Committee on the Rights of the Child
Eighty-third session

Summary record of the 2434th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 21 January 2020, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Pedernera Reyna

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 pm.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Costa Rica (CRC/C/CRI/5-6 CRC/C/CRI/Q/5-6 and CRC/C/CRI/RQ/5-6)

1. At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Costa Rica took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. Duncan Villalobo (Costa Rica), introducing her country’s combined fifth and sixth periodic reports (CRC/C/CRI/5-6), said that Costa Rica had recently commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention and reiterated its commitment to combating the causes of discrimination against children. The body responsible for ensuring that public policy was compatible with respect for children’s rights was the National Council on Children and Adolescents, a platform for coordination between the executive branch, decentralized government agencies and relevant community organizations. The Council was also the body responsible for coordinating implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols. The National Child Welfare Agency was the lead agency for child and adolescent affairs and took action on education and prevention of violations of children’s rights.

3. Children accounted for almost 30 per cent of the total population of Costa Rica. Approximately 10,500 were looked after within the child protection system, 82 per cent in a family setting and 18 per cent in residential facilities. In 2019, the regulations on the placement of children had been updated in accordance with the Committee’s recommendations, and the Government was working with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) towards deinstitutionalization.

4. In line with the Committee’s recommendations, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy had issued a guide to drafting public policy, which underlined the need for a human rights-based approach and incorporation of the Convention principles of participation, survival and development, the best interests of the child and non-discrimination. The National Development and Public Investment Plan included 11 of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators concerning the situation of children.

5. Costa Rica had a broad legal framework in the area of child protection – in the past 12 years, laws had been adopted to prevent corporal punishment, to ensure the best interests of seriously ill children, to prevent bullying in schools and to improve nutrition in school canteens. Act No. 9406 had been adopted to strengthen the legal protection of girls subjected to gender-based violence in abusive relationships, which provided for the criminal offence of sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 15 and an increase in the age of consent from 13 to 15 when the age difference between the two partners was more than five years. That law also prohibited the registration of child marriages and marriages between members of the same adoptive family. In May 2019, the statute of limitations had been extended from 10 to 25 years for sexual offences against minors.

6. A number of protocols had been adopted to complement the legal framework and improve child protection mechanisms. They included an institutional protocol for the support of child victims of trafficking in persons, a protocol to be applied in educational establishments when signs of violence were detected, and practical recommendations on how to handle the bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex students in schools.

7. Although the pretrial detention of minors was permitted for up to nine months, non-custodial measures were applied in most cases. Minors accounted for only 2.1 per cent of persons within the prison system.

8. A decree had been issued in 2017 to specify that discrimination with respect to enjoyment of the constitutional right to free education was prohibited, including based on socioeconomic or migration status, nationality or disability. Preschool education had been made compulsory and the age of entry lowered to 4 years. A further decree had been issued on inclusive and accessible education for children with disabilities.

9. The National Child Welfare Agency had launched a number of projects to ensure freedom of expression and opinion for children, targeting indigenous persons and persons of
African descent. Education policy had been updated in 2015 to prioritize the formation of creative and critical citizens who respected cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual and religious diversity.

10. Implementation of the road map for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, which concerned the protection of children from violence, forced labour and sexual exploitation, was due to be completed in 2020.

11. As a result of the Salud Mesoamérica project and institutional efforts throughout the country, the number of teenage pregnancies had fallen by more than 8 percentage points between 2013 and 2018. Efforts had been reinforced by the introduction in 2015 of a new standard on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care for adolescents, which stipulated that health-care facilities should offer a variety of modern contraceptive methods that were safe to use for adolescents. To that end, the Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund had made the contraceptive implant available at national level and had updated the guidelines for the prescription of contraception to adolescents to raise awareness among health-care personnel and remove access barriers to sexual and reproductive health services. In 2019, the Ministry of Health had approved the non-prescription sale of emergency contraceptive pills. The vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV) had been incorporated in the national vaccination programme and the first dose given to 98 per cent of all 10-year-old girls. In 2019, the President had approved a technical standard for legal abortions.

12. The Government recognized that it faced major challenges in the field of children’s rights, including the need to strengthen inter-institutional coordination and to promote a shift in attitudes to sexual and reproductive rights, corporal punishment and inappropriate relationships, areas in which the adoption of laws and procedures had proved insufficient. It would endeavour to make the changes through education, preventive programmes and policies aimed at cultural change within institutions and among the general public.

13. Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi (Country Rapporteur) said that she would like to know what measures had been taken or envisaged to rectify the situation whereby the impressive legal framework did not translate to effective action to combat violence, including femicide, corporal punishment and discrimination. She wished to understand the reasons for the lack of social acceptance of the rights set out in the Convention. She wished to know what measures were planned or in place to ensure the Convention and its Optional Protocols were widely disseminated among all stakeholders.

14. While major investments had been made in social services, it seemed that a lack of inter-agency coordination had led to duplication of efforts. She wondered what measures had been taken to strengthen the coordination mechanism, ensure systematic follow-up on the implementation of laws, policies and programmes and adopt results-based management and child-responsive budgeting. She wished to know what steps were being taken towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and how investment in children’s rights could be maintained in the face of budgetary constraints.

15. She would welcome information on what was being done to address the problems encountered with risk reduction strategies for climate change-related disasters and to ensure preparedness for emergency response, including among children.

16. She would like to know why the Ombudsman’s Office was not more active in promoting and adopting policies to support children’s rights and whether its role was restricted to the handling of complaints. She wondered whether the Office operated an accessible child-sensitive complaints mechanism that guaranteed the confidentiality necessary to prevent reprisals.

17. She would be interested to hear whether the Government had analysed the reasons for the failure of its efforts to combat discrimination on the grounds of migration status, disability and sexual orientation. She would appreciate information on the extent to which the best interests of the child were taken into account.

18. She wished to note that, although Costa Rica had the lowest rate of child mortality in Central America, the headline figure concealed disparities between urban and rural areas and higher rates among indigenous persons and persons of African descent. She would appreciate an explanation of the causes of the upsurge in homicides and gang violence, the
ineffectiveness of the State’s response to the phenomenon and the measures taken to address it.

19. She would like to know what measures had been taken to ensure the full participation of all children, including migrant children, children with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and children living in rural areas, in the various forums where they could express their views.

20. She wished to know what had been done to combat violence against children within the family, including sexual violence, and to guarantee safe schools free from violence and bullying. She would like to hear about any measures taken or envisaged to combat domestic violence. Lastly, it would be useful to have information on steps taken towards the deinstitutionalization of children and to ensure monitoring of existing facilities.

21. The Chair (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee, while welcoming the 94 per cent birth registration rate, was concerned about the issue of non-registration among migrants and indigenous persons. He wished to know whether the Government had identified the cause of the problem, assessed its policies and taken the appropriate steps to improve the situation.

22. He would like to know what measures were being taken to ensure that children had access to the digital environment and to age-appropriate information, as well as protection from harmful online information. He wondered what was being done to expand access to digital technologies in education and in remote and rural areas.

23. He would be interested to learn about measures taken to ensure that children’s exercise of their freedom of expression was not a mere formality and that their opinions were respected by government agencies, including the police, health services, local authorities and the justice system. He would appreciate information on any measures taken to promote greater involvement of students in education governance and the content of the curriculum. He wondered what steps would be taken in light of the Constitutional Court ruling on the political rights of minors. It would be helpful to have information about the student government programme, the Institute of Training and Research in Democracy of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the relationship between them. He would like to know what was being done to address the stereotyped portrayal in the media of children, especially poorer children and those of African descent, and to educate journalists on children’s rights.

24. He wished to hear the delegation’s views on why Costa Rican children had expressed pessimism to the Committee about the work of the Child and Adolescent Participatory Councils. He would also like to know whether children of African descent, indigenous children and children with disabilities participated in the Councils, whether information about the Councils was accessible to them, and what budget was allocated to the Councils.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.00 p.m.

25. Ms. Hernández Sánchez (Costa Rica) said that the 2020 budget of the National Child Welfare Agency had been reduced by 20 per cent under Legislative Decree No. 9365, on measures to strengthen the public finances. Since 2016, the Agency had been expanding its educational and preventive programmes by means of mobile units, which travelled to remote, hard-to-reach areas to promote the rights of minors and give community members an opportunity to ask questions or report violations, and early intervention centres, which offered a safe place for children in challenging, urban environments outside school hours and provided them with a range of support. With the budget cuts, those programmes would be maintained but likely not expanded. The head of the Agency, who was also Minister for Children and Adolescents, had requested before the Council of Government that surplus funds remaining from 2019 be allocated to the aforementioned programmes.

26. In 2019, the National Council on Children and Adolescents had created two units to monitor compliance with international obligations and internal Council recommendations. The National Child Welfare Agency was also conducting technical oversight in order to ensure the effective implementation of the many laws in place. The National Council on Children and Adolescents also served as a mechanism for developing joint projects with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on priority issues.
Ms. Lobo Ugalde (Costa Rica) said that international organizations and civil society provided significant support to the State party in disseminating information about the Convention and the Optional Protocols. From 2016 to 2019, the National Child Welfare Agency had carried out 52 promotional, preventive and educational campaigns to raise awareness of the rights of children under the Convention and the Children and Adolescents Code. Around US$ 5 million had thus far been invested in such activities. In order to disseminate information about those rights more broadly, there needed to be better coordination among government institutions and greater involvement by entities such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Arce Meneses (Costa Rica) said that violence against children was a source of ongoing concern and was both a structural and a cultural problem. For example, although a law against the corporal punishment and degrading treatment of minors had been in place since 2008, 45 per cent of the respondents in one study had expressed the view that corporal punishment was an accepted, everyday practice. In surveys conducted among children, approximately 40 per cent of respondents said that they had experienced corporal punishment.

Efforts undertaken by the State party to address the issue had focused primarily on prevention and providing care to victims of various types of violence against children. Examples of those efforts included the mobile units and early intervention centres run by the National Child Welfare Agency, which helped minors develop the life skills to be able to live in harmony with others and resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner. The mobile units also worked with parents, government officials, community members and other adults responsible for minors. Although the impact of the programmes had not yet been assessed, children and adolescents receiving the services had expressed their satisfaction.

Local offices of the National Child Welfare Agency ran parenting academies that aimed to give parents and guardians the tools to be able to raise their children in a respectful manner, without physical punishment or degrading treatment. Local Child and Adolescent Protection Boards carried out projects at the community and cantonal levels aimed at preventing violence, including the “Responsibility with Love” project for adults. In addition, the civic centres for peace under the Ministry of Justice, together with the Agency and the Ministry of Culture, provided artistic services, psychological care and pedagogical support. There were seven centres in total, one in each province.

Unfortunately, those efforts to create a culture of peace respectful of children’s rights had not yet resulted in a decrease in violence against that group. There would be a continued focus on raising public awareness of positive forms of discipline and conflict resolution. Again, coordination needed to be improved among the agencies working on the issue.

NGOs were making an important contribution in that area. For example, in a canton in the province of Limón that was home to a large indigenous population, persons of African descent and migrants, four “listening cottages” had been set up where children and adolescents could receive psychological, pedagogical and artistic support and take part in workshops that explored the cultural traditions of each group of children and that were taught in the language of that group.

Mr. Burgos Mata (Costa Rica) said that the principle of the best interests of the child was enshrined in article 7 of the Juvenile Criminal Justice Act and in the Juvenile Criminal Penalties Act, and efforts were made to ensure it was effectively applied in practice.

Since 1996, there had been an effort to move away from an adult-centred approach to juvenile criminal justice. That could be seen not only in the specialized courts of the justice system, but also in laws, jurisprudence and doctrine. There were now defence lawyers, prosecutors and judges who were specialized in juvenile criminal justice and sentence enforcement.

The Juvenile Criminal Affairs Commission brought together all stakeholders in the administration of juvenile criminal justice and had been created by the judiciary as a way to guard against the adoption of an adult-centred approach. The Commission planned to work with civil society and organs of the executive branch with the aim of centralizing efforts and ensuring that the best interests of the child prevailed.
36. A training programme for journalists on the rights to privacy and confidentiality, particularly in the context of juvenile criminal justice, was being developed. There had been convictions in criminal cases relating to the publication in newspapers of images of children facing criminal charges. In addition to the specific rights they enjoyed as minors, children between the ages of 12 and 18 years who were involved in criminal proceedings under the Juvenile Criminal Justice Act had the same rights as adults.

37. **Ms. Hernández Chaves** (Costa Rica) said that, although the infant mortality rate in Costa Rica was fairly low, a large percentage of deaths occurred during the neonatal period, often as a result of preterm birth or congenital anomalies. Almost all women gave birth in a public (94 per cent) or private (4 per cent) hospital. Steps taken throughout the country to reduce infant mortality included the implementation of neonatal screening programmes, the use of surfactant therapy for preterm babies and the granting of “child-friendly” certification to hospitals that promoted breastfeeding.

38. In 2016, public health facilities had begun to use pulse oximetry to diagnose congenital heart defects and ensure timely surgery when indicated. In 2017, a model of care for pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period had been developed. Thanks to the introduction of the model, which took into account the diverse cultural backgrounds of women in Costa Rica, including members of the Ngäbe indigenous people, positive results had been achieved in two health facilities in particular: the Monseñor Sanabria hospital in Puntarenas and the San Vito hospital, which was located in an area with a significant indigenous population. The world view of indigenous women was respected through the wearing of culturally appropriate clothing by hospital staff and the serving of traditional indigenous food.

39. Special units had been established to provide care to newborns, and measures were being taken to strengthen the health-care networks in the northern, southern and eastern parts of the country and to expedite the referral of newborns in need of specialized care to a facility in San José. Moreover, inter-institutional and intersectoral work was being carried out to address issues such as poverty and migration with the aim of improving conditions for vulnerable populations and thereby reducing infant mortality.

40. **Ms. Hernández Sánchez** (Costa Rica) said that, of the 10,510 minors in respect of whom special protection procedures had been taken by the National Child Welfare Agency, only 0.7 per cent had been identified as having specialized care needs. The children in question were kept apart from their families only for the time strictly necessary. A new model of care had been established to guarantee that children who had been abandoned or for whom a return to their biological family was impossible could benefit from an expedited adoption procedure, and a bill was being prepared to accelerate adoption decisions by allowing them to be made by an administrative body and subsequently communicated to a judge for approval.

41. Since the promulgation of a law designed to prevent sham marriages arranged for the purpose of obtaining residency in Costa Rica, foreign nationals had turned to adoption as a means of achieving the same end. In response, and to put a stop to irregular adoptions in general, a system had been introduced to alert the National Child Welfare Agency to any anomalies encountered during civil registration processes.

42. The birth registration rate in Costa Rica stood at 94 per cent. Given that many of the remaining 6 per cent of individuals belonged to indigenous cross-border populations, in 2014, the Government, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, had launched the “Chiriquitos” programme, which was designed to facilitate the formalities necessary for late birth registration in indigenous communities and, subsequently, for the issuance of documentation. It was hoped that the programme, which had proved successful in areas near the border with Panama, could be replicated in the north of the country.

43. **Ms. Arce Meneses** (Costa Rica) said that, six months previously, the National Child Welfare Agency had created a local management unit to strengthen and support the Child and Adolescent Participatory Councils. Each of the 83 Councils, which brought together some 4,000 minors across the country, had been allocated a budget of US$ 5,300 for 2020. The functions and powers of the Councils were regulated by an agreement concluded in 2014.
A project entitled “Ésta es mi voz” (This is my voice) had recently been developed to boost the capacities and political participation of Council members through leadership and citizenship training. The project was scheduled for implementation in 2020.

44. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that he would be interested to hear what steps the State party was taking to ensure that any austerity measures imposed were temporary and did not adversely affect vulnerable groups. He also wished to know which authority was tasked with spearheading the implementation of child welfare policies and how that implementation was coordinated.

45. He would like the delegation to respond to reports that budget cuts had led to a reduction in the number of mobile units for the promotion of children’s rights, and indicate what issues the units dealt with and whether it was the Ministry of Education that was responsible for efforts to combat bullying. An example of those efforts would be appreciated.

46. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know what had been done to raise awareness of domestic legislation prohibiting corporal punishment, whether that legislation was applied, and, if so, how many people had been prosecuted. The delegation might indicate whether there had been any known cases of incest in the State party, and, if so, describe how the cases had been handled and what had happened to the perpetrators.

47. She would be grateful for details of measures taken to eliminate harmful traditional practices, including child marriage and female genital mutilation, and to prevent, recognize and repair obstetric fistulae.

48. Regarding the rehabilitation of child rape victims, she would be interested to hear whether counselling centres provided medical and psychological support, and whether there was a helpline for victims that was accessible to children.

49. Lastly, she wished to know why the Government had been forced to impose budget cuts, how it planned to rectify the situation, and how, in the absence of funding, it would implement plans, policies and strategies that had recently been developed or were in the pipeline.

50. **Ms. Khazova** asked whether and how, in cases of intimate partner violence, the psychological impact on children was taken into account, and what approach was taken when registering children whose filiation was unknown.

51. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** asked what was being done to combat corruption, which had a hugely detrimental effect on the national budgets of many countries.

52. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what strategies were in place to ensure that all children were registered and able to benefit from the rights to which they were entitled as Costa Rican citizens.

53. **The Chair** said that he wished to know whether the Government intended to allocate to the National Child Welfare Agency the budget that it was due according to the Constitution, what non-legislative measures were being taken to tackle sexual violence, and what was being done to prevent abuse, including bullying, directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. He would also appreciate statistics, disaggregated by ethnicity, disability and migrant status, to illustrate the results of the many plans and programmes that the delegation had mentioned.

54. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** asked what measures were being taken to investigate and prevent child and adolescent deaths due to violence.

55. **Ms. Hernández Sánchez** (Costa Rica) said that the National Child Welfare Agency was responsible for securing the funding necessary to ensure the protection of the rights of the child. However, as the entry into force of Legislative Decree No. 9365, on measures to strengthen the public finances, had eliminated sources of funding previously available to the Agency, the Agency was taking steps, including before the Council of Government, to make up for the expected shortfall and avoid having to cancel or suspend ongoing projects. The Agency’s 2020 budget would be presented in February.

56. **Mr. Burgos Mata** (Costa Rica) said that psychological violence, like physical violence, had been criminalized in Costa Rica. The perpetrators of either form could be
prosecuted. Cases involving the psychological abuse of a minor could be heard by the courts that dealt with domestic violence, family courts or criminal courts. Prosecutors and other officials involved in cases of sexual violence against children followed guidelines on preventing revictimization that had been drafted some twenty years earlier.

57. Ms. Khazova said that she wished to know how psychological violence was defined in the State party.

58. Mr. Burgos Mata (Costa Rica) said that there was no specific definition of psychological violence in Costa Rican law. In practice, such violence was often identified by process of elimination. A victim could also show, with the help of expert witnesses, that he or she had suffered psychological harm.

59. Ms. Arce Meneses (Costa Rica) said that the existence of psychological harm was also determined by psychologists or social workers from the National Child Welfare Agency, the Public Prosecution Service’s Office for Crime Victims and other relevant institutions. Children who were not physically harmed as a result of domestic violence were nonetheless considered victims, as studies had shown that violent environments were detrimental to their neurological development. They were thus entitled to victim services, including those provided by the local offices of the National Child Welfare Agency and NGOs subsidized by the Agency.

60. The staff members who provided rehabilitation services to children and adolescents in local communities had trained in clinical psychology and underwent rigorous hiring procedures. Early intervention centres were staffed by multidisciplinary teams that were composed of educational psychologists, occupational therapists and physical education, music and art teachers.

61. Although the number of mobile units, whose aim had been to promote the rights of children and adolescents and to provide them and their parents with relevant information, had been reduced, the services they had provided had not been eliminated. The personnel had simply been redeployed elsewhere. The mobile units also handled complaints from children and adolescents, organized life-skills training and offered workshops for teenage mothers, some of whom received scholarships to enable them to continue their studies. The units were expected to present their 2020 plans of work in the coming days.

62. The Chair said that he wished to know what the investigation of the National Child Welfare Agency by two parliamentary commissions had involved, what conclusions or recommendations the commissions had adopted and what effect the Agency intended to give to those recommendations.

63. Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi said that she wondered why adoptions took so long in the State party and whether the slowness of the procedure was really in the best interests of the children who were up for adoption. She also wondered how many children lived in prison with a parent – generally a mother – who had been deprived of her liberty and what measures were taken to meet the needs of such children.

64. Education was funded relatively generously in the State party, but dropout rates were high, and a large percentage of the school-age population did not enrol in upper secondary school. She therefore wished to know what the State party was doing to help ensure that children and adolescents – those living in rural areas, those with disabilities and migrants in particular – completed upper secondary education. She also wished to know what steps were taken to safeguard an oft-neglected right – namely, the right to leisure and recreation.

65. The Chair said that he would welcome an indication of the steps the State party intended to take to give full effect to the recommendations on adoption made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/CRI/CO/4, para. 52). In particular, he wished to know what plans had been made to ban direct adoptions and empower the National Child Welfare Agency to supervise adoption proceedings more effectively.

66. He wished to know whether the State party had assessed the impact of the programmes it had launched in a bid to ensure that children with disabilities had access to education and health care and, if so, whether children with disabilities themselves had been consulted as part of the assessments. He would also like to know why the provision of services for such
67. In view of the cuts to social and other services that had recently been made by the State party, he wished to know what measures were being taken to deal with the falling share of the population – currently 53 per cent – that contributed to the Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund. He also wished to know what steps were taken to train health-care personnel to work more empathetically with children and adolescents – by respecting their privacy, for example. In addition, he would welcome a clarification of the rules on abortion in the State party. It would be interesting to learn whether it had been decriminalized and, if not, whether any steps had been taken to do so or to give effect to the recommendations recently made in that regard by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

68. He wondered what provision was made for children and adolescents in the State party’s National Mental Health Plan 2012–2021, in particular in view of increasing numbers of suicides. In that connection, he wished to know whether data were being collected to assess the magnitude of the problem, including by geographic area, and whether the authorities cooperated with NGOs, families and youth groups in an attempt to lower suicide rates.

69. He would be interested to know what measures the State party took to combat widespread prejudice against child migrants or asylum seekers, ensure that such children were not deprived of their liberty and make certain that they could enrol in school. He wondered, with particular reference to girls who took up positions as domestic workers, whether delayed responses to applications for asylum encouraged asylum-seeking children to leave school and look for work in the informal economy.

70. He would appreciate information on measures taken to ensure that children who were being exploited economically could exercise their right to education, the status of the National Plan to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents and the achievements of the National Commission to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. In addition, it would be helpful to know what steps were taken to identify child victims of sexual exploitation and make sure that they had access to appropriate shelters. It would likewise be interesting to know more about the resources available to the State agencies that worked with such children.

71. He wished to know what steps the State party was taking to ensure that its juvenile justice system, once the envy of Latin America and the Caribbean, could again serve as an example to the region. In that connection, it would be interesting to know what complaint mechanisms and opportunities for redress were available to the children held in Zurquí juvenile detention centre.

72. He would welcome information on the measures that had been taken to combat discrimination against indigenous children and children of African descent – the Committee had learned, for example, that children were sent home from school for having dreadlocks or not speaking Spanish – and to seek indigenous children’s views on economic development or other projects likely to affect them. A comment on how the State party ensured that teachers put the principle of intercultural education into practice would also be welcome. Lastly, it would be interesting to learn what efforts the State party was making to comply with its obligations, in respect of children entering its territory in particular, under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.