



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.: General
3 December 2019

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 100th session

Summary record of the 2780th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 28 November 2019, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Amir

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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

Combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Cambodia (CERD/C/KHM/14-17; CERD/C/KHM/Q/14-17)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Cambodia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Chet** (Cambodia), introducing the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of Cambodia (CERD/C/KHM/14-17), said that his country had endured a long history of civil war and internal armed conflict driven by political ideologies and racial discrimination. Since the end of the conflict, his country had been making great efforts to promote harmony among all ethnic and political groups. Thanks to the support of the international community, Cambodia had been able to rebuild its social fabric and develop the necessary policies and legal frameworks. However, the Government was also aware that greater progress was needed with regard to the country's legislation.

3. Racial discrimination was criminalized under the Criminal Code, and the Constitution enshrined all the rights guaranteed under article 5 of the Convention. The Constitution also provided for the independence of the judiciary and prohibited the legislative and executive branches from exercising judicial power. Adjudication was the core function of the judiciary and was performed by judges. Judicial rulings could be contested only by means of a formal appeal. In 2014, the National Assembly had adopted the Law on the Organization of the Court, the Law on the Status of Judges and Prosecutors and the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the Supreme Council of Magistracy to regulate case proceedings, the decision-making process, resources, the performance of key actors and the organization and functioning of the courts, with a view to protecting the independence of the judiciary.

4. The Law on the Organization of the Court had introduced three major changes to the court system that had contributed to judicial independence. Specialized labour and commercial courts had been established to improve the quality of the judicial service and the efficiency of the courts; regional courts of appeal, which would become operational in April 2020, had been created to improve access to justice and reduce the backlog of cases; and non-judicial staff had been appointed to manage the administrative affairs of the courts, thus making it possible for them to perform functions previously carried out by the judges themselves.

5. The Government was strongly committed to promoting judicial independence and improving the services rendered by the justice system. However, some countries, critical of Cambodian law enforcement's legitimate response to offences committed by politicians, political parties, media outlets and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), had placed pressure on the Government to interfere in judicial affairs, which would violate the constitutional principle of the separation of power.

6. The progress made for the establishment of a national human rights institution had been slow. The Government had thus recently made the Cambodian Human Rights Committee responsible for drafting a bill on the subject, in the hope of expediting the process. The first draft was expected to be submitted for consultation with stakeholders, including civil society representatives, in 2020.

7. The Government supported the freedom of all Cambodian citizens, regardless of race or origin, as stipulated in the Constitution. The terms "Khmer Krom" and "Kampuchea Krom" referred to a geographical area, currently in Viet Nam, rather than a people. It was therefore incorrect to refer to "Khmer Krom" or "Khmer Leu" people. As at June 2018, there had been 10,944,101 persons aged 15 or older from that region living in Cambodia, 9,900,189 of whom had been issued with Khmer identification documents. Their origin was not recorded in the identification card database, and they were referred to simply as "Khmer". To obtain Khmer identification, applicants needed to be aged 15 or older and possess official documentation indicating that they had been born to Cambodian parents or had been legally granted citizenship, in addition to being able to present a family book or official evidence of residence. The ability to speak Khmer was not considered sufficient

evidence of nationality. Persons from Khmer Krom who did not meet those requirements were considered Vietnamese and needed to register as immigrants in Cambodia. According to the 2015–2017 survey, some 180,000 Vietnamese citizens were living in Cambodia. Children born to non-Khmer parents were entitled to Khmer nationality only if their parents had been born in Cambodia and were resident there. Children living in Cambodia whose parents had been born in Viet Nam were therefore considered Vietnamese.

8. The land rights of indigenous people were enshrined in the Constitution and the 2001 Land Law. Indigenous persons could choose whether to participate in or leave their communities, and indigenous communities had the right to manage their land privately or communally. There were 24 indigenous communities comprising 2,335 households in Cambodia, and on average, their households occupied land four times larger than that occupied by Khmer households. Between 2010 and 2014, with the support of Germany and Canada, the Government had run a pilot project to register indigenous communal land titles, through which the titles in eight communities had been registered. Communal land titling registration was voluntary; communities needed to submit an application for registration in order to launch the process. Indigenous communities had the right to participate at every stage of the registration process. As at May 2018, a total of 669 communal land titles had been granted across the 24 indigenous communities.

9. Cambodia treated all citizens equally before the law, regardless of their political affiliation, profession, social or racial status or past actions. While the Government would continue to work closely with stakeholders to safeguard the interests of all citizens, it would not give credence to politically motivated recommendations that showed no regard for the national situation. Human rights issues needed to be addressed through constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized dialogue. Success depended on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, impartiality and non-selectivity. There was no one-size-fits-all approach to protecting human rights. However, the Government of Cambodia would continue to work with the United Nations human right mechanisms and with the relevant stakeholders to promote and protect human rights in the country.

10. **Mr. Diaby** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to know when the Government planned to declare that it recognized the Committee's competence to consider individual complaints pursuant to article 14 of the Convention, as over 30 years had passed since Cambodia had ratified the Convention. While recognizing the important progress made in the field of human rights since the end of the internal conflict, he noted that the definition of racial discrimination in the Constitution and the Criminal Code was not fully in keeping with the one in the Convention. The figures concerning the economic and social situation of indigenous peoples provided in the table on page 3 of the report were somewhat confusing and seemed to imply that their situation had deteriorated. The Committee would welcome more detailed information on their current situation.

11. According to the report, the provisions of the Convention were enshrined in the State party's Constitution. He wished to know how those provisions were implemented by the judicial system. He asked whether the Government planned to enact a law concerning discrimination, whether it had adopted a national policy to combat discrimination and whether a national survey had been conducted to ascertain the scale of racial discrimination in Cambodian society. What measures were envisaged to promote equality in a society in which ethnic and racial identities occasionally clashed?

12. The Committee would be grateful for disaggregated data concerning each of the 24 formally identified indigenous peoples who had benefited from a national development policy since 2009. He asked whether the policy had been assessed in order to remedy any shortcomings. How did the school enrolment and dropout rates of minors from such communities compare with the national averages? Noting that indigenous peoples were particularly devoted to traditional medicine, he asked whether such medicine was incorporated in the national Health Strategic Plan and whether steps had been taken to remove language barriers and other possible impediments to their access to health-care centres in the areas where they lived.

13. According to the report, by 2017, 19 of the indigenous communities had received certificates of entitlement to collective land. He was interested in hearing how the land was apportioned among the 24 formally identified indigenous peoples. Additional information

would also be appreciated on the number of applications for certificates, the number granted and the procedures for lodging an appeal. Were the certificates irrevocable, and what was the fate of peoples who failed to benefit from them?

14. The Committee would welcome detailed information on the situation in Steung Treng Province, where the Lower Sesan II hydroelectric project had deprived the Bunong indigenous people of a large portion of their forests and means of subsistence. The Kui indigenous people in Preah Vihear Province had also been deprived of part of their agricultural land and forests, in their case, through the actions of sugarcane companies. He wished to know whether the Government had considered simplifying the process for granting community land titles and allocating more funds for indigenous community development. Were indigenous peoples adequately consulted on community land management policies and the use of land for mining and agro-industrial purposes? He had received reports that they encountered major practical impediments when they sought to defend their rights. In that context, he would be interested to hear whether the Government had considered establishing an effective consultation procedure.

15. The Committee would appreciate detailed information concerning racist attacks on persons of Vietnamese origin. Were there any plans to adopt a national plan of action against racial discrimination? According to article 950 of the Civil Code, a woman was not entitled to remarry until 120 days had passed since the annulment of a previous marriage. Moreover, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had issued a directive imposing restrictions based on age and income on foreign men who wished to marry Cambodian women. He asked whether the State party planned to repeal provisions constituting marital discrimination based on sex, age and income.

16. The Committee urged the State party to protect and promote ethno-religious diversity. The Government had allegedly taken severe action against the members of a mostly Christian minority who had fled from the mountains of Viet Nam to Cambodia for religious and political reasons. In 2017, 16 members of the mountain community (Montagnards) had been deported to Viet Nam against their will and 13 others had left for the Philippines. He asked whether members of the mountain community could apply for recognition as refugees or asylum seekers. According to the Refugee Office in Phnom Penh, only 3 out of 200 applicants for asylum had been granted refugee status, and the others had been treated as illegal migrants.

17. The Cham people were a Muslim minority. In June 2016, the Government had closed down Radio Sap Cham, the only radio programme in the country broadcasting in the Cham language. The Committee wished to know whether it had been possible to file an appeal against its closure. The State party had undertaken, during the second cycle of the universal periodic review, in 2013, to establish a national human rights institution that complied with the Paris Principles, but no such institution had yet been established. According to the report, the Government had agreed to enact a law for that purpose, and the Cambodian Human Rights Committee had cooperated with civil society organizations in drafting a bill. He asked whether the organizations in question represented minorities and indigenous peoples and whether the issue of racial discrimination had been addressed.

18. With regard to human rights defenders, the Committee would like to receive additional information concerning the conditions of arrest and detention of Kem Sokha. It would also appreciate information concerning restrictions on the activities of civil society organizations, in particular addressing the circular of 2 October 2017 requiring prior notification of such activities, and concerning the legal framework applicable to the establishment and functioning of civil society organizations. He wished to know whether any NGOs addressed the issue of racial discrimination, and if so, whether they had been consulted during the preparation of the State party's report.

19. The Committee had received disturbing reports of the excessive use of force to disperse peaceful demonstrations by human rights defenders. It would be useful if the delegation could provide information regarding training courses for law enforcement officers and the armed forces. Were they familiarized, for instance, with the provisions of the Convention, and did minorities, indigenous peoples and Cambodians of Vietnamese origin have access to the services of the police? With regard to the procedures for supervising public demonstrations, he asked what weapons and conventional means were used to protect demonstrators. The Committee had seen reports that almost 100 persons had

been arrested in 20 provinces since January 2019 for undermining the security of the State. He wished to know whether they had been guaranteed the right to a fair trial and whether any of them had filed complaints of abuse after their arrests.

20. According to the periodic report, 20 persons of Uighur ethnicity had been expelled from the State party, in accordance with the law. He wished to know which law had been invoked and whether the principle of non-refoulement was respected in the country's legislation. Could the persons concerned have filed an appeal? The Committee would appreciate information concerning the protection of migrants in Cambodia, and also about the protection of Cambodians, including domestic workers, who lived abroad. Were measures taken, for instance, to supervise the conduct of recruitment agencies? The elections in July 2018 had allegedly exacerbated tensions and led to numerous human rights violations, especially against persons of Vietnamese origin. He asked whether any action had been taken to address the problem.

21. He said that the Committee would appreciate more in-depth information regarding the situation of the Khmer Krom community and residents of Vietnamese origin who remained stateless because they were unable to obtain Cambodian identity documents. He wished to know whether children born to stateless parents in Cambodia could obtain such documents and, if not, whether the State party planned to amend the applicable regulations. In particular, did the State party plan to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness? With regard to hate speech, he asked whether there was a code of ethics for journalists and, if so, whether action had been taken against journalists who had violated it. Was a specific authority tasked with preventing and regulating hate speech and propaganda against minorities in the public and private media, and in social media?

22. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that the Committee would like to receive detailed information concerning any criminal proceedings in which the provisions of the Convention had been invoked and the number of convictions in such cases. He noted that the authorities had begun, under the National Plan of Action on the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Labour and Sexual Exploitation (2011–2013), to monitor locations used for prostitution, to give advice to sex workers and to issue instructions to business proprietors concerning sexual exploitation. Recruitment agencies had also been alerted to the risk of falsified documents, and assistance had been provided to more than 1,300 people who were victims of sexual exploitation or vulnerable to it. The related National Plan of Action for the period from 2014 to 2018 had provided instructions concerning the identification of victims of trafficking. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime had in 2017 noted that Cambodia had become a destination country for trafficking and sexual exploitation for persons from Viet Nam. He would therefore appreciate an evaluation of the outcome of the National Plan of Action. Had a new plan been adopted?

23. The International Trade Union Confederation had issued a report to the World Trade Organization noting that many Cambodian migrant workers, particularly domestic workers in Malaysia and men working on fishing vessels in Thailand, were vulnerable to forced labour. He noted that a decree of 2011 provided for the management of the cases of domestic workers sent abroad through private recruitment agencies. The Committee would appreciate information concerning its implementation and its specific outcomes.

24. He commended the sanctions imposed on perpetrators of the crime of child trafficking and arrangements made in the State party for the rehabilitation of its victims, and he said that the Committee would welcome additional information on the number of trials and convictions in such cases, especially in cases related to economic or sexual exploitation. The Committee urged the State party to enhance the capacity and increase the funding of the competent law enforcement agencies. He asked whether the Strategic Plan 2014–2018 to ensure equitable and inclusive education had been assessed and, if so, what results had been ascertained, especially in terms of enrolment and drop-out rates for migrant children and children from indigenous communities. He said he also wished to know whether the National Action Plan on Multi-Languages Education (2015–2018) had facilitated schooling for indigenous children.

25. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that in its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/KHM/CO/8–13) the Committee had requested the State party to provide information within one year on its follow-up to the recommendations contained in

paragraphs 15, 16, 17 and 18. Unfortunately no such report had been submitted. A similar request would be contained in the forthcoming concluding observations, and he trusted that the State party would respond within the specified period.

26. Paragraph 15 had recommended the establishment of an independent human rights institution. The procedure for its establishment had been launched, but no result had been achieved to date. He wished to know when a final result might be anticipated. The recommendation in paragraph 16 of the concluding observations, concerning appropriate protective measures for indigenous peoples' rights to possess, develop, control and use their communal lands, had been addressed in paragraphs 9 to 15 of the periodic report.

27. The Committee had urged the State party in the recommendation in paragraph 17 of the concluding observations to provide full protection to vulnerable groups as they sought to exercise their rights to communal lands. Paragraphs 26 to 29 of the periodic report seemed to imply that the Committee's comments were mere allegations that did not need to be taken into account. Such a response was unsatisfactory; the Committee required more comprehensive information. The recommendation in paragraph 18 of the concluding observations that was for the State party to ensure that each individual Khmer Krom was able to obtain citizenship documents just like other citizens; it had been addressed in paragraphs 31 to 33 of the periodic report, but the explanations were unduly brief. The Committee wished to know how many Khmer Krom individuals had received their documents, whether there were still grievances and, if so, how the State party intended to resolve the problem.

28. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that access to land presented a particular challenge in Cambodia, a relatively small, densely populated country. Noting that indigenous communities had been granted titles for the collective use of over 16,000 hectares, he asked whether that land was controlled by the State and had been redistributed to the indigenous communities, or whether it was recognized as their ancestral land. He was curious to know what legal regime governed the use of land by indigenous peoples, especially if it was used for nomadic farming. It would also be useful to know how indigenous land rights were perceived in the context of the national public debate. Regarding the measures on land and natural resource management that had been taken in consultation with indigenous peoples, he requested more details on the nature of the consultations undertaken, such as whether they had been conducted in accordance with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). It would be useful for the Committee to hear whether the Government had any forums for dialogue and consultation with indigenous peoples and whether indigenous peoples participated or were represented in public administration. While the report stated that indigenous peoples maintained their culture and lifestyles, he wished to know to what extent they exercised their own customary rules or laws and, if they did, how such rules or laws were upheld in the administration of justice. Given that the prison population was often a telling indicator of the circumstances of ethnic groups, he asked what proportion of prisoners were indigenous. Lastly, he asked what role indigenous peoples played in combating climate change and its impacts, notably in terms of the State party's engagement with international forums. Did they contribute to progress reports on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and were their views taken into account?

29. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** noted that in the periodic report, the respective populations of the Ro ang, Speung, La-eun and Samre communities were given as zero. He asked whether those communities no longer existed and, if that was the case, when they had disappeared. He said he would like to know whether persons from indigenous communities faced obstacles in acquiring Cambodian nationality or identity cards, since the Cambodian authorities gave the impression that they were extremely reluctant to grant nationality. He would be grateful if the delegation could clarify the statement in the periodic report according to which Khmer Kampuchea Kroms or other individuals applying for Cambodian identity cards "must have a proof that he/she was born from Khmer parents". Did that mean that both parents must be Khmer, or was one parent sufficient? He also wished to know whether foreign nationals were able to acquire Cambodian nationality through marriage to Cambodian citizens. If so, did the same rules apply to foreign women who married Cambodian men and to foreign men who married Cambodian women?

30. **Ms. Mohamed**, noting that the Government, in cooperation with civil society, was drafting a law to establish a national human rights institution, said that she wished to know

whether civil society organizations were themselves regulated by a law and if so, whether that law required their neutrality. She asked whether the civil society groups that participated in the consultations on the national human rights institution included representatives of ethnic minorities. She said she also wished to know whether children born outside of Cambodia to indigenous parents received Cambodian nationality, and whether their parents had access to birth registration on the same terms as other Cambodian citizens. Lastly, she asked whether ethno-religious groups had the right to practise their religion in public and whether places of worship existed for that purpose.

31. **Ms. Li** said that the State party was to be congratulated for its achievements in national development and for sustaining annual economic growth of over 7 per cent for more than two decades. The fact that the poverty rate had fallen from 53 per cent in 2004 to 11.5 per cent in 2015 showed that Cambodia had made excellent progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Noting that in 2014 a law on the organization and functioning of the Supreme Council of Magistracy had been promulgated, she said she wished to know whether the Council was responsible to the National Assembly or to the King. The Committee would also appreciate clarification of the institutional status of the Anti-Corruption Unit that had been empowered to monitor and investigate corruption offences and to arrest perpetrators. Was it attached to the police, the prosecution service or the courts?

32. **Ms. Ko** said that she would be grateful if the delegation could clarify the State party's understanding of the terms "race", "ethnic group" and "indigenous people". In that regard, she drew attention to paragraph 5 of the report, which mentioned "24 races of indigenous people"; paragraph 17, which referred to "ethnic groups of indigenous people"; and paragraph 20, which stated that the definition of racial discrimination in the Criminal Code referred to "ethnic groups or races". She expressed particular interest in finding out whether the State party considered the concepts of "race" and "ethnic group" to be identical and whether there were any races or ethnic groups in Cambodia that were not classified as indigenous peoples. She emphasized the importance of definitions for establishing a legal framework, given that groups recognized as indigenous peoples were specifically entitled to certain rights.

33. Concerning specific groups, she said that she had read that several indigenous or ethnic groups lived in the north-eastern highlands and were collectively known as Khmer Leu. Regardless of whether the Government recognized that term as representative of an ethnic group or of a locality, she was concerned about reports of large-scale land grabs by foreign companies in the corresponding region, accompanied by harassment and forced relocation of its residents. She would therefore be grateful if the delegation could provide information on the situation in north-eastern Cambodia, including on any investigations conducted into land deprivation and relocations. Lastly, she asked the delegation to provide statistics on any investigations, prosecutions and judicial decisions relating to the violation of articles 265 to 270 of the Criminal Code, which addressed racial discrimination.

34. **Ms. Dah** said that the Committee was mindful of historical events in Cambodia and wished to congratulate the Cambodian people for their resilience and their recent progress in the spheres of economic development and human rights. Nevertheless, the Committee was obliged to critically consider racial discrimination in the country, in view of the size of its large Khmer majority, of over 90 per cent of the population, which presented the particular risk that minorities, including indigenous peoples and foreign nationals, might be neglected. She requested the Government to examine, in its future development programmes and plans, appropriate measures to improve the situation of minorities and to hold consultations with them, taking into account the provisions of ILO Convention No. 169.

35. Corruption was a menace to both development and human rights, and it was encouraging to note that the Government recognized it as such and had taken measures to combat it. She would be grateful for information on the State party's general policy against corruption and any particular lines of action it had developed in that regard.

36. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, recalling that Cambodia had made heroic efforts to overcome the repercussions of a century of occupation and conflict, said that the Government should be aware of the need for further progress in safeguarding and respecting the rights of all Cambodians. Regardless of the State party's achievements in tackling racial discrimination,

the Committee had, in its own experience, noted that the presence of minorities and indigenous peoples gave rise to contrasts, with the potential to lead to discriminatory acts. He thus asked whether any complaints of racial discrimination had been referred to the courts and what the circumstances and outcomes of such cases had been. He wished to remind the State party that the absence of court cases did not necessarily mean that racial discrimination was non-existent, but more likely, that the public was unwilling to file complaints, owing to a lack of confidence in the justice system. Moreover, he wished to recall that article 1 of the Convention made clear that the term “racial discrimination” meant any act based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which had the “purpose or effect” of nullifying or impairing human rights. Accordingly, it was not enough for States to pass laws whose intended purpose was beneficial for everyone; they also had to be careful that there were no discriminatory effects in practical terms on certain segments of the population.

37. In Cambodia, it was estimated that ethnic minorities, including the Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese and Cham communities, accounted for only 2 or 3 per cent of the population. The indigenous peoples of Cambodia, as in all other parts of the world, had a historical attachment to the land and strong economic and cultural links with the environment. The adoption of the Land Law in 2001 and the Forestry Law in 2002 had raised hopes that indigenous lands could be protected through collective land ownership, but very few indigenous communities had subsequently managed to obtain collective land titles. Meanwhile, international companies were increasingly occupying indigenous land for the legal or illegal exploitation of forest resources, which had led to conflict between the indigenous peoples and the rest of the population. The indigenous peoples of Cambodia feared that losing their land would in turn entail the loss of their resources and homes, together with their identity, culture and traditions. He therefore expressed the hope that the Government of Cambodia would recognize the need for a greater effort to protect indigenous languages, culture and customs, which were part of the identity of Cambodia itself.

38. **Mr. Bossuyt** said that he would welcome more information about the guarantee of collective land ownership in the State party’s Constitution. It would be interesting to know, for instance, whether the guarantee applied to all the State party’s communities or only to its indigenous communities. He would also welcome clarification regarding the cases of professional misconduct by judges and prosecutors who had been disciplined by the Supreme Council of Magistracy since 2015 and regarding the requirements for qualification for a Cambodian identity card. It seemed unreasonable to require applicants for identity cards to submit proof of a court verdict attesting to their birth to Khmer parents, yet that was one of the requirements listed in the State party’s periodic report.

39. **Ms. Chung** said that she would like to hear more about the State party’s approach to the gender-related aspects of racial discrimination, in particular in view of reports that there had in recent years been an increase in the number of rapes and murders of indigenous women and children. She asked what steps the Cambodian authorities had taken to set up a system of transitional or restorative justice, including with respect to ethnic-based and other forms of sexual violence in armed conflict. In particular, had any measures been taken to help the survivors of such violence recover their dignity or obtain redress? Did the State party have any institutions that worked specifically to resolve the lasting problems caused by sexual violence in armed conflict?

40. **Mr. Chet** (Cambodia), alluding to the long lapses of time between appearances by his country’s delegations before the Committee, said that although the Cambodian authorities often skipped class, they were, as far as efforts to eliminate racial discrimination were concerned, good students. The seniority of the members of his delegation attested to the seriousness with which the Cambodian Government undertook to meet its obligations.

41. The terms “Khmer” and “Cambodian” were often used interchangeably, but the Khmer people were actually a racial group. As he had noted earlier, however, the terms “Khmer Leu”, “Khmer Kandal” and “Khmer Krom” referred not to people of separate races, but to people with different geographical origins. The Khmer Krom, for example, were originally from the lower Mekong basin, whereas the Khmer Kandal were from the central Mekong basin and the Khmer Leu were from the upper Mekong. Cambodian identity cards included no mention of anything but the bearer’s Cambodian nationality.

42. The Cambodian Government took steps to combat all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against persons who were educated in the West. His father had been killed in the time of Pol Pot, simply because he had been a French teacher. The governing party was keen to prevent a return of the types of discrimination that had led to the killing of his father and others like him. Harmony was the goal. Opposition parties, however, tended to focus on discrimination against persons whose background was not Cambodian. Their aim in focusing so narrowly on that form of discrimination was to increase their share of the vote.

43. **Mr. Dy** (Cambodia) said that the country's recently completed Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018 had been developed in partnership with local and international NGOs. An assessment of the progress achieved under the Plan had shown that dropout rates had decreased and that the rates at which children enrolled in primary education had increased. The development of education policy in Cambodia had been informed by Sustainable Development Goal 4, the purpose of which was to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. A policy on inclusive education, which was meant to improve access to education for all people with special needs and other vulnerable groups, including indigenous people and other ethnic minorities, had been endorsed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

44. The new Education Strategic Plan, for the period 2019–2023, had recently been unveiled. The new National Action Plan on Multi-Languages Education 2015–2018, for its part, had been approved by the Ministry in October 2019. The drafters of the Action Plan had drawn on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Constitution of Cambodia and other relevant texts; the overarching goal was to ensure that every indigenous child in Cambodia had access to education. Cambodia had been commended for the efforts it had made to ensure access to education for indigenous children, in particular by enabling them to be taught in their own languages.

45. **Mr. Chet** (Cambodia) said that earlier attempts to draft a bill on the establishment of a national human rights institution, which had been led by civil society, had ended in failure. As a result, the Prime Minister had recently instructed the Cambodian Human Rights Committee to lead efforts to draft such a bill. A draft was nearly complete, and consultations with stakeholders were expected to begin in early 2020. A national human rights institution could be established with the stroke of a pen, but the Cambodian Government wished to avoid establishing an institution that was not in a position to comply with the Paris Principles.

46. **Mr. Khlok** (Cambodia) said that the Supreme Council of Magistracy had 11 members, including the King, who chaired the Council and guaranteed the independence of the country's courts. The other members of the Council were selected by a wide range of State bodies, including the Ministry of Justice, the Senate, the National Assembly and the Supreme Court. More information on the disciplinary sanctions imposed by the Council would be provided in due course. Although the country's periodic report might have suggested otherwise, it was not necessary for both parents to be Khmer for people to be issued with identity cards attesting to their Cambodian nationality. It was sufficient if one parent was Khmer.

47. **Mr. Chet** (Cambodia) said that dual citizenship was allowed in Cambodia. His own son was a dual citizen. The Anti-Corruption Unit acted as the secretariat for the National Anti-Corruption Committee. The Unit was an independent body that could carry out investigations and arrests. It worked effectively, including with the private sector. For example, it had signed memorandums of understanding with major corporations, such as the Coca-Cola Company, to help ensure that bribes were not paid to government officials. It also worked with the Ministry of Education to combat bribery in the country's schools during examination time. The Anti-Corruption Unit was, in effect, a law enforcement agency.

48. **Mr. An** (Cambodia) said that the Government of Cambodia was of the view that civil society organizations, of which Cambodia had more than 5,000, were indispensable. In the three years since the adoption of a law regulating the status and operations of civil society organizations in Cambodia, the Ministry of the Interior had received nearly a thousand registration applications from local organizations. The large number of Cambodian civil society organizations was clear evidence of the freedom such

organizations enjoyed in Cambodia. To enhance that freedom, the Government had recently announced that it had dropped the requirement under which civil society organizations had had to provide three days' notice of any public events they planned to organize. In addition, the Cambodian authorities regularly held consultations with local and international NGOs. An interministerial working group had been formed to address concerns about the law on civil society organizations, and in November 2019 government officials had met with representatives of civil society to discuss possible amendments to the law.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.