

36. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that freedom of expression prevailed in Equatorial Guinea. The Government stood by its commitment, given during its latest periodic review, to review and update the Press and Publications Act. No journalists were currently detained in Equatorial Guinea. All recognized political parties were authorized to have their own media channels. Owing to a number of major obstacles, such as a lack of printing houses and paper, those who required printing services were usually required to procure them abroad. However, international media stations were widely accessible in Equatorial Guinea and freedom of expression within the confines of the law was not repressed.

37. The Government was examining new ways to speed up and simplify the granting of visas. At a recent assembly that had convened more than 2,000 guests, the Government had experimented with allowing individuals entry on the basis of a list of participants held and checked at airports. The possibility of granting visas online was also being examined.

38. Websites occasionally went offline for technological reasons but never as a result of government intervention. The delegation was not aware of any opposition party websites ever having been blocked but would be happy to investigate any specific cases raised by the Committee.

39. Persons wishing to organize assemblies were obliged to request authorization from the Government and were held responsible for whatever public disorder offences might arise. Law enforcement agents were deployed to manage assemblies and did not seek to clash with demonstrators.

40. Political parties masquerading as NGOs were not eligible for government support. However, genuine NGOs in areas such as health care and education had encountered no difficulties in securing such funding. The Committee's proposal to abolish the authorization procedure for NGOs would be put to the Ministry of the Interior.

41. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that Alfredo Okenve, according to his own testimony, had been assaulted by a group of unidentified individuals. The police were attempting to identify the perpetrators so that they could be brought to justice.

42. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that political pluralism in the country was evidenced by the sheer number of registered political parties, of which there was one for every 70,000 or so citizens. Anybody could form a political party, subject to the conditions laid down in the Political Parties Act.

43. Multiparty participation was encouraged through national dialogues, the sixth of which had been held in July 2018. The Government was committed to implementing the decisions taken at the dialogue.

44. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the presidential elections had been held early owing to national circumstances and with the approval of the Constitutional Court.

45. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that parliament was not an investigatory body, although a committee had been established within it to consider petitions and complaints from citizens.

46. Political parties' access to media was governed by the National Pact of 1993, which set coverage quotas for election and non-election periods. The party in power used the media more extensively because it had so much information to convey; however, all political parties were able to publicize their activities. During election periods, the National Pact Monitoring and Follow-up Commission met with representatives of all parties to agree on the conditions for access to media. Candidates for public office used all resources at their disposal to fund their campaigns. Imposing a limit on such funding would be difficult. Party leaders were not detained purely by virtue of their political persuasion. A doctor and opposition party leader, Wenceslao Mansogo Alo, had been arrested and detained after one of his patients had died during surgery. However, he had been released after providing redress to the victims.

47. If the Citizens for the Innovation of Equatorial Guinea party had been dissolved, then it must have contravened the rules laid down in the Political Parties Act. The presidential campaign of Gabriel Nse Obiang had been suspended to restore public order after supporters of the campaign had clashed with the public authorities. The members of the National Electoral Commission, including its chair and secretariat, were appointed by joint decision of the Government and opposition parties. The Supreme Court also issued its opinion on the candidates. Any allegations of fraud during elections were duly investigated and referred to the courts where necessary.

48. The term "isolated political areas" referred to remote areas of the country where the local authorities did not necessarily know how to correctly interpret national legislation. The adoption of any new laws was reported in an official gazette, which was publicly available. The delegation was unsure how widely consulted the gazette was, however.

49. The concepts of civil society and political opposition tended to overlap in the country. The Directorate-General of Human Rights had recently held a workshop with members of the press and civil society to clarify the definition of civil society. Revenue from the exploitation of fossil fuels was used to develop public infrastructure, such as ports and hospitals, for the benefit of all citizens. A decree-law on the abolition of the death penalty was under examination by parliament, as confirmed by the President at a recent press conference. Public officials were obliged to declare their assets when they assumed or left office. A commission had been established to oversee the declaration process and no irregularities had been identified.

50. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that some of the Committee's questions had yet to be answered. She wished to know, for instance, whether the Government gathered information on where and for how long persons were held in pretrial detention, and whether a maximum duration of pretrial detention was prescribed by law. She would also like to know how many cases of arbitrary detention had been identified annually for the past three years, and what measures were being taken to prevent them. Similarly, she would welcome information on the number of persons held in incommunicado detention. Lastly, she was eager to learn whether the length of tenure of judges was enshrined in law, and whether judges could be re-elected at the end of their terms.

51. **Mr. Santos Pais** asked who sat on the commission tasked with quantifying the assets held by public officials, by whom they were appointed, and whether declarations of assets were made public.

52. **Mr. Zimmermann** said that he would appreciate information on the use of firearms to control public assemblies. Specifically, he would like to know whether live ammunition could be used and, if so, under what conditions and according to which regulations. He wondered whether the Government would consider amending legislation on freedom of

assembly so that organizers needed only to provide notification of events, rather than request authorization.

53. **Mr. Koita** said that he wished to know whether the legislative branch of Government was empowered to exceed the scope of the proposals made to it by the executive branch. He would be interested to learn also whether a specific law had been implemented to govern political parties' access to the media under the National Pact, and in particular how much coverage was afforded to each party. Further, he wondered whether amnesty or pardons had been granted to political opposition leaders in the wake of the recent elections.

54. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that she had yet to receive information on trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. She wished to know how many complaints had been made in that regard, whether they had been investigated, whether any convictions had been handed down as a result, and whether any support had been provided to the victims. In addition, she would be grateful for information on any steps taken to actively identify such offences and dismantle human trafficking networks.

55. **Mr. Zyberi** said that he would like to know whether investment in the prison system was sufficient to cover detainees' accommodation and food and other such costs. He would be interested to know by when the amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure would be made. Furthermore, since the Civil Code was outdated, he wondered whether the Government planned to update it and, if so, when.

56. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he wished to hear about the motives underlying the decision to bring forward the 2016 presidential elections by about seven months. Many representatives of opposition parties and a number of international observers had alleged that the National Electoral Commission lacked the requisite impartiality. He wished to know whether the State party had considered taking steps to ensure greater impartiality in future elections.

57. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that, according to the most recent figures, there were currently about 1,000 detainees in the country, of whom between 10 and 12 per cent were in pretrial detention. He reiterated that the duration of pretrial detention was normally proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and the expected conviction.

58. According to the Constitution, the five-year term of office of judges of the Supreme Court was renewable indefinitely. Other judges enjoyed life tenure. However, with a view to safeguarding the independence of the judiciary, judges were occasionally removed from office by a decree of the Supreme Council of Justice.

59. If persons deprived of their liberty breached disciplinary regulations, they could be placed in incommunicado detention. He had no statistical data but could perhaps submit relevant data in due course.

60. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that, in principle, elected officials, members of the Government and parliament, as well as judges, were required to make declarations of assets on assuming public office. The National Financial Investigation Agency was composed of representatives of diverse branches of the judiciary. Such declarations were, in principle, private and personal, but access was permissible under certain circumstances.

61. He was unaware of whether the armed forces and law enforcement officers were equipped with tear gas. He would look into the matter and keep the Committee informed. He could imagine, however, that tear gas might have been used in cases of disruption of law and order. Political parties were required to obtain authorization for the holding of public events, but they were not required to notify the authorities of private meetings.

62. All 100 members of the Chamber of Deputies were entitled to question the Prime Minister and all members of the executive about the performance of their duties. They could also propose legislation and had a great deal of leeway. It had been alleged that the composition of the Chamber of Deputies, in which there were very few opponents of the Government, undermined its ability to take effective action. That was not true, since the



deputies represented the people and not just their political party, and they were free to speak and act as they saw fit.

63. Members of political parties and the Government had met in June 2019 to discuss the amended legislation on the funding of political parties. His party had opposed it, but it had lost the final vote. The funding of parties under the previous system had been based on their electoral representation or districts. The new approach was that each party should fund itself. Access to the media for political parties was regulated during both electoral and non-electoral periods.

64. There was no law under which amnesty could be granted to party leaders. The Constitution permitted the President to grant amnesty and he had done so in response to certain requests. It had been recommended during a recent dialogue that all political leaders based abroad should be granted an amnesty provided that they participated in the recently reformed government and political parties. Many had returned to the country and had been granted an amnesty.

65. **Mr. Mba Chama** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the Government was taking vigorous action to combat human trafficking since the country's ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol). It had promulgated Act No. 1/2004 of 14 September 2004 on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. The Government had adopted a National Action Plan and set up an Intersectoral Committee and an Interministerial Committee for the purpose. Training would be provided for focal points, and shelters would be provided for potential victims throughout the country.

66. The phenomenon of forced child labour did not exist in Equatorial Guinea. Such practices were strictly prohibited by ministerial decrees.

67. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) apologized for the lack of statistics. He would seek specific data on the deplorable situation of children from neighbouring countries who sold water, peanuts and other products in the streets.

68. There were no human trafficking networks in the country. When resident non-nationals submitted requests for admission to the country of persons who were allegedly close relatives, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undertook research in order to prevent cases of abuse and exploitation. A protocol on the subject had recently been signed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of the United States.

69. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the budgetary figures that he had provided at the previous meeting related solely to the food supplies provided to the three prisons. Two additional prisons would shortly be opened. Funds for other purposes, such as medical and pharmaceutical care, were covered by separate budget items and were based on agreements with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health. If health-care and medical facilities failed to meet the needs of inmates due to the gravity of their condition, they could be referred to a hospital run by the Ministry of Health.

70. It was essential, in the interests of the general public and the judiciary, to update the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Civil Code. The authorities were currently focusing on the Criminal Code. An amended version would be circulated to the legislature within the next two months and it would hopefully be adopted within a further six or seven months.

71. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) said that all political parties were required to agree on the convening of presidential elections, and a consensus had been reached on the 2016 elections, even though they had been held seven months earlier than planned. The Constitutional Court had also endorsed the decision to hold the elections. There was no law governing the actions of the National Electoral Commission or requiring it to be chaired by a representative of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) or some other party. It was composed of persons selected by participants in the elections and the political parties were required to agree on the procedure for appointing a new President of the Commission.

72. **Mr. Ondo Nkumu** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the current members of the Commission effectively performed their duty to ensure the smooth conduct of elections.

However, the Government would welcome any proposals for improvements that were made in good faith.

73. **Mr. Nsue Mokuy** (Equatorial Guinea) expressed appreciation of the constructive dialogue with the Committee. He apologized for his country's failure to appear before it for 24 years and undertook, on behalf of the Government, to adopt a new approach and meet all requirements in good time in the future.

74. **The Chair** said that the Committee also hoped that the dialogue would continue on a stable and regular basis.

75. Although the State party had ratified the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant, the Committee had received very few individual communications. He therefore encouraged the State party to raise public awareness of both the Covenant and the Optional Protocol. The Committee welcomed the moratorium on the death penalty and looked forward to the State party's ratification of the Second Optional Protocol.

76. Lastly he highlighted the importance of implementing a pluralistic political framework and of promoting full engagement by opposition parties in political life.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*