



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3214th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 24 April 2026, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Kut

Contents

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties under
article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twenty-second to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Cuba (continued)

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

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States Parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined twenty-second to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Cuba (continued)
([CERD/C/CUB/22-26](#); [CERD/C/CUB/Q/22-26](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Cuba joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Tlemçani** (Country Rapporteur), noting that, in the State Party's combined twenty-second to twenty-sixth periodic reports ([CERD/C/CUB/22-26](#)), some information had been provided on the participation of people of African descent in the National Assembly of People's Power, said that he would be glad to also receive data on the representation of people of African descent, including women, in the executive, the legislature and leadership positions. He would be interested to know what steps had been taken to remove structural barriers to the participation of Afrodescendent women in decision-making positions and whether the Government planned to adopt temporary or special measures to promote substantive equality in access to such positions.
3. In the light of allegations that people of African descent had been arbitrarily detained or subjected to excessive use of force for organizing or participating in peaceful protests, he wished to know what steps had been taken to prevent such conduct by law enforcement officers, to ensure respect for the principle of non-discrimination and to ensure prompt, independent and impartial investigations into the allegations, especially where the alleged victim had died. He wondered how many complaints of excessive use of force and arbitrary detention had been filed, what the outcomes of investigations had been and what redress had been provided to victims and their families.
4. He would be interested to know why, according to the State Party report, people of African descent were overrepresented in the prison population. He would like to know whether detention registers might be modified so as to include the detainee's ethnicity and thus identify possible racial disparities. He wondered why no complaints of excessive use of force and arbitrary detention had been upheld and what mechanisms were available to ensure that people of African descent could submit complaints without fear of reprisals. He wished to know whether the State Party, in the absence of a national human rights institution, had any independent mechanisms for the monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty.
5. Despite the enactment of legislation to prevent and punish discrimination, including the Criminal Code of 2022, the Committee was concerned about the absence of provisions explicitly prohibiting the use of racial profiling. He wished to know whether the State Party intended to adopt any legislative or administrative measures to prohibit racial profiling by law enforcement officers, and whether there were instructions or protocols that prohibited checks, arrests or searches on the basis of racial stereotypes or physical appearance. He would appreciate information on disciplinary or criminal proceedings brought against officers suspected of racial profiling and on the remedies available to victims. He wondered whether the training of law enforcement personnel and other government officials was designed to combat prejudice, stereotypes and racial profiling; what steps had been taken to increase the capacity of the National Ombudsman's Office to identify and address complaints of racial profiling; and whether victims received free legal aid when bringing complaints before the courts.
6. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of information on the effective enjoyment of the constitutional rights to the freedoms of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association, especially by people of African descent. He wished to know what measures had been taken to ensure that people of African descent, including human rights defenders, journalists and artists, could freely exercise those rights without fear of legal or administrative consequences, and how the State Party ensured that the legal framework governing public order was not applied in a disproportionate or discriminatory manner.
7. While the Committee noted the existence of complaint mechanisms in the public prosecution service and other competent authorities, it would appreciate additional up-to-date information on the number of racial discrimination cases registered by the authorities, the

outcomes of investigations and prosecutions, the penalties imposed and the forms of reparation granted to victims. Disaggregated data on the ethnic origin of complainants and defendants would also be welcome.

8. Furthermore, the delegation might describe any non-judicial or administrative mechanisms for dealing with complaints – for instance, mediation – and the results obtained. It would be interesting to know how many racial discrimination cases had been resolved through administrative fines rather than through court proceedings. He would like to hear about any steps taken by the State Party to remove obstacles to access to justice for victims of racial discrimination and to ensure that victims could submit complaints without fear of stigmatization or reprisals. He was curious to know whether any awareness campaigns had been conducted to sensitize the public, in particular vulnerable groups such as people of African descent, to the rights enshrined in the Convention and to the available complaint mechanisms.

9. **A representative of Cuba** said that the Government acknowledged gaps in data collection and was working to compile statistics and capture intersectional data with the aim of better understanding the situation of disadvantaged groups, such as women, within black and mulatto communities. Despite difficulties, the Government had managed to obtain information on the representation of black and mulatto women in political bodies. Of the 464 deputies in the National Assembly, 56% were white, 24% were mulatto and 20% were black. Women held 56% of seats. In local government, of the 12,429 people currently serving as municipal delegates, 56% were women, while 47% were black or mulatto and 47% were white. Black or mulatto persons accounted for 36% of presidents of municipal assemblies and 45% of vice presidents, and therefore were overrepresented in leadership positions in local government.

10. **A representative of Cuba** said that the Government had strengthened the guarantees that protected individuals in the context of use of force by law enforcement. In such cases, the principle of legality prevailed. If a law enforcement officer was guilty of misconduct or an offence, he or she would be punished by the courts. However, no one had been punished for committing an act of racial discrimination during the period under review. In 2021, a law on military criminal procedure had been adopted which strengthened safeguards for victims of discrimination.

11. The rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, as protected by the Constitution, might be exercised only for lawful and peaceful purposes. The peaceful expression of an opinion or of dissent was not a reason for detention: those who had been arrested during demonstrations had been detained not for protesting peacefully but for committing offences. The public prosecution service actively monitored the lawfulness of detention from the time of the detainee's first interview and throughout the investigation.

12. The composition of the prison population was not the result of racist conduct on the part of the courts or the public prosecution service but was a reflection of economic conditions and disadvantages. The Government recognized that challenge and had been striving to overcome it.

13. **A representative of Cuba** said that, in recent years, legislation had been strengthened to improve access to justice for persons in contact with the criminal justice system. Due process had been enhanced through law provisions stipulating that persons had the right to legal representation from the outset of proceedings; to participate in all proceedings; to access all relevant information; to adduce evidence; to challenge evidence adverse to their interests or which did not meet the legal requirements; to receive information on the outcome of proceedings; and to seek appropriate remedies.

14. The new legislation also conferred on victims the status of parties with rights equal to those of the other parties to the proceedings. Accordingly, the People's Supreme Court, exercising its constitutional authority to interpret the law, had issued provisions governing the treatment of victims in judicial proceedings. Both the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court had adopted protocols that facilitated or guaranteed the observance of due process.

15. **A representative of Cuba** said that the Constitution of 2019 recognized the principle of equality and guaranteed the exercise of all civil and political rights. In Cuba, those rights were exercised without discrimination on the basis of skin colour, political opinion or any other grounds. However, as the Committee was aware, civil and political rights were not absolute. Their exercise was subject to the restrictions set out in the country's laws, with the aim of ensuring social harmony and peaceful coexistence. For example, the right of peaceful assembly might not be abused for the purpose of breaking the law. Civic space for the promotion and protection of human rights was broad, as illustrated by the growth of anti-racism activism during the period under review. The Government conducted regular consultations with organizations, movements and platforms that worked to combat racism and to promote the rights of people of African descent.

16. Cuba had a diverse, active and critical civil society that contributed to identifying and addressing shortcomings in public policy. The current level of social activism, including anti-racism efforts, would not be possible in a country that did not allow space for the defence of human rights. Reprisals and arbitrary detentions did not occur in Cuba because the authorities acted in accordance with laws that established when and for how long a person might be detained and under what terms he or she might be prosecuted or released. Mechanisms were available to detained persons to challenge the lawfulness of the detention and to seek compensation. All detentions complied with laws based on the principle of legality and fully observed all international standards. It was possible that the Committee had received information or reports that misrepresented the situation by falsely presenting certain individuals as human rights defenders or activists.

17. **A representative of Cuba** said that the police, the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court all had protocols for addressing racial discrimination in accordance with the law. Citizens could make claims under the Complaints and Petitions Act, which the authorities would act upon.

18. **A representative of Cuba** said that, according to data from 2025, black and mulatto persons held about one third of leadership positions in the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Energy and Mines, respectively. The proportion had increased slightly in recent years.

19. **A representative of Cuba** said that black persons holding high political office included the President of the National Assembly, the Vice-President of the Republic and several ministers. Black persons were well represented in all public bodies and agencies. Training was provided to prepare them for future leadership roles.

20. **A representative of Cuba** said that black and mulatto persons were also well represented in senior positions in the judiciary and the Attorney General's Office and in the national commissions and working groups that monitored human rights issues relating to specific segments of the population, including women, children and persons with disabilities. Such representation allowed those bodies to address issues affecting people of African descent with an intersectional perspective.

21. **Mr. Tlemçani** said that he wished to receive information on citizens' enjoyment of their rights and on any restrictions of the freedoms of religion, peaceful assembly and association. In particular, he wondered whether any independent investigations had been conducted into the alleged harassment, arbitrary detention and imprisonment of members of Afro-Cuban religious groups.

22. **Mr. Diaby** said that, in 2025, the Observatorio Cubano de Derechos Humanos (Cuban Human Rights Observatory) had reported 529 cases of arbitrary detention in Cuba and had drawn attention to the cases of Berta Soler, Jorge Fernández Era and Leonardo Romero Negrín. As there appeared to be some uncertainty over whether the persons concerned were members of subversive movements or were human rights defenders, he asked whether the State Party intended to adopt legislation that made a clear distinction between human rights defenders, including defenders of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, and other categories of persons.

23. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Rapporteur) said that, in its previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/CUB/CO/19-21](#)), the Committee had requested the State Party to conduct information and awareness-raising campaigns on the essential work carried out by human rights defenders, with a view to fostering a safe environment conducive to their work. The State Party had responded to that recommendation in its follow-up report of 2020 ([CERD/C/CUB/FCO/19-21](#)). She would be grateful for clarification of the statement made in paragraph 8 of that report, which seemed to suggest that individuals or groups who received foreign funding could not be regarded as human rights defenders. She wished to remind the delegation that, in its letter in response to the follow-up report, the Committee had requested the State Party to provide examples of concrete measures taken to protect human rights defenders from reprisals and details of awareness-raising campaigns on their essential work, neither of which had been included in the report currently under consideration.

24. **Mr. Vicente Vázquez**, observing that the Constitution underpinned people's right to submit complaints and requests to the authorities, said that complaint mechanisms nonetheless seem to struggle to effectively identify cases of racial discrimination, as only six complaints had been submitted to the Attorney General's Office between 2018 and 2023. He therefore wished to know how the State Party prevented the revictimization of persons who filed complaints against civil servants; by what mechanism the State ensured that complaints were duly processed; and how the State ensured access to justice for racialized persons who lived far from justice institutions. He wondered whether the State Party intended to publish and disseminate the protocols of the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of the Interior on preventing and combating racial discrimination and on responding to workplace discrimination, violence and harassment, and whether the delegation could provide further details on the scope and entry into force of those protocols and the means of accessing them.

25. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know why the incarceration rate of people of African descent was higher than that of the general population. As people of African descent often lacked access to education and were more likely to fail at school, he wished to know what steps were being taken for the retention of children, adolescents and young people of African descent in the education system at all levels, so that education was not the preserve of a well-connected elite.

26. Recalling that some communities in eastern Cuba self-identified as descendants of the island's Indigenous Peoples, he said that he was curious to know what had been done to repair the years of injustice and invisibility that they had experienced. He would be interested to hear about any measures, laws or provisions that the State Party envisaged to provide communities of Indigenous descent with redress, to teach their history in school textbooks and to ensure that their voices were heard in Cuban society.

27. **A representative of Cuba** said that between 2019 and 2025, the Attorney General's Office had conducted almost 44,000 inspections, including 36,000 inspections of detention facilities and 7,100 of prisons. None of the seven complaints of discrimination received from prisoners between 2018 and 2023 had been found to have merit. The persons in question had claimed to have been discriminated against because they had been denied access to prison benefits, but prosecutors had determined that access to those benefits had in fact been granted.

28. The collection of disaggregated data was a major challenge for the country. The Ministry of the Interior and the Attorney General's Office were working to introduce digital case files in criminal proceedings, which would enable the collection of data disaggregated by skin colour.

29. The overrepresentation of mulatto and black persons in the prison population could be explained by the fact that many came from marginalized areas that lacked the same access to healthcare and education as the rest of the country. Nevertheless, there could be no impunity for those who committed offences – they served their sentences in the prison system, with prosecutors ensuring respect for their rights. The prison system afforded extensive opportunities for education, including vocational training and higher education courses.

30. **A representative of Cuba** said that, in respect of freedom of religion, the country's mix of cultures had resulted in a unique phenomenon, in that it was increasingly common for white Cubans to practise religions of African origin and play prominent roles in those religious communities. The Government had not seen any evidence of discrimination on religious grounds. People belonging to a wide range of religious confessions enjoyed the freedom to worship, to choose their leaders and to organize and participate in national and international events. The Government had recently granted certain confessions title of ownership of their places of worship, free of charge, thus broadening the space for the enjoyment of the freedom of religion. Although some religions were better established in the country than others – their presence shaped by geography, history and other factors unique to Cuba – nobody was discriminated against because of the religion they practised or because the followers of a certain religion had a particular skin colour.

31. Many of the activities of civil society would not be possible without international cooperation or support. The Government recognized the need for such cooperation, given the scarcity of resources caused by the embargo imposed by the United States of America. The presence of European cooperation agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious organizations, and the provision of funding for their counterparts in Cuba, was entirely normal. However, the financing of crime or of activities that subverted the constitutional order of Cuba was a criminal offence. Article 45 of the Constitution clearly established that the exercise of rights was limited by the rights of others, collective security, general welfare and respect for public order, the Constitution and the law.

32. Regarding the alleged cases of arbitrary detention, it was important for the Committee to draw on information that was truthful, verifiable and up to date. Several individuals who had claimed to have been subjected to arbitrary detention had received international funding for illicit purposes, including to misrepresent the reality of the country, to break its laws or to foment social unrest. Persons who received money from the United States – which for decades had financed subversive activities and was currently attempting to strangle the Cuban economy through an energy embargo – could not be considered human rights defenders. No country in the world could allow attacks upon its constitutional order, as to do so would be to surrender its territorial integrity, sovereignty and self-determination and the collective security of its population.

33. The Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1998, which was the international standard on the subject, established the right to defend human rights but did not define what constituted a human rights defender. Under the Declaration, officials, prosecutors, civil society organizations, anti-racism activists and treaty body experts might all be considered human rights defenders. For that reason, it was difficult to draft a specific law on human rights defenders. Instead, the Government's approach had been to strengthen the legal framework and guarantees so that persons could freely exercise their right to defend human rights.

34. **A representative of Cuba** said that Cuba had begun to transform the teaching of history as part of the third round of improvement of the national education system. New elements highlighting the history of people of African descent had been introduced in textbooks, in line with a gradual approach of giving greater visibility to people of African descent in education. The history syllabus in secondary education addressed the role of people of African descent in the history of the modern world and their contribution to the development of the Cuban nation. Textbooks also covered the support that Cuba had provided for the African independence struggle.

35. Black and mulatto persons were overrepresented in the country's education system. The proportion of black and mulatto persons entering higher education was in line with that of the general population.

36. **A representative of Cuba** said that generations of Cubans had been taught that the island's Indigenous People, the Taino, had been exterminated in a genocide. Research conducted among communities living the easternmost part of Cuba had recently concluded that the Indigenous People was indeed extinct, although their traces lived on. Casa de las Américas, a Cuban cultural institution, had studied elements of the culture of the

communities in question, and had concluded that they could not be recognized as an Indigenous People. While the communities claimed to be descendants of the Taíno, they also recognized their genetic admixture with people of African descent and they self-identified as Cuban. Nevertheless, genetic studies, conducted on a voluntary basis, had revealed that community members shared 20% to 30% of their DNA with native Amerindians. Sociocultural studies had revealed syncretic elements in their daily customs, including their food, their way of building *bohíos* (traditional houses) and ceremonies in which they gave thanks to the sun, the moon and nature.

37. In the light of such findings, the Government was taking steps to give greater visibility to groups of Taíno descent and to recognize their contribution to Cuban history and identity. One example was the Indigenous Cuba project, in which scientists, historians and photographers had produced a book that contained photographs of persons of Indigenous descent, together with the results of genetic and genealogical studies. Such efforts contributed to the greater recognition of the origins and identities of communities of Indigenous descent. The main problems those communities faced related to their material standard of living, as they lived in a hard-to-reach mountainous area without road access. The State had taken steps to address those problems – such as building housing after a hurricane – and recognized the need to do so in a manner consistent with their wishes.

The meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.35 a.m.

38. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she would be interested to know more about the education opportunities that were provided for juvenile and adult offenders in prisons. She wondered whether education was offered to prisoners awaiting trial as well as those serving sentences; whether prisoners attended classes inside prison or were granted release to attend schools or universities; and whether the authorities conducted any post-release follow-up on the educational progress and social integration of offenders who had studied during their incarceration.

39. **Ms. Chung** (Country Task Force) said that she would be grateful if the delegation could describe any special measures that had been taken to put an end to structural, multiple and increasing forms of discrimination and inequality that affected people of African descent, in various public and private settings, and to ensure the effective enjoyment of their rights. She would be interested to know what the impact of such measures had been, and whether the State Party had established any mechanisms for the consultation and inclusive participation of people of African descent and their representative organizations in their design, implementation and evaluation. She wondered whether the State Party had adopted any policies or legislative reforms in order to remedy the structural inequalities that were a historical legacy of slavery, and whether the Government planned to discuss with people of African descent the establishment of a national commission to study and develop proposals on redress for historical injustices.

40. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations, she wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to eliminate all obstacles that impeded the effective enjoyment by people of African descent of their economic, social and cultural rights and to combat the poverty, social exclusion and marginalization that disproportionately affected them. In particular, she wondered what measures had been taken to ensure that people of African descent enjoyed equal and effective access to education, housing, healthcare, employment and basic services, and what the impact on their socioeconomic situation had been. She would like to know what steps had been taken to promote the equal access, retention and graduation of people of African descent at all levels of education. She would be interested to hear about measures to tackle the underrepresentation of Afrodescendent workers in the State sector and in senior managerial positions and their overrepresentation in low-skilled and informal work. The delegation might also describe measures to address inequalities in asset ownership and access to capital and remittances, including any provision of targeted credit, land or business development programmes for Afrodescendent households. It would be useful to know what measures had been taken to ensure equal access to adequate housing, safe neighbourhoods and good quality basic services for Afrodescendent communities; to address disparities in mortality and the incidence of diseases such as pulmonary tuberculosis; and to allocate resources to support residents of rural areas, eastern

provinces and marginalized urban neighbourhoods with a high proportion of people of African descent.

41. Women and girls of African descent experienced disproportionately high rates of gender-based violence, poverty and adolescent pregnancy, faced greater obstacles in accessing the labour market, and had fewer opportunities for political participation. She wished to know what steps the State Party had taken to mainstream a gender perspective in all policies and strategies to combat racial discrimination affecting women of African descent, and how it tackled multiple, intersecting and structural forms of discrimination. She would be interested to know what special measures had been adopted to allow women of African descent to access healthcare services and social benefits, to participate in political and public life and to hold decision-making positions. She was curious to know whether the Government compiled disaggregated and intersectional data on women and girls of African descent in order to identify trends and inform policy, planning and other measures. She wondered what steps had been taken to combat gender-based violence, including sexual violence and femicide, against women and girls of African descent. Information on cases of such violence, their investigation, prosecution and punishment and the protection and reparation measures granted to victims would be welcome. She would also like to hear about any measures taken to provide comprehensive sexuality education in the national education system with a view to preventing early pregnancies; to facilitate universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services for people of African descent; and to protect women human rights defenders and activists of African descent from threats, harassment, intimidation and defamation.

42. Recalling that the Committee had previously called for the State Party to consider eliminating the offence of illegal entry into the national territory, she said she wished to know what had been done to bring national legislation – specifically article 282 of the Criminal Code – fully into line with international obligations relating to the protection of human rights of migrants. She would be grateful if the delegation could provide disaggregated statistics and socioeconomic data on non-citizens living in the State Party and explain how such statistics were collected. She would be interested to know what measures the State Party had taken to facilitate the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers and to ensure the protection and enjoyment of their human rights. She wondered whether the State Party intended to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

43. The Committee would appreciate information on measures taken to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation, including under the National Plan of Action to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons and Protect Victims 2023–2026. Disaggregated data might be provided, for the period under review, on identified victims of trafficking in persons; investigations, convictions and penalties; and reparation and rehabilitation measures. It would be useful to know the number, capacity and locations of shelters and assistance centres for victims of trafficking. Information on public awareness campaigns on trafficking in persons, particularly in the tourism sector, would also be welcome.

44. **A representative of Cuba** said that measures had been taken to strengthen the protection of human rights defenders and expand the space in which they operated. The Criminal Code had recently been amended to introduce tougher punishments for individuals, including civil servants, who attempted to hinder the operations of civil society organizations or to infringe their rights. The articles in question afforded general protection for the exercise of all civil and political rights, but were particularly beneficial to human rights defenders. Thousands of people in Cuba, including anti-racism activists and persons who belonged to civil society organizations, platforms and movements, could be classed as human rights defenders. Many were community leaders who were authorities in their field and who worked with government bodies such as the National Commission against Racism and Racial Discrimination “Color Cubano” – for instance, by passing on information and filing complaints about human rights violations or inequities.

45. In 2023, an important initiative had been organized to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Cuban United Nations

Association, with the support of other civil society organizations and State institutions, had recognized the efforts of 75 human rights defenders and leaders, many of whom were black or mulatto persons.

46. The Government had not observed any targeting or discriminatory treatment of women human rights defenders of African descent. Any person who considered that her activities had been unlawfully obstructed by the authorities because of her status as a woman, as a person of African descent or as a human rights defender, had access to practical remedies, with the country's legal framework providing guarantees of protection and reparation.

47. Whether or not to ratify international instruments was a sovereign decision of the Government. Although not a Party to the instruments the Committee had mentioned, Cuba protected refugees and stateless persons in practice. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was responsible for processing asylum applications. Children born to refugee parents on Cuban territory could enrol in the national education system on equal terms with Cuban citizens. The authorities provided asylum-seekers with healthcare when needed, and UNHCR provided financial support to cover their accommodation and living costs during the processing of their applications.

48. Haitian migrants on their way to the United States sometimes entered Cuba in an irregular manner, having arrived in Cuban territorial waters in rickety vessels. Border troops and other State institutions rescued them and afforded them all necessary protection, and they received medical treatment and screening, food and accommodation pending their repatriation. Repatriations were conducted under a tripartite agreement between Cuba, Haiti and the International Organization for Migration and in accordance with international standards, including the principle of non-discrimination.

49. **A representative of Cuba** said that persons admitted to prison, either to await trial or following conviction, were offered the opportunity to access the prison's education service. If they accepted, a plan would be drawn up on the basis of their education level. Teachers working in prisons imparted education at different levels with a view to the prisoners' social reintegration. The level of education attained by the prisoner was taken into account when placing him or her in employment or further education upon release. Some prisoners had obtained degree qualifications.

50. The Attorney General's Office worked to prevent and combat gender-based violence. In the previous five years, many steps had been taken to raise social awareness of the problem, which indeed had a severe impact on mulatto and black women and girls. A gender equality observatory, established in 2023 under the National Programme for the Advancement of Women, tracked indicators relating to gender violence, including the number of persons convicted and the skin colour of victims. The observatory had detected that, while most victims of gender-based violence were white, the number of mulatto and black victims was increasing. The Attorney General's Office, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of the Interior were working to set up a register of violent killings of women and girls, which would provide important information, including data on victims and perpetrators disaggregated by skin colour.

51. The offence of illegal entry was characterized by the requirement that the conduct be considered socially harmful, as the person had intentionally and knowingly violated the country's immigration procedures. However, the Government did not consider that that criterion was applicable to migrants, whose situation was assessed independently. Migrants were treated humanely and with solidarity; they enjoyed all rights and were provided with services. The Attorney General's Office had received no complaints of their being subjected to discriminatory treatment.

52. **A representative of Cuba** said that article 73 of the Constitution explicitly stated that all persons enjoyed the right to education and that the State must ensure free, affordable and good quality education services. Accordingly, the Cuban education system provided services from early childhood to adulthood. Early childhood education was provided to 99% of Cuban children in the corresponding age group, including through the country's 298 casitas infantiles (childcare facilities), which were designed to respond to the needs of vulnerable mothers in complex social situations. White, mulatto and black students accounted for 55%, 34% and 11% of students enrolled in secondary education, which was in line with the

composition of the general population. For the 2025/26 academic year, 25% of students enrolled in higher education were mulatto and 12% were black.

53. Various types of courses allowed for equitable access to higher education. Besides regular programmes for students who had completed upper secondary education, weekly session-based courses were open to persons of any age who wished to study, with no requirement to pass an entrance examination. Online distance courses were also available. Alternative study arrangements favoured access to higher education, in accordance with the principle of lifelong learning, for a range of social groups, particularly people of African descent. They also allowed participants to combine study and work.

54. **A representative of Cuba** said that, in the light of the Committee's 2018 recommendations on the implementation of special measures, the Government had adopted the National Programme against Racism and Racial Discrimination "Color Cubano" and created the Color Cubano Commission, thus establishing a national platform for the joint action of the State and civil society. One of the goals of the Color Cubano Programme was to improve the socioeconomic situation of black and mulatto persons and their access to good quality education, employment, health and housing. Progress in some areas had been held back by the difficulties the country faced owing to the intensification of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States. As at December 2023, some 338,000 individuals belonging to families in situations of economic vulnerability had been receiving assistance in the form of monetary benefits, services and resources, which covered the cost of the food basket, basic services and medicine. Of those individuals, 24% were black, 30% were mulatto and 46% were white. To further combat inequities, the State had identified and provided assistance to almost 63,000 mothers with three or more children, of whom 40% were white, 21% were black and 39% were mulatta.

55. In recent years, the Government had opened community canteens in over 1,700 vulnerable communities with a high proportion of black and mulatto residents. Besides meal services, the canteens also provided employment, mostly for black women. In terms of housing, 1,253 of the 1,700 vulnerable communities had launched transformation processes that included the transfer of ownership of buildings to occupants who previously had no legal title and the installation of photovoltaic panels in more than 5,000 housing units. The Government had also launched a project to convert shipping containers into new housing units. Other examples of special measures included the establishment of a 24-hour legal advice service to address the complaints of LGBTIQ+ persons, regardless of their skin colour, and the work undertaken with the Caribbean Network of Researchers on Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassaemia, which was treating 7,000 persons for conditions associated with black or brown skin colour.

56. **A representative of Cuba** said that another important measure was the neighbourhood transformation initiative, which was implemented particularly in municipalities where black and mulatto persons formed the majority of the population.

57. **A representative of Cuba** said that the Government applied a policy of zero tolerance for all forms of trafficking. Since acceding in 2013 to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Cuba had produced an annual report that described the challenges facing the country and the cases adjudicated by the courts. The National Plan of Action to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons and Protect Victims had been updated in 2023. Between 2019 and 2024, 68 prosecutions had been brought for exploitation of prostitution and corruption of minors in cases with features similar to trafficking in persons. Eighty-four victims (76 female and 8 male), all Cuban nationals, had been identified; no data had been collected on their skin colour. Trafficking in Cuba was an infrequent offence that did not involve international criminal networks and was carried out mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

58. **Ms. Tlakula** said that, in its previous concluding observations, the Committee had requested information on the training of public officials, prosecutors, judges, magistrates and law enforcement personnel to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention. Paragraphs 14 and 26 of the follow-up report contained information on the training provided

to law enforcement officers and others; however, the report currently under review did not provide any information on the impact of training programmes.

59. She appreciated the frank acknowledgement, in paragraph 24 of the follow-up report, that the State Party had not yet implemented the Committee's recommendation to introduce tools for accessing information on crime and violence, including the variables of the victims' colour, national origin or ethnic origin or any other relevant variable of intersectional discrimination. Despite the Committee's request in its letter of November 2020, the State Party report unfortunately contained no information on the subject. She was particularly interested to know whether the Color Cubano Commission had reviewed the issue of tools for accessing information on crime and violence.

60. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she would be interested to know whether Cuba continued to train medical doctors from other parts of the Caribbean and whether such training was threatened by the current economic challenges. She would be grateful for further details about the teaching of history as a mandatory subject, including an indication of whether the curriculum focused solely on Cuban history. She wondered what percentage of Haitian migrants were returned to Haiti and whether any of them were granted refugee status and remained in Cuba.

61. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said she was concerned that structural inequalities linked to geography, education and social conditions continued to influence health outcomes. She would therefore be interested to hear about any targeted public health or social policies to improve health outcomes among vulnerable groups. She wondered whether the State Party had taken any steps to raise awareness of the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 on equality and freedom from racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health.

62. **Mr. Diaby**, observing that sport often reflected social tensions and inequalities, said the Committee had received multiple reports that people of African descent were well represented among high-performance athletes but underrepresented in management and leadership positions, including as referees, umpires and coaches. He wished to know what steps had been taken to correct the situation.

63. **Mr. Guissé** said that he would be interested to hear more about the response of the United Nations to the situation in the country, which the World Health Organization had described as "deeply concerning". He would particularly like to know what practical steps the United Nations had taken to alleviate the crisis.

64. **Ms. Tebie** said that, having listened with interest to the information provided on the descendants of the Taino people, she wished to know whether the State Party had taken any steps to preserve their culture, such as applying to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for recognition of their heritage. She wondered whether people of Indigenous descent were represented in the country's decision-making bodies.

65. **A representative of Cuba** said that Haitian migrants attempting to reach the United States sometimes landed on the Cuban coast as a result of the tides and the precarious nature of their vessels. When asked whether they wished to return to their country of origin, they generally answered in the affirmative, and were repatriated in accordance with international standards.

66. Cuba maintained its medical cooperation programmes, which included the provision of training and higher education in Cuba and the deployment of Cuban medical brigades to other countries. The Government was seeking to protect those efforts in the current difficult context.

67. The United Nations had responded in several ways to the economic asphyxiation of Cuba by the United States. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had publicly warned about the human rights implications, the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General had voiced concern, and special procedures mandate holders had issued communications on the subject. Various United Nations agencies had allocated funds and drawn up action plans to assist the country. Many Governments had expressed political support and warned against military intervention.

68. **A representative of Cuba** said that the judiciary paid special attention to the training of judges and prosecutors on the rights enshrined in the Convention. Such training commenced at university and continued upon admission to the judiciary, where it formed part of the initial and in-service training of judges and prosecutors. The court system had reported 166 training activities with the participation of more than 1,000 judges. Postgraduate studies, including various master's degree courses, also covered issues related to the protection of human rights, while the National Ombudsman's Office and police academies also provided human rights education and training.

69. **A representative of Cuba** said that Cuba had trained over 40,000 health professionals from 149 countries, especially those in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Most of the 2,800 young people currently studying health programmes in Cuban universities were training to become doctors.

70. Cuba ensured the right to health regardless of religious belief, place of residence, skin colour or socioeconomic status. The State provided universal free health coverage, with services provided by the country's 75,000 doctors at a ratio of 1 doctor per 131 inhabitants. Black persons accounted for 18.7%, mulatto persons 28.7% and white persons 52.7% of health professionals. Over 11,000 family doctors' offices had been established throughout the country. Health professionals and doctors followed an ethical code that prohibited discrimination on grounds of skin colour.

71. As a measure to reduce maternal and infant mortality, the Government had taken steps to improve the quality of food available to low-income pregnant women. The country's 158 maternity homes served nutritious meals to such women, helping them and their unborn children to maintain weight during pregnancy.

72. The current incidence of tuberculosis in Cuba stood at 10.6 per 100,000 people. Since 1963, Cuba had vaccinated over 14 million people against the disease; however, reduced antibody protection over time meant that persons who had been vaccinated as children could contract tuberculosis as adults – a reality that, coupled with the socioeconomic situation, had caused a slight deterioration in the epidemiological status of the population.

73. The Ministry of Health had set up a working group that every month considered issues related to skin colour and public health with a view to making recommendations. One such recommendation had been to include data on morbidity rates disaggregated by skin colour in the 2026 statistical yearbook on health.

74. **A representative of Cuba** said that, in Cuba, preparation for a career in sport began at the age of 6 years, notably in sports schools. Young people could choose to train as high-performance athletes, referees or umpires or sports administrators. Professionals specializing in athlete preparation incorporated sport science innovations and advanced techniques to support the emergence of young athletes at the local level. Various international organizations donated resources for the preparation of black and mulatto sportsmen and sportswomen.

75. **Mr. Tlemçani** said that he hoped that the frank and open constructive dialogue would allow the State Party to strengthen ongoing efforts and would inform new measures to address persistent challenges in the implementation of the Convention.

76. **A representative of Cuba** said that implementing the Committee's recommendations would be easier were the Cuban people not being subjected to a criminal policy of aggression and asphyxiation. Nevertheless, the Government maintained its principled position of condemning all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. Cuba would work to meet the challenges it faced in implementing the Convention, and it had the political will and the institutional and legal framework to do so, despite the negative impact of the United States embargo. The Government would continue to stoutly defend the convictions of the Cuban national hero José Martí – a staunch anti-racism advocate – and to fight the scourge of racism in keeping with the principles of the Cuban socialist revolution.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.