



International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

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Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Thirty-fifth session

Summary record of the 497th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 21 September 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Corzo Sosa

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 73 of the Convention *(continued)*

Initial report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (continued) (CMW/C/BOL/3; CMW/C/BOL/Q/3; CMW/C/BOL/RQ/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Torrealba** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that, since diplomatic ties with Colombia had been re-established, work was under way to resume normal consular activities, although many consular offices had been destroyed, which had slowed progress. The Government hoped that a similar re-establishment of relations could be achieved with Brazil.
3. Freedom of association was fully guaranteed, all workers were able to join a trade union and trade unions were able to carry out their activities freely, including collective bargaining. Migrant workers and nationals were not treated differently with regard to labour rights. No person was asked about their migratory status in order to exercise their labour rights or to submit complaints regarding violation of their labour rights to a labour inspectorate. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had become a party to 54 conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 50 of which had been fully implemented, including the 8 core conventions. Although migrant domestic workers were already protected by labour laws, the development of specific legal protections for such workers was under consideration.
4. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that all workers, whether foreigners or nationals, were guaranteed access to justice and to legal services, including free legal assistance, if necessary. It was not a criminal offence for a migrant worker to have irregular immigration status, and migrant workers were therefore only imprisoned if they had committed an offence against the public order. The Foreign Nationals and Migration Act established the requirements for the entry, prolonged stay and exit of foreign nationals and provided for deportation and expulsion procedures. Expulsion procedures were the responsibility of the Ministry of People's Power for Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace. The courts would only order the expulsion of a migrant as an accessory penalty if the person concerned had committed a serious criminal offence.
5. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Constitution permitted Venezuelan citizens to hold more than one citizenship. Venezuelans abroad were able to vote, in line with the law and regulations on elections, at the country's consular and diplomatic offices. The standard guarantees of the electoral system were applicable to votes cast abroad.
6. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the contribution of women migrant workers to the country's sustainable development was appreciated. The Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality, the National Institute for Women and the Women's Development Bank were among the main bodies that supported women, including migrant women, who had received financing from the Women's Development Bank for small enterprises. Migrant women who were heads of households received State support for their families. The National Institute for Women had helped migrant women with children under 12 years old to access legal assistance and support in the event that they experienced violence. A special justice system with its own specialist judges had been established to address cases of violence against women, including migrant women, who enjoyed equal access to justice with regard to gender-based violence. Victims of gender-based violence received comprehensive support.
7. A national consultation had revealed concerns about a potential rise in trafficking in persons as a result of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on the country, and an awareness-raising campaign had therefore been launched on the risks and dangers of exploitation and trafficking. The impact of the unilateral coercive measures could also be seen in the number of women, including single mothers, who had emigrated. Those women

often faced discrimination in their destination countries. Women represented the majority of Venezuelans who had returned to the country. Although a memorandum of understanding had been signed between the Ministry of People's Power for Women and Gender Equality and the Brazilian Secretariat of Policies for Women in an effort to support orderly movement across the border, it was not being fully implemented by the Brazilian authorities. A similar situation existed with Colombia. The Venezuelan authorities hoped to work with the Colombian authorities to improve protections for women migrants.

8. The legislature had put in place a strong legal framework for the protection and empowerment of women, including migrants. Recent legislative reforms included amendments to the Women's Right to a Life Free of Violence Act and the Racial Discrimination Act.

9. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Public Prosecution Service did not conduct investigations solely on the basis of irregular entry into the country. Its investigations focused on organized criminal groups whose members had entered the country for criminal purposes. With regard to the child shot by the Trinidad and Tobago coastguard, on 9 February 2022 the Public Prosecution Service had filed charges against those allegedly responsible for the crime of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons under the Organized Crime and the Financing of Terrorism Act. The incident was being investigated by a prosecutor who specialized in the area of child victims.

10. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that, when a Venezuelan citizen died abroad, consular offices provided support to the deceased's family and used their network to help repatriate the body. The Identification, Migration and Foreign Nationals Service of the Ministry of People's Power for Internal Affairs, Justice and Peace handled the identification of the deceased, and experts were deployed if needed.

11. Since its launch in 2018, the Return to the Homeland (*Vuelta a la Patria*) Plan had resulted in the return of approximately 29,000 citizens in situations of vulnerability. Returnees received support to enable them to reintegrate into Venezuelan society, including social benefits and access to housing. The logistics and costs of repatriation were borne by the Government. Despite efforts by some countries to hinder those repatriation efforts, the policy was considered a success, since it afforded citizens a dignified way of returning to their homeland and reuniting with their families.

12. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the work of the National Migration Commission focused on upholding the human rights of and assisting migrants, including migrant workers. The Commission was responsible for reviewing the law on migration and had carried out multidisciplinary discussions on how to adapt the country's legislative framework to the current reality.

13. Administrative omissions under the Foreign Nationals and Migration Act could not be treated as criminal offences, and the expulsion of foreign nationals was therefore an administrative procedure. A foreign national who had committed an offence under the Criminal Code was entitled to the usual judicial safeguards and to consular assistance. Once a foreign national had served the sentence handed down by the court for a criminal offence, an administrative expulsion process would be launched. Expulsion was an exceptional procedure and was only applied to foreign nationals who had committed a serious crime or whose country of origin had requested their extradition.

14. The Government was determined to continue taking vigorous action against the crime of trafficking. More than 250 awareness-raising activities had been carried out in recent years. In addition, criminal investigation agencies had introduced programmes in each of the country's states to raise awareness of trafficking among investigators and to assist them in combating organized criminal groups. Multidisciplinary teams provided trafficking victims with long-term medical, psychological and legal support. Priority had been given in the National Plan against Trafficking in Persons 2021–2025 to the development of all necessary anti-trafficking legal instruments. The Committee's support in drafting the bills would be appreciated.

15. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that a large number of complaints had been received from family members concerning acts of aggression,

stigmatization and xenophobia against Venezuelans abroad, including a complaint concerning two adolescents who had been murdered in Colombia. The National Assembly had established a commission composed of 18 Assembly members, including from the opposition. A 385-page report produced by the commission assessed the causes of forced migration of Venezuelan migrant workers, including the devastating impact of the unilateral coercive measures and the encouragement of migration by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of which were led by Venezuelan opposition leaders. According to the report, more than 80 per cent of the murders of Venezuelan migrant workers had occurred in Colombia. The report would be submitted to the National Assembly and, if approved, would be submitted to the Public Prosecution Service so that investigations could be conducted where necessary. It was noteworthy that the Minister of the Interior of Colombia had stated that his country should apologize for the suffering caused to Venezuelan migrant workers under the previous Administration in that country.

16. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that a National Human Rights Plan had been adopted in 2016, following countrywide consultations involving some 260,000 participants, including migrant workers. The Plan provided for programmatic actions to strengthen respect for the rights of migrant workers and their families and to improve the administrative services and expand the geographic coverage of the Identification, Migration and Foreign Nationals Service. It also provided for strategic action to raise awareness of relevant international instruments, including the Convention. State institutions had organized more than 1,290 training courses on human rights for civil servants. Human rights training schools included the National School of the Judiciary, the National School of Prosecutors, the National School of the Public Defence Services and the National Human Rights School of the Ombudsman's Office.

17. The Ombudsman's Office enjoyed organizational, financial and administrative independence. It took into account the standards applicable to national human rights institutions under the Paris Principles, and its wide-ranging mandate included action to ensure compliance with international treaties. The Ombudsman was elected by the National Assembly through a procedure that guaranteed the involvement of citizens. The Office submitted an annual report on the human rights situation. The Office was taking the necessary measures to enable it to regain A status from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

18. Venezuela supported the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. However, it was essential to avoid double standards and politicization in the implementation of its 23 objectives. Representatives of Venezuela had attended the regional review of the Compact organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the International Organization for Migration in April 2021. Venezuela had recognized the competence of a large number of treaty bodies to consider individual communications and it was currently considering the possibility of recognizing the Committee's competence in that regard under article 77 of the Convention.

19. The Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Act, promulgated in 2001, had established the National Commission on Refugees, which had four offices in different parts of the country and received technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A total of 9,328 requests for recognition of refugee status had been approved. All refugees were granted provisional identity documents in order to ensure that their rights were respected while the administrative procedures were being completed.

20. **The Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations Office at Geneva** said that his country was willing to implement all the rules of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) residence agreement. During its membership of MERCOSUR, Venezuela had incorporated 92.67 per cent of the MERCOSUR norms into its domestic legislation by 2012. Migrants in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were protected by many instruments, including the MERCOSUR rules and regulations. Unfortunately, however, other States that had signed the MERCOSUR agreement on travel documents had ignored its norms and standards and were unwilling to admit migrants from Venezuela. The Venezuelan authorities had recently reported on a study that was being undertaken with a view to returning to the Andean Community, which would enable the country also to return to MERCOSUR as an associated State.

21. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that public policies known as “social missions” had been implemented since 2003 with a view to eliminating poverty and improving health, housing, education literacy, support for families, social protection, public safety, food security, and eco-socialism. Following the imposition of the unilateral coercive measures, President Maduro had launched the Love in Action (*Amor en Acción*) Plan in 2019 to assist vulnerable communities that had suffered from the economic sanctions.

22. The Guaicaipuro Mission for indigenous peoples had also been launched in 2003. A total of 82 events had been held in 2022 under the Love in Action Plan to provide comprehensive support to indigenous communities along the country’s borders. In addition, 174 mission bases had been established in indigenous communities to provide, inter alia, medical and educational support, and 121 units had provided food support for more than 25,000 persons. The entire population, including indigenous communities, had been vaccinated against coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Steps were being taken to ensure that all indigenous children were enrolled in school and to provide appropriate housing for indigenous communities.

23. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that comprehensive human rights and social protection was guaranteed for all children and adolescents, including both documented and undocumented migrants. Their families benefited from cash transfers under the Homes for the Nation (*Hogares de la Patria*) mission. The authorities guaranteed them access to food in coordination with producers and distributors throughout the country. They received high-quality educational services, textbooks and school supplies, and school meals free of charge and without discrimination. Health care and vaccinations were provided for all children and adolescents, including migrants. Subsidies were provided for water, electricity, fuel, transportation, fixed and mobile telephone networks and Internet access. Migrant children participated in recreational, cultural, sports and musical programmes for young people throughout the country.

24. The Autonomous Institute and National Council for Children’s and Adolescents’ Rights had implemented two important programmes for adolescent migrant workers, a life skills and vocational training programme and a motivational and support programme that helped them to cope with emotional, psychological and legal problems stemming from the migratory process. A hotline received complaints from migrants and provided them with psychological and legal support. Unaccompanied migrant children had access, free of charge, to special protection programmes, including at centres for neurodevelopment and centres for learning and motor skills. Family guidance centres helped to address substance abuse. The educational authorities were developing a programme, in cooperation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), to facilitate the incorporation of migrant children into the education system. The best interests of migrant children and adolescents was a primary consideration in all cases.

25. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**, noting that the country shared extensive land borders with Colombia, Brazil and Guyana, said that no migrants had been detained or expelled at the borders before or after the COVID-19 pandemic. Venezuelan citizens who had returned during the pandemic had received medical and social support. There were some border areas in which Venezuelan citizens and citizens of neighbouring countries resided on one side of the border and worked or studied on the other side. They were allowed to cross the border freely.

26. **Mr. García Sáenz** (Country Rapporteur), welcoming the bill on combating trafficking in persons, said that he would appreciate more information on the National Council on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, he would be grateful for any statistical data that the State party could provide on persons who had returned to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela under the Return to the Homeland Plan and started work, with their children having returned to education. Statistical data on the number of Venezuelans residing abroad who had voted in presidential elections would be useful, as would information on any support measures in place to help them to vote.

27. **The Chair** (Country Rapporteur) said that it would be useful to have clarification of whether Venezuelans could update their information on the electoral register from abroad

and were therefore able to register and vote from the country where they were resident. He also wished to know more about any mechanisms to enable Venezuelans to be involved in investigating the deaths of their relatives who died abroad without their being required to travel to the country in question; in particular, he wondered what support measures were in place to ensure that such individuals had access to justice and to the truth.

28. Noting that the Committee had recently had a very fruitful exchange with the legislature of Chile on the drafting of that country's migration legislation, he said that the Committee would be pleased also to contribute, if requested, to the legislative process in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in particular with regard to the proposed reform of the Foreign Nationals and Migration Act and the drafting of the bill on combating trafficking in persons. Similarly, the Committee was willing to help the State party with the issue of Venezuelan children abroad who had lost contact with their families; however, it would be important for the authorities to redouble efforts to locate the children's families and to prevent the migration of other unaccompanied minors.

29. He would appreciate further information on how the Convention was applied by the courts and other institutions in the State party. He would also welcome clarification of the status of international instruments ratified by the State party when their provisions were deemed less favourable than or when they contradicted the Constitution. In addition, he wondered whether the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela intended to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

30. It would be useful to have further detail on the practice of placing persons awaiting deportation under humanitarian guard (*resguardo humanitario*), which the delegation had indicated was an administrative procedure. The Committee's concern was that persons awaiting deportation were reportedly being placed under humanitarian guard for up to three days, although, since paragraph 98 of the State party's report (CMW/C/BOL/3) stated that the country had no detention centres for migrants, it was unclear where such persons were housed and whether they enjoyed freedom of movement. Lastly, an update on the National Plan against Trafficking in Persons 2020–2023 would be useful, as the report indicated that it was being updated. Since just three months of 2022 remained, the period covered by the Plan had nearly elapsed, but it appeared that it had not yet been implemented.

31. **Mr. Soualem** said that he wished to know whether the rights established in the Convention had ever been invoked in court proceedings, either by migrants or by their legal counsel. In addition, he would welcome information on how the State party's report had been drawn up and on which stakeholders had been involved in its drafting.

32. **Mr. Taghi-Zada** said that he understood the difficulty of producing accurate estimates of the number of Venezuelans living abroad. However, the State party must know how many persons living abroad had voted in elections; he would like to know those statistics.

33. **Mr. Oumaria** said that he wondered whether the Ombudsman's Office had been granted A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and what role it played in protecting migrant workers' rights. Furthermore, he would like to know whether the Ombudsman had raised issues pertaining to violations of such rights before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

34. **Mr. Charef** said that he would welcome information on research on migration issues by the country's research institutes. Details of the role played by civil society in the field of migration would be useful, in particular information on how the Government involved associations of Venezuelan workers abroad in its national policies and strategies.

35. **Ms. Diallo** said that she wished to know whether the Government produced statistical data on migratory flows, including the number of Venezuelans who had emigrated, and whether it had up-to-date disaggregated data on the number of persons who had returned to the country, either under the Return to the Homeland Plan or by their own means, including potentially irregular means. If such data existed, she wondered whether the statistics were made available to the general public and to civil society. She too would like to know whether civil society had been involved in drafting the report and, if so, what view the Government

took of that involvement and of civil society's wider contributions to matters pertaining to the protection of migrant workers.

36. **Mr. Ceriani Cernadas** said that it would be interesting to learn whether, in order to facilitate Venezuelans' residency applications in foreign countries, there was any mechanism for exempting them from paying the fees charged for the processing of documents in consular offices. He also wished to know whether reports of persons with irregular migration status being placed in preventive administrative detention at the headquarters of the Identification, Migration and Foreign Nationals Service while they awaited deportation were accurate; if so, he would like to hear details of the conditions in which such persons were held, whether they had access to free legal aid and whether such detention measures were subject to judicial review. Furthermore, he would appreciate statistical data on any such persons and on any who had already been deported.

37. **Mr. Babacar** said that he would like to know whether the national human rights institution had the power to take legal action and to become a party to a court case on a migrant's behalf. In addition, he wondered whether the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela intended to ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

The meeting was suspended at 11.55 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

38. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the electoral register, which was continuously updated, currently included 21,283,590 voters, 21,052,882 of whom were Venezuelan nationals, including Venezuelans abroad who were registered with the country's consular offices and diplomatic missions. The remaining 230,708 were resident foreigners who were entitled to vote in the country's elections. He wished to reiterate that decisions by some foreign Governments had led some of his country's consular offices and diplomatic missions to close, effectively preventing Venezuelans in those countries from voting. Once diplomatic relations with those countries had been normalized, his Government would be able to guarantee the voting rights of Venezuelans resident there, as it had previously done for many years.

39. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that, as part of the follow-up to the Return to the Homeland Plan, 73 per cent of returnees had been incorporated into one of the country's social missions, through which they received food, housing and education. Pregnant women were given support through the Humanized Childbirth Plan, while women with children of breastfeeding age received an allowance. Returning migrants who had previously worked in the health-care and education sectors were able to take up their old posts with no penalty for having emigrated.

40. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the Venezuelan State had an inter-institutional unit for migration-related matters, which dealt with the protection of migrant children and adolescents. The unit comprised representatives of the Autonomous Institute and National Council for Children's and Adolescents' Rights, the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Prosecution Service, the National Association of Protection Advisers and the Directorate for Identification, Immigration and Foreign Nationals, among other relevant bodies. Guidelines for protecting and communicating with children during migration procedures had been drafted in cooperation with UNICEF.

41. As part of the family reunification process, socioeconomic evaluations of families receiving unaccompanied child returnees were carried out. State-run institutions provided comprehensive care and support for children who could not be reunited with their families. Over 200 children had been repatriated from 21 countries to date. The Family Welfare Institute of Colombia, under that country's former President, had unilaterally severed relations with the Autonomous Institute and Venezuelan National Council for Children's and Adolescents' Rights. As a result, the Venezuelan authorities had received no information regarding the 1,200 Venezuelan children reportedly in Colombia.

42. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the current National Plan against Trafficking in Persons had been in effect since June 2021; it covered the period 2021–2025. The National Council on Trafficking in Persons had been created as part of the Plan. The Council was a high-level body chaired by the President of the Republic.

It met once every three months to analyse matters related to trafficking and decide on concrete actions to be taken.

43. Migrant workers subject to administrative proceedings had complete freedom of movement. They were afforded procedural safeguards, including the right to access lawyers and interpreters free of charge, at all times. In certain cases, migrants were required to pay bail and, if they failed to appear when summonsed or to meet their bail conditions, they could be placed under humanitarian guard for short periods not exceeding 15 days. The duration of the administrative proceedings varied, depending on the individual case. No migrants were currently being held under humanitarian guard.

44. **Mr. Torrealba** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that no one was ever subject to administrative or judicial proceedings in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela simply as a consequence of being a migrant worker.

45. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the provisions of the current Constitution, which had been adopted in 1999, exceeded the minimum standards established by the human rights treaties in force. The Constitution allowed the direct application of international conventions and treaties within the justice system where they were more favourable than the Constitution's own provisions. In the event that the provisions of the Constitution or domestic legislation were more favourable, those provisions were applied. International instruments were analysed before ratification to identify any potential conflicts with the Constitution and, in the event of any conflict, the instrument would either not be ratified or a reservation would be entered. Given the extensive range of human rights enshrined in the country's Constitution and laws, the Convention was rarely invoked in the judicial system. Regarding the criminal investigation of matters that had been brought to the attention of the National Assembly commission, the Public Prosecution Service was unable to investigate offences that had occurred outside of the national territory, since it lacked jurisdiction; any such offences must be investigated by the authorities of the country concerned.

46. His country's initial report had been drafted through a consultative process that had involved all branches of government. Civil society organizations had also been consulted and their concerns had been included in the report where appropriate. Venezuela was a participatory democracy in which all people had the right to take part in the management of public affairs, within the limits established by law. Under that model, more than 800 trade unions and more than 1,000 social movements had been registered between 2012 and 2021. Furthermore, there were almost 50,000 councils around the country that allowed people to participate in the development of public policy within their local communities. The Government recognized and supported the work carried out by NGOs and human rights defenders in the promotion and protection of human rights.

47. The Ombudsman's Office was mandated by the Constitution to oversee the implementation of international human rights treaties, including the Convention. It had sub-offices throughout the country and, in 2020, a specialized sub-office had been created to protect the rights of migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking. The Office received and followed up on complaints of human rights violations and protected and defended, through diplomatic or international legal channels, the rights of Venezuelans residing or in transit abroad. Family members of persons who had died abroad could contact the Office, which would then liaise with the national human rights institution of the country concerned to conduct any investigations required. Furthermore, the Ombudsman's Office was authorized to inspect, without prior notice, any State institution, place of deprivation of liberty or private entity that provided public services. Migrants who had been detained for having committed an offence in Venezuelan territory could be interviewed by staff from the Ombudsman's Office during prison visits. The Office was currently working, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to regain its category A status.

48. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that fees for consular services were regulated by law. There were exemptions for procedures that concerned children and adolescents; birth, marriage and death registration; and social security documents. Venezuelan citizens in situations of extreme vulnerability who wished

to return to their home country were provided with travel documents free of charge. Assistance was provided by Venezuelan consulates to the family members of deceased Venezuelan nationals, including apostilles for documents required in the State where the person had died. Support, including evidence for criminal investigations and proceedings, could be provided to foreign authorities through mechanisms for mutual assistance in criminal matters. In countries where consular offices had been closed, the Public Prosecution Service was able to liaise directly with its counterpart in the State concerned in order to facilitate investigations.

49. **The Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations Office at Geneva** said that one of the central goals of the Return to the Homeland Plan was to rescue Venezuelans in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability who had been tricked into leaving the country and wished to return. The Government had mobilized funding and aircraft to repatriate as many of its citizens as possible. The Plan had no international support, despite the Government's repeated requests for assistance from international migration agencies. He believed that the Committee should support the request for assistance and promote United Nations recognition of the Plan as a best practice.

50. The country's leading universities – one public and one private – were undertaking research into immigration issues and had released several publications. The National Observatory on Unilateral Coercive Measures had been established with financing from the Ministry of People's Power for University Education, Science and Technology to determine the overall effects of such measures. Over the previous five years, work had been carried out in close collaboration with the Latin American Social Sciences Council, which had recently published a paper on South-South migration. The Venezuelan Government was currently the subject of a fierce media attack, and it went to great lengths to counter disinformation, especially with regard to the number of Venezuelan migrants abroad.

51. **A representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the National Institute of Statistics gathered information from various sources. Administrative records provided figures on migration flows and the number of returnees under initiatives such as the Return to the Homeland Plan. Surveys were frequently conducted to gather up-to-date information. The Government was in the process of conducting its fifteenth national housing and population census, which would supply data on migration flows. Specific questions would be asked about migratory processes, such as the origin and destination of migrants. The previous census had been carried out in 2011 and the results had been made available on the website of the National Institute of Statistics.

52. A network of more than 1,000 data collection nodes had been established around the country to collect data at the local level. Civil society organizations played an active role in processing data to inform public policy. Mechanisms were in place within the national public planning system for the participation of such organizations in formulating policies for specific sectors of society.

53. **Mr. Torrealba** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Labour and Workers Act established a series of protection and safeguard measures that went beyond the minimum requirements of ILO conventions. Workers' rights were also enshrined in the Constitution. Nevertheless, the Government was reviewing the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and, with the support of ILO, a forum for social dialogue involving workers, employers and the Government had been set up to consider ratifying that Convention.

54. **Mr. García Sáenz** said that the Committee looked forward to continuing to work with the State party to address the various issues raised during the dialogue with a view to strengthening protections for the rights of migrant workers.

55. **Mr. Torrealba** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that he wished to underscore his country's determination to continue working with the Committee to improve mechanisms to safeguard the rights of migrant workers and their families. It was unfair for nations such as the United States of America and Brazil to deny Venezuelan nationals their right to vote or obtain identity documents by closing consular offices. He called for support in protecting the rights of migrant workers who had been forced to leave the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela owing to the unilateral coercive measures adopted by other countries and urged the Committee to take into consideration the harm that those unfair and illegal measures had

caused and the Government's efforts to facilitate the voluntary return of Venezuelan migrants.

56. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation for its constructive participation in the dialogue, said that the Committee would offer its full support to the Venezuelan Government in its efforts to protect the rights of migrant workers.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.