



# Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General  
31 May 2023

Original: English

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Eighty-fifth session

### Summary record of the 1986th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 May 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Peláez Narváez

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention** *(continued)*

*Ninth periodic report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (continued)*  
([CEDAW/C/VEN/9](#); [CEDAW/C/VEN/Q/9](#); [CEDAW/C/VEN/RQ/9](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela joined the meeting.*

*Articles 1–6*

2. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that 111 victims of trafficking had been repatriated. In 2022, the Government had broken up 348 gangs involved in forced sexual exploitation and arrested over 1,350 people in connection with that offence. In the same year, the National Office to Combat Organized Crime and Financing of Terrorism had carried out numerous actions to tackle trafficking in persons, people smuggling and pornography, including child pornography. A considerable number of measures to combat trafficking in persons had also been taken in 2023. A plan on combating trafficking would shortly be issued.

3. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Public Prosecution Service had brought charges against the perpetrators in 90 per cent of the cases of trafficking in persons initiated under ordinary proceedings. In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, the Government had drawn up educational guidelines on trafficking in persons, in accordance with which specialist prosecutors who dealt with child victims of trafficking must undertake ongoing training in the comprehensive approach to be adopted in such cases.

4. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that two special shelters had been set up for women who had been trafficked into the country.

*Articles 7–9*

5. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the National Electoral Council had issued a number of decisions to strengthen democracy and promote gender equity within the sphere of politics. For instance, the Council had developed a plan for the equal and alternating representation of men and women candidates in the elections for the National Assembly. It had also drawn up two sets of regulations on gender parity that had been applied to the lists of candidates standing in the municipal and regional elections held in 2021.

6. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the automated system for managing candidacies established by the National Electoral Council required all political parties to comply with the regulations on gender parity in electoral lists. For example, if a woman was put forward for a senior position, the system would automatically ensure that a man was put forward as the alternate candidate. If the regulations on gender parity were not observed, the system would not process the candidacies. As a result of the various measures taken, women now occupied 35 per cent of the seats on the legislative councils and, in the most recent municipal elections, 46 per cent of the candidates for council seats had been women.

7. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that women were well represented in leadership positions of the National Assembly, including its Bureau. A network of women parliamentarians worked to mainstream gender equality and anti-discrimination policy in the national parliament, the legislative councils of the states, the municipal councils and the communal parliaments. Furthermore, 21 laws with a focus on gender had been passed, reflecting the impact of women parliamentarians on the legislative process.

8. Under the amended Act on Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence, political violence was considered to be a form of violence against women. Article 65 of the Act, which defined political violence, applied to women's participation not only in elections for political

posts but also in trade unions and associations. The article established that using any form of violence to restrict or prevent women's participation in elections, political life or associations would be punishable by a term of imprisonment of between 3 and 8 years.

9. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the National Commission to Guarantee Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence had been tasked with establishing a system for collecting disaggregated data on acts of violence against women. That data would include the number of reports, convictions and sentences relating to such acts, the forms of violence directed at the victims and the relationships between the perpetrators and the victims.

10. **Ms. Mikko** said that it was not clear whether the State party had adopted a specific binding law providing for mandatory gender parity in elections.

11. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that a bill on the establishment of gender parity in elections was being discussed in the National Assembly. As part of that process, the approach to gender parity taken by a number of political parties had been examined. Some parties had taken steps to ensure that their lists of candidates contained equal numbers of men and women but others had not.

#### *Articles 10–14*

12. **Ms. Akia** said that she wished to know what was being done to prevent women and girls with disabilities from being subjected to discrimination in educational institutions. She wondered what the State party was doing to combat the sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse faced by women and girls in educational institutions and to punish the perpetrators. The State party might describe any measures being taken to make menstrual hygiene products accessible to women and girls. It might also explain how it would ensure women's and girl's access to quality basic education and whether it would introduce age-appropriate education on sexual health and gender equality in order to reduce the high rates of teenage pregnancy. The Committee would be grateful to learn whether school curricula addressed the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by some women and girls.

13. **Ms. Xia** said that she wished to know what measures were being implemented to tackle the fall in the proportion of people in formal employment and the rise in the unemployment rate for women, which had stood at 8 per cent in 2018. She wondered whether a gender perspective was integrated into the State party's assessments of its national planning for economic development and structural transformation.

14. The State party might describe any plans in place to increase employment opportunities for women. It might also describe any measures being taken to improve the conditions of women working in the informal sector and ensure their labour rights and access to social protection. What had been done to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on women working in the informal sector?

15. She would appreciate hearing about any steps being taken to ease the burden of caregiving and domestic work on women. In that connection, she wondered what efforts were being made to encourage men to carry out an equal share of housework and caregiving. It would be interesting to learn how the State party implemented the provisions of the Labour Act prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace and how successful its efforts to implement those provisions had been. Lastly, she wondered whether any action had been taken to increase employment opportunities for rural women with low levels of education living in areas with low levels of economic development.

16. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Ministry of People's Power for Education organized regular courses on gender equality and equity. Over 1,200 teachers from all levels of the education system had enrolled on the course scheduled to begin in June 2023 while over 1,800 students had enrolled on a course on gender justice that was due to begin the following day. Around 80 per cent of those students were women. The working groups attached to a number of ministries had collaborated with the Ombudsman to develop courses for schoolteachers on gender justice, gender-based violence and gender equality and equity, among other subjects. For the 2022/23 school year, over 6 million children were enrolled in nurseries, primary schools or intermediate technical

education colleges. The gender parity indices cited in the periodic report were unchanged ([CEDAW/C/VEN/9](#), para. 94).

17. Teams of volunteers and members of the armed forces were working to upgrade schools. To date, over 85 per cent of the target number of schools had been upgraded, despite the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to reduce early pregnancy, the Government was continuing to implement the National Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Early and Teenage Pregnancy. The Ministry of People's Power for Education was taking measures to ensure that pregnant students were able to complete their education. In that connection, students whose pregnancies did not pose any risk to their health continued to attend school as normal, while students whose pregnancy entailed a health risk were given assignments and attended school periodically to receive support and be tested. Pregnant students enrolled in technical education courses took on internships in places that did not pose any risk to their health.

18. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund, had developed educational materials relating to the protection of women and girls with disabilities against violence and their access to education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the State had paid the salaries of employees in the public and private sectors to ensure that they could keep their jobs.

19. The reform of the Act on Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence had expanded the protection afforded to women workers by the Organic Labour Act. Article 63 of the former Act defined gender-based violence in the workplace and specified the penalties for which employers violating the Act would be liable. The same article also set out the punishments that, in certain circumstances, could be imposed on employers who failed to observe the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. A network of childcare centres was being established that would make it easier for mothers to remain in paid employment.

20. In recent years, efforts had been made to diversify the economy, which would lead to an increase in employment opportunities. The Venezuelan Social Security Institute was implementing a policy to support people working in the informal sector, who were entitled to assistance from the country's universal social security system.

21. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Ministry of People's Power for Education was implementing a programme called "Health Goes to School" (*salud va a la escuela*), under which teachers and students received guidance and training on matters related to health, including sexual and reproductive health. The programme also provided for the vaccination of all children in the country.

22. **Ms. Reddock** said that she wished to know how the State party planned to ensure universal access to safe and affordable contraception in all parts of the country, including areas with majority Indigenous and Afrodescendent populations. She would welcome information on the status of the National Plan for the Protection of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights of Women in Venezuela 2014–2019. It would be interesting to know whether a new, expanded plan would be developed and, if so, whether women's civil society organizations would participate in that process. The delegation might describe any plans in place to raise men's and boys' awareness of the role that they played in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights.

23. In the light of reports indicating that unsafe abortion and sterilization in inhumane conditions were the main methods of contraception used in the State party, she wished to know whether the Government planned to decriminalize abortion, ensure the availability of abortion services and phase out sterilization campaigns. The Committee would be grateful to hear about any measures taken to address the shortage of essential medicines for women and girls with infectious and chronic diseases, including pregnant women and girls, and women deprived of their liberty.

24. In view of the recent reported rise in the maternal mortality rate, she wondered whether the State party had assessed the impact of the National Plan for Humanized Childbirth, whether the plan had incorporated any of the relevant measures recommended by the Committee in 2014 ([CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/7-8](#), para. 31 (a)), and whether the State party

intended to develop a new plan. The Committee would be grateful for information on the status of systems for monitoring maternal health, such as the System of Maternal and Child Vigilance. It would also be interested to know whether a surveillance, analysis and response committee had been established to prevent and monitor morbidity and maternal mortality, including among adolescent girls, and neonatal mortality. The Committee was concerned to have received reports of mercury poisoning in rural areas inhabited by Indigenous persons, including the Orinoco valley. What was being done to curb pollution in that area, to monitor the health of the inhabitants, including Indigenous women and girls, and to provide them with access to quality health care?

25. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she would welcome information on the reform of the welfare system conducted in 2012, which had overhauled all aspects of that system. In its response, the State party might include details of the social benefits currently available, the number of enrolled beneficiaries, and any specific schemes for supporting unemployed women, women with disabilities, women-headed households, Indigenous women, women working in the informal sector and other vulnerable groups of women.

26. She wondered what percentage of the population lived in chronic poverty and what measures had been taken to lift all women, including rural, Indigenous and vulnerable groups of women, out of poverty. She would welcome details of any steps being taken to ensure women's economic resilience and right to food, including any measures to assist women entrepreneurs, provide women with cash transfers and promote their access to a decent living by recognizing and redistributing care work.

27. The delegation might describe any policy or regulatory measures in place to make private companies accountable for protecting the population against the effects of environmental degradation and to ensure that they fulfilled their obligations to conserve the environment and manage natural resources responsibly. The Committee also wished to know how the implementation of those measures was monitored and what sanctions existed to deter companies from violating environmental regulations. It would be grateful to hear about any mechanisms in place to implement and ensure compliance with legislation on prohibited substances and any actions being taken to protect and compensate communities in the Yanomami, Pemón, Ye'kwana and Sanema Indigenous territories, where women's health was disproportionately affected by business activity. She wondered when the State party would ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

28. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Government prioritized the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and advised young women on birth control. A wide range of measures was taken to ensure ongoing coordination between the different sectors responsible for implementing the National Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Early and Teenage Pregnancy. The Government had organized around 650 information-sharing workshops on sexual and reproductive health for university students.

29. In 2022, despite the unilateral coercive measures that adversely affected the provision of health care, the Government had distributed over 400,000 free contraceptive devices, over 28,000 of which had been given to adolescents. In addition, house-to-house visits, community health workshops and campaigns to distribute barrier contraception methods to the most vulnerable groups in society had been organized to promote family planning and control sexually transmitted diseases. Health-care centres adopted a life-course approach to provide differentiated care to patients.

30. The Government had organized training and capacity-building campaigns for health-care staff as part of a concerted strategy to reduce the maternal and neonatal mortality rates. Progress had been made in training teams that worked with seriously ill mothers and children. Over 28,000 health-care professionals had received training in managing obstetric emergencies, delivering babies, carrying out prenatal monitoring, providing clinical care to victims of sexual violence and preventing sexually transmitted diseases, among other areas. In 2022, practical and theoretical training had been given to around 950 health-care professionals.

31. A strategy for promoting maternal health adopted in 2015 had been redesigned to operate at the community level, enabling community leaders to refer pregnant women to the available services as early as possible in their pregnancies. Efforts were made to ensure that

women received the appropriate support both before and after they gave birth. As a result of the measures taken, over 480,000 pregnant women had received care and the lives of almost 6,000 critically ill mothers had been saved. Health-care teams had vaccinated over 83,000 pregnant women against COVID-19 and monitored the well-being of almost 84,000 pregnant women.

32. Since 2022, the opening of consulting rooms and the provision of equipment to outpatient clinics had led to a significant rise in the number of women receiving prenatal care. Under the National Plan for Humanized Childbirth, women with low-risk pregnancies were helped to have a natural childbirth, during which their rights to autonomy, information and privacy were respected at all times. The proportion of childbirths involving a vaginal delivery had risen significantly.

33. Maternity programmes had been improved, enhancing the quality of the care provided to women prior to conception and during pregnancy and childbirth. A standardized system for detecting and classifying pregnancies had been implemented throughout the network of health-care services. Over 250 delivery rooms had been refurbished. A system for monitoring the health of mothers and children had brought about an increase in the number of timely interventions carried out to address complications. A room for monitoring and following up on women with high-risk pregnancies had been established as part of efforts to bring down the maternal mortality rate.

34. The Ministry of People's Power for Public Health had established 24 committees responsible for monitoring adverse events to ensure the provision of timely assistance to women with risky pregnancies. In three states, committees had been set up to monitor, analyse and respond to cases of serious morbidity, maternal mortality and neonatal mortality. Shelters had been opened to accommodate pregnant women and members of their families who lived in rural areas far from any health centre. A total of 16 of those shelters were located inside health centres. Efforts had been made to refurbish and enhance rooms designed for low-risk deliveries. As a result, 620 such rooms had been put into operation.

35. Obstetric violence, the definition of which included forced sterilization, was established as an offence and penalized under the Act on Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence. All patients who were to be sterilized were required to sign a document indicating that they consented to the procedure and had been informed of any risks that it might entail.

36. The Ministry of People's Power for Public Health organized awareness-raising campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles. It also implemented the national programme to combat AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, under which steps were taken to prevent the transmission sexually transmitted diseases, to treat people who were ill and to protect them against stigmatization and discrimination. The programme also provided for the distribution of free antiretroviral drugs to all persons living with HIV/AIDS who were registered with the Simón Bolívar system for the management and distribution of medicines and medical supplies. All pregnant women were entitled to be tested for HIV/AIDS and all pregnant women living with the condition had the right to receive treatment for it. Health-care staff were given ongoing training in implementing every aspect of the programme. A protocol on the treatment of persons living with HIV/AIDS set out the guidelines for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

37. The Government implemented cancer prevention and screening programmes to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates for the most common cancers, giving priority attention to women belonging to high risk groups. The economic blockades imposed on the country had prevented multinational companies from repairing and maintaining radiotherapy equipment, which meant that only a proportion of that equipment was still operational. However, over 2,700 women had been treated using the existing resources. The Government was forging strategic alliances with other countries with a view to procuring additional medical equipment. Despite the unilateral coercive measures, which severely hindered the acquisition of medicines and medical supplies, a large number of hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centres, high-technology centres and outpatient services were continuing to provide health-care services. The high-technology centres provided a broad range of specialized diagnostic and treatment services to women. In 2022, high-cost medicines had been distributed free of charge to over 120,000 women suffering from a range of different

conditions, including lupus, haemophilia, arthritis and various cancers. Free chemotherapy was also provided to women.

38. The unilateral coercive measures had not only made it difficult to repair and maintain specialized equipment, they had also hindered the acquisition of surgical supplies and vaccines, among other items. A number of international banks had blocked the transfer of funds to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, preventing the Government from purchasing essential medicines and medical equipment. As a result, the country's vaccination programmes had been seriously disrupted.

39. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that she wished to draw attention to the protocols in place to guarantee the right to humanized pregnancy and childbirth. A bill to uphold that right was currently undergoing its first reading before the parliament, along with bills intended to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancies. Replies to other questions concerning health care would be submitted in writing. To supplement the Labour Act, the National Assembly had enacted laws to encourage entrepreneurship and to promote the labour-market integration of persons with disabilities and young persons. Bills on agricultural workers and transport workers were currently being discussed. To date, the Great Housing Mission had benefited more than 6.5 million vulnerable families, including those in rural and Indigenous areas.

40. **Mr. Constant Rosales** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which the Government had signed in 2013, was still awaiting ratification. Nonetheless, a presidential commission that met periodically to consider questions related to chemical pollutants regularly reviewed the issue of mercury contamination, particularly its impact on Indigenous communities in rural and mining areas. In that regard, it was important to recall that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had not only the Ministry for Indigenous Peoples but also the Indigenous Health Directorate, which was headed by an Indigenous woman and sought to strike a balance between science-based medicine and traditional medicine. The State took a progressive stance towards combating climate change and protecting the country's vast natural resources, which included a large portion of the Amazon rainforest.

41. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the pensionable age for Indigenous women was 50, as compared to 55 for other Venezuelan women.

42. **Ms. Reddock** said that she would be interested to know if the State party had plans to improve its methods for collecting and disseminating population data, also in the light of reports from civil society that much data was not available to people living in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

43. **Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia** said that she acknowledged the commitment of the State party to environmental protection. However, she wished to know if efforts were being made to contain development in Arco Minero del Orinoco, because the Committee had received information that illegal mining activities were taking place beyond the limits of that strategic development zone. Had compensation been paid to Indigenous communities affected by the development in the zone? She had been encouraged to learn of the existence of the presidential commission on chemical pollutants. However, as long as the State party failed to ratify the Minamata Convention there could be no law and consequently no offence. She wished to know what interim regulatory measures had been put in place, how mercury contamination was monitored and how affected communities were informed of the risks they faced.

44. **The Chair** said that, although she had been happy to hear about laws against forced sterilization, she was concerned by the fact that certain categories of women and girls, such as those with particular disabilities, could be sterilized involuntarily. The same concern had been raised recently by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Did the Government have plans to rescind the provisions of the law that admitted such practices?

45. **Ms. Akia** said that, in view of the fact that climate change had a disproportionate impact on women, including women with disabilities and Indigenous women, she wished to know what steps the State party was taking to ensure gender sensitivity in its climate change-related policies and actions.

46. **Ms. Bonifaz Alfonzo** said that the Committee had received troubling reports about attacks targeting female human rights defenders. Some defenders had faced problems in obtaining justice while others had suffered persecution or been forced to flee for fear of reprisals. She therefore wished to know what actions the State was contemplating to protect female human rights defenders and to prevent and investigate all acts of aggression and intimidation against them.

47. The Committee would be interested to learn more about a bill to regulate non-governmental organizations. She wished to know what steps the State party was taking to improve conditions for women deprived of liberty, who often suffered harassment and who were held in overcrowded and unhygienic facilities. She would appreciate it if the delegation could explain how Indigenous and rural women were being involved in the fight against climate change.

#### *Articles 15 and 16*

48. **Ms. González Ferrer** said that she wished to commend the State party for progress made in the field of family legislation over recent years. However, significant challenges persisted, notably in the form of gender stereotypes and prejudices. The law of 2021 that established 16 as the minimum age for marriage was undoubtedly a welcome change and an improvement on the previous limit of 14. Yet, did the State party intend to move towards a total prohibition on marriage for minors, in line with recommendations made by the Committee and by the Committee on the Rights of the Child? She would be interested to hear about any educational initiatives aimed at preventing such marriages. The Committee would like to know if any legislative action had been taken to address the concern it had raised in its previous concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/VEN/CO/7-8](#)) that work-related assets, such as insurance benefits and pensions, were not considered to be a part of joint property to be divided upon the dissolution of a marriage.

49. She congratulated the Government for having repealed article 565 of the Organic Code on Military Justice, which criminalized consensual same-sex relationships in the armed forces. Although same-sex households had been recognized in Supreme Court ruling No. 1187/2016, no action had been taken to apply that precedent to other cases. Did the Government have any plans to ensure that same-sex couples could enjoy their rights on an equal footing with the rest of the population, in line with article 21 of the Constitution? The Committee would be interested to hear about any administrative amendments to facilitate the registration of children of same-sex couples or to record name changes of transgender and non-binary persons.

50. The delegation should clarify whether the unilateral coercive measures against the State party had been in force since 2014 or 2017, as the Committee had received conflicting reports in that regard. What effect had those measures had on women? She hoped to hear more about the specialized courts on gender-based violence against women, what practical impact they had had and whether they were able to deal with cases of gender-based violence effectively and from an intersectional perspective.

51. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that his Government recognized the important work done by human rights defenders, who received explicit mention in the National Human Rights Plan. Human rights defenders were able to conduct their activities freely and with the support of the Federal Council of Government. Any acts of aggression or intimidation were duly investigated by prosecutors.

52. The unilateral coercive measures had unquestionably had a profound impact on the enjoyment of rights, including women's rights. The sanctions had begun in 2014 when the Congress of the United States of America had approved the so-called Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act. As a direct result of that Act, and of an executive order issued by the United States President in 2015, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been excluded from the international financial system and accounts belonging to the Central Bank of Venezuela had been closed. The country's foreign currency revenues, which derived largely from the export of petroleum, fell by 69 per cent, from \$42 billion in 2013 to \$13.5 billion in 2015. Economic actors, including most international pharmaceutical companies,



had abandoned the country giving rise to a drug shortage, which was having a profound effect on health, including women's health.

53. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that 75 per cent of national territory was under the jurisdiction of the specialized courts on gender-based violence against women. In areas where they were not present, their functions were exercised by the municipal criminal courts. The inclusion of intangible assets as part of joint property to be divided upon separation or divorce would require the amendment of existing laws or the enactment of new ones.

54. The Supreme Court ruling concerning same-sex households recognized the right to identity for the children of such households. Since then, the Court had issued other family-related rulings, including one in which it recognized the right of persons in de facto unions to enter into partnership agreements and the right of spouses to modify marital agreements after the marriage had taken place.

55. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the bill to regulate the financing and operation of non-governmental organizations derived from article 52 of the Constitution, which recognized the right of association. The bill was in a phase of public discussion and had not yet been approved.

56. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Ministry for the Prison Service had been created in 2011 with a view to promoting the social reintegration of former inmates. Just 8 per cent of the prison population was female, with 4,554 women currently deprived of liberty, held in 17 different prison facilities. Their situation was constantly monitored by the competent State institutions, notably the Ministry of Health. All female prisoners in the country had been vaccinated against coronavirus disease.

57. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the State was in the process of setting up "communal care cities" (*ciudades comunales de cuidado*) across the country. The new facilities would use data provided by the country's Climate Change Observatory to determine the specific climate-related risks faced by vulnerable groups, including women, residing in different parts of the country. Initial analyses had identified women from deprived urban areas and from rural, fisher and Indigenous communities as primary beneficiaries of the services offered by the cities, which would have an intersectional and intersectoral focus.

58. **Ms. Guzmán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the interactive dialogue had provided an important opportunity for her country to explain the circumstances it faced and to demonstrate the progress it had made, which might serve as an example to other nations.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*