



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Combined second and third periodic reports submitted by Paraguay under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2019*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. The Republic of Paraguay, in accordance with its international obligations, hereby submits to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities its combined second and third periodic reports, as required of States parties under article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
2. The Government of Paraguay established a joint working mechanism comprising State institutions in order to respond to the list of issues prepared by the Committee (CRPD/C/PRY/QPR/2-3). To this end, it used the Human Rights Recommendations Monitoring System, a publicly accessible online information tool, which has allowed for better monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of international human rights recommendations. This tool is the result of a cooperation project between the Government of Paraguay and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and is considered an example of good practice.
3. As part of efforts to promote a constructive and interactive dialogue with representatives of civil society organizations and members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a workshop was held to present the State report, in which civil society representatives participated in order to work together for the promotion and protection of human rights in Paraguay.

A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 1 of the list of issues

4. With regard to the amendment of the terminology used in article 58 of the Constitution, it should be noted that, since that article appears in Part I, Title II, Chapter IV, in accordance with article 290¹ of the same text, it may only be amended through the reform procedure set out in article 289, which requires the establishment of a National Constituent Convention.
5. The article in question cannot be amended through an act of the legislature since, according to the order of priority established in article 137 of the Constitution, any other normative instrument is of lower rank.
6. However, Act No. 4720/12, which provided for the creation of the National Secretariat for the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SENADIS), and its regulatory decree No. 10514/13, have established the legal basis with respect to disability, which makes it possible to mainstream the term in subsequent normative instruments.
7. The legislature has also brought numerous initiatives aimed at introducing and promoting the appropriate terminology in legislation that is planned and adopted on the subject, in accordance with the terms of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, approved pursuant to Act No. 3540/08.
8. By way of example, the following laws incorporating the appropriate terminology have been passed:
 - Act No. 4962/13, which establishes employer incentives for the recruitment of persons with disabilities in the private sector.
 - Act No. 5136/13 on inclusive education.
 - Act No. 5362/14 on accession to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.
 - Act No. 5421/15 on equal vocational training opportunities for persons with disabilities.

¹ Article 290 – Amendments. “The specified amendment procedure shall not be used, but rather the reform procedure, for (...) the provisions of Chapters I, II, III and IV of Title II, Part I”.

- Act No. 4934/15 on accessibility of the physical environment for persons with disabilities.
- Act No. 5884/17 on the declaration of 20 May as the National Day for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Workplace.

9. In the same vein, the legislative initiatives currently in progress in the legislature incorporate the appropriate terminological standards in relation to persons with disabilities.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 2 of the list of issues

10. SENADIS has an active staff of 518 people, including professionals, technicians and permanent, contracted and commissioned staff, as shown in the following table:

Table 1
SENADIS human resources

<i>Description</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total active staff (a+b)	293	225	518
Permanent staff (a)	186	142	328
Contracted staff (b)	107	83	190
Professionals (permanent and contracted university degree-holders)	163	85	248
Personnel in managerial positions (department heads and above)	37	39	76

Table 2
SENADIS human resources by type of employment relationship

<i>Employment relationship</i>	<i>Administrative personnel</i>	<i>Health-care personnel</i>
Permanent staff member	217	111
Fixed-term staff member	105	85

Table 3
Composition of SENADIS health-care staff

<i>Composition of health-care staff</i>											
<i>Branch</i>	<i>Doctor</i>	<i>Nurse</i>	<i>Physiotherapist</i>	<i>Psychologist</i>	<i>Dentist</i>	<i>Health technician</i>	<i>Health assistant</i>	<i>Social worker</i>	<i>Nutritionist</i>	<i>Biochemist</i>	<i>Speech therapist</i>
Headquarters	35	13	33	32	8	3	4	24	3	7	4
Santani	1	0	4	1	1	2		1	0	0	0
Caacupé	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coronel Oviedo	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pilar		1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Villarrica/ Tebicuarymi	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Concepción	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	38	14	46	40	9	5	4	25	4	7	4

Table 4
Composition of SENADIS health-care staff

<i>Composition of health-care staff</i>	<i>Number</i>
Psychologist	40
Physiotherapist	46
Dentist	9
Doctor	38
Nurse	14
Speech therapist	4
Social worker	25
Biochemist	7
Nutritionist	4
Technician	5
Assistant	4
Total health-care staff	196

Table 5
SENADIS budget

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Financial plan</i>
SENADIS	2013	65 032 041 326	62 713 274 510
SENADIS	2014	54 882 232 173	59 157 232 173
SENADIS	2015	54 600 651 114	56 582 341 481
SENADIS	2016	54 099 485 743	51 394 511 456
SENADIS	2017	54 099 485 743	54 007 485 743
SENADIS	2018	54 099 485 743	52 085 506 313
SENADIS	2019	56 451 225 451	56 451 225 451

B. Specific rights: Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 3 of the list of issues

11. The principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in the Constitution, article 46 of which establishes that discrimination between citizens of Paraguay is not permitted and that obstacles must be removed and factors that maintain or promote discrimination must be prevented.

12. Despite the absence of anti-discrimination legislation, it should be noted that article 45 of the Constitution specifies that the absence of an implementing act does not entitle the State to deny or curtail any right or guarantee that, despite being inherent in the human person, is not expressly included in the Constitution.

13. Article 21 of Act No. 4720/2012 on the establishment of National Secretariat for the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, states:

Protection of rights

“Any person who suffers discrimination due to his or her condition as a person with a disability or threats in the exercise of his or her rights and benefits as enshrined in this act and other related laws, may, before filing a claim and at any stage of the trial, demand before a civil judge preventive and precautionary measures, which will be processed, as applicable, in accordance with the Code of Civil Procedure:

- (a) Immediate cessation of the discriminatory action; and

- (b) Any other measure that prevents the continued violation of rights.

The judge shall order the measure upon taking cognizance of the claim, provided that it is accompanied by specific and consistent evidence that allows for a reasonable presumption of the actual or imminent violation of the rights recognized in this act and others related to persons with disabilities. The judge shall verify whether the petitioner is a person covered by these laws, for which purpose the rules contained therein shall be applied.

In the proceedings conducted in this matter, if discrimination or a violation of the rights of the person with disabilities is established, the civil judge may impose a fine in the corresponding ruling.”

14. The competencies of the Civil Service Secretariat include the obligation to formulate the State’s human resources policy and to ensure effective compliance with the Civil Service Act, which clearly establishes the prohibition of discrimination. This implies the responsibility to design plans, programmes, projects and specific actions aimed at eradicating discriminatory practices in the civil service.

15. One concrete action in this regard is the publication of a guide for inclusive and non-discriminatory practices in the civil service. The material is intended to provide guidance to civil servants in relation to concepts, the regulatory framework and specific practices of non-discrimination and inclusion. It is hoped that this guide will support the process of transitioning from an exclusionary State culture towards an inclusive State culture.

16. Point 15 of this guide covers good practices with respect to persons with disabilities. The recognition of legal personality entails the same access to justice, for example through procedural adjustments to facilitate the involvement of persons with disabilities as direct and indirect participants, including testifying as witnesses or complainants, in administrative and judicial proceedings.

17. In order to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in public spaces and services, it is essential to progressively provide reasonable accommodation and to adopt, in future, procedures, environments and services based on universal design models.

18. In July 2018, the Civil Service Secretariat presented a protocol for action in cases of workplace violence and a guide to ensuring that the internal rules of public institutions are informed by a gender perspective and the imperatives of non-discrimination and decent treatment. Through decisions No. 387/2018 and No. 388/2018, the Secretariat urged State bodies and agencies to implement both equality and non-discrimination instruments.

19. The instruments were developed with technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Paraguay Democracy and Governance Programme, managed by the Centre for Environmental and Social Studies, within the framework of an inter-institutional round table led by the Civil Service Secretariat, the Ministry for Women, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and SENADIS.

20. Under Act No. 5136 and Decree No. 2837, which regulates the Inclusive Education Act, the Ministry of Education and Science has the power, as the governing body for education, to establish actions and mechanisms aimed at the creation and implementation of an inclusive educational model at all educational levels within the mainstream system, in order to ensure accessibility, attendance, learning, participation, promotion and timely educational completion for students with specific educational support needs.

21. The Ministry’s Directorate General for Inclusive Education has also developed the National Education Plan 2024 to ensure equal access and conditions for the timely completion of studies for students across different levels and modalities of education. The Plan provides for the expansion of inclusion support centres through the gradual conversion of special schools and the expansion of the offerings of the Remedial Education Support Service such as hospital classrooms, centres/homes and shelters. It will also have the benefit of providing additional support to technical staff, teachers, students and families in educational institutions in which students with specific educational support needs are included.

22. The Ministry of Education and Science's Decision No. 1/2015, which regulates the system of offences and penalties for non-compliance with Act No. 5136/13 on inclusive education applicable to public, private and State-subsidized private educational institutions under the Ministry of Education, aims to safeguard the rights of children and adolescents that may be violated by non-compliance with the regulations by educational institutions nationwide.

23. In addition, Decision No. 31561/2018 provides that textbooks procured by the Ministry, for all levels and modalities, must have an editable digital version in accessible formats for blind persons, persons with visual impairments and other users who have difficulty accessing the printed format.

24. In the same context, the Ministry issued an expert legal report in which it expresses support for the draft bill on the use of the Braille system and other technical and technological means to facilitate access to information for persons with visual impairments, for identity cards and all banking and service documentation, including information in visible places in physical spaces.

25. The guidelines for an inclusive education system in Paraguay (Decision No. 17267/2018) and the manual on the physical accessibility of schools were distributed to administrative monitoring and support inspectors, pedagogical technical support inspectors and Indigenous education inspectors.

26. The Ministry for Women promotes the implementation of the framework of the Fourth National Equality Plan, through which a series of national documents and plans with a gender perspective have been formulated and implemented, such as: the 2018–2023 Government Plan; the National Education Plan 2024; the National Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan (2009–2013 and 2014–2018); the Strategic Agricultural Framework (2009–2018); the National Public Safety Plan (2013–2018); and the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2030).

27. In addition, SENADIS and the Ministry for Women coordinate activities and are members of the inter-institutional round table for the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market. They also implement the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2030), which has been approved and validated at the national level and provides for the promotion of temporary measures to advance substantive equality in education, health and employment for women with disabilities in the face of persistent barriers. In addition, the National Action Plan promotes compliance with the Regulatory Decree of Act No. 4934/13 on the accessibility of the physical environment for persons with disabilities (2015), which includes a Transportation System Adaptation Plan, covering issues related to accessibility for public transport units and stops.

28. The process of developing human rights indicators for the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities began in 2016–2017, with the technical cooperation of OHCHR. During the process, indicators were developed for the areas of production of national data, accessibility, the right to education, the right to work and employment and investment. The indicators were approved through Decision No. 4004/17 and incorporated into the Technical Planning Secretariat's results-based planning system.

29. With the cooperation of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the European Union in the framework of the Bridging the Gap II project, SENADIS is currently in the process of developing indicators for all the areas of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthen institutional management and the participation of civil society. In this context, the Civil Service Secretariat is involved in the areas of national data production and the right to work and employment.

30. The Ministry has also prepared an equality barometer containing the following parameters in relation to the implementation of equality and non-discrimination policies in the civil service:

- List of State bodies and agencies that have run public competitive examinations for persons with disabilities.

- Institutions that have measured the degree of implementation of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan.
- Institutions that have plans for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Transparency in the use of public resources (Act No. 5189/2014).
- Femininity index (number of women per 100 men).
- Masculinity index (number of men per 100 women).
- Institutions that have adhered to the Ministry's Decision No. 0516/2016.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 4 of the list of issues

31. As of April 2018, the Ministry of Social Development's Tekoporã Programme has invested 1,609,360,000 guaraníes (G) in persons with disabilities. At the end of 2017, a total of 19,595 persons with disabilities (2,176 of them with severe disabilities) were protected under the programme. As of April 2018, coverage had reached 20,068 persons with disabilities, 8,944 of them women.

32. The Ministry of Social Development has had a module for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in place since 2015. A methodology is applied that targets, includes and retains persons with disabilities, providing them with specific benefits, with shared responsibility. Families with one or two members with severe disabilities receive an additional sum. Shared responsibilities are applied progressively and appropriately, with the State ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to their rights in accordance with social programmes and following an intercultural approach in the case of Indigenous families.

33. At the end of 2017, 23,319 Indigenous families were included (covering 95 per cent of the occupied Indigenous households in the country), of which 541 are persons with disabilities. For the most part, the Tekoporã Programme protects persons living in poverty in rural areas (approximately 88 per cent of the total beneficiaries). Seventy-five per cent of beneficiaries are female heads of household. By the end of 2017, a total of 152,132 families (about 664,000 persons) were protected under the programme.

Women with disabilities (art. 6) – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

Replies to the issues raised in paragraphs 5 and 17 of the list of issues

34. In recent years, the Government of Paraguay has made great efforts to create conditions for the empowerment of women and girls through the promotion of actions aimed at eliminating the inequalities and barriers they face in developing fully and achieving substantial and real autonomy over their own lives.

35. Since 2016, Paraguay has participated in the orange ribbon campaign to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, approved by the United Nations General Assembly. The legal framework for the promotion and protection of women and girls has been expanded with the laws enacted in recent years, such as Act No. 5446/15 on public policies for rural women and Act No. 5777/16 on the comprehensive protection of women against all forms of violence.

36. By Decree No. 6973 of 27 March 2017, the regulations implementing Act No. 5777/16 were approved, establishing as protected persons all women in a situation of violence, without any type of discrimination based on age, language, religion or beliefs, marital status, nationality, disability, health status, physical appearance, economic situation, cultural origin, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, urban or rural origin, or any other condition or circumstance, including their sons, daughters and other dependants.

37. Chapter III, article 27 of Act No. 5777/16 on State policies for prevention and for the care and protection of women refers to the Inter-institutional Round Table for the Prevention of Violence against Women, in which institutions of the executive and judiciary and civil society participate, including SENADIS.

38. Continuous training programmes are developed in order to raise awareness among the authorities and institutional representatives about violence against women and femicide, promoting a common framework for inter-institutional action and introducing the definitions, strategies and procedures established in Act No. 5777/16. Likewise, materials have been published to disseminate the Act.

39. In this context, people from different sectors have been trained in dissemination and training workshops, including government officials and members of civil society, such as women entrepreneurs, students from public and private schools and universities, and private companies.

40. By Decree No. 5140 of 13 April 2016, the Second National Plan on Violence against Women 2015–2020 was approved and the inter-institutional round table for the prevention, handling and follow-up of cases and the protection of women in situations of violence was formed, comprising 13 State institutions, with the objective of guiding actions that contribute to the full respect of women's human rights and promoting a comprehensive response by public and private institutions.

41. In 2017, in order to ensure the proper implementation of Act No. 5777/16, the Gender Secretariat of the Supreme Court of Justice signed a cooperation agreement with the German Cooperation Agency, through the Regional Programme to Combat Violence against Women in Latin America, to conduct an assessment and training sessions for the judges and judicial staff of the judicial districts of Boquerón, Alto Paraná and Amambay. A memorandum of understanding was also signed in 2018 with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in relation to an assessment and training in the Central, Capital, San Pedro, Paraguari, Cordillera, Guairá and Itapúa districts.

42. In November 2017, a communications campaign called “Kuña, ñañoptyvõ ñaguahẽ haɣua” (“Women, let's help each other get there”) was launched to raise awareness about the importance of working in sorority in view of the entry into force of the new law and the challenges it poses as a tool in access to justice. The campaign has been disseminated through printed and digital materials.

43. Important advances in respect of area 14 of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include the promulgation of Act No. 6002/16 amending article 135 of the Criminal Code, increasing sentences in cases of sexual abuse of children and incorporating technological means in the commission of these acts. Similarly, Act No. 6083/18 amends article 29 of the Children and Adolescents Code on the publication of names, images or audio recordings of children or adolescents who are the victims, perpetrators or witnesses of punishable acts or accidents by whatever means, including technological systems.

44. The legislative branch has also adopted Act No. 4788/12, a comprehensive anti-human trafficking law, which aims to prevent and punish trafficking in persons in all its forms, whether it is committed in the national territory or abroad, and protect and assist victims, by strengthening State action in this area.

45. In addition, Act No. 5683/16 establishes the obligation to visibly display a sign in public places reading: “The sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and trafficking in persons is an offence that carries severe penalties in the Republic of Paraguay. Report it.” The law establishes that airports, ports, transport terminals, public transport, border crossings, public tourism offices, public institutions, country promotion offices, hotels, pubs, discotheques, casinos, motels, and other places identified by the enforcement authority must display the aforementioned sign in a visible place.

46. The National Commission for Prevention and a Comprehensive Response to Violence against Children and Adolescents was created pursuant to National Decree No. 11056/2013 and is led by the Ministry for Children and Adolescents. In addition, the inter-institutional round table for the participatory construction of the inter-institutional road map for a comprehensive response to cases of sexual abuse and sexual violence is led by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

47. Notable measures taken by the National Commission include sponsoring Act No. 5659/16 on the promotion of good treatment, positive parenting and the protection of children

and adolescents against physical punishment or any type of violence as a method of correction or discipline, the objective of which is to ensure that all children and adolescents enjoy the right to good treatment and respect for their physical, psychological and emotional integrity.

48. Pursuant to Decision No. 25664/2017 of the Ministry of Education and Science on the establishment of the network for prevention and a comprehensive response to violence against children and adolescents in an educational setting, protection networks have been set up, with specialized staff from the various departmental educational oversight offices. Their main function is to serve as focal points for prevention and a comprehensive response to situations of violence against children and adolescents in an educational setting in their departments.

49. A bill submitted in November 2016 with a view to criminalizing dangerous child labour and unpaid domestic child labour is currently at the first reading stage before the Senate.

50. The Ministry for Children and Adolescents' green ribbon campaign, launched in 2012, seeks to raise awareness among public and private institutions, the media, adults and children and adolescents themselves regarding the need to combat child and adolescent sexual abuse. The National Day against the Ill-treatment, Sexual Abuse and Labour Exploitation of Children and Adolescents is marked on 31 May. This campaign is promoted in the media by departmental and municipal governments and has a significant reach.

51. In addition, sexual abuse prevention campaigns are incorporated into the national curriculum, starting in early education and continuing at different levels in the country's institutions.

52. The Ministry of Education and Science has taken various measures through the Directorate for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, including the issuance of the following ministerial decisions:

- Decision No. 5731/15 on an intervention guide for violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of children and adolescents in an educational setting.
- Decision No. 1848/2015 on the adoption of a protocol for the educational care of students at risk in educational institutions (preschool, primary, secondary and continuing education). This protocol covers situations of vulnerability arising from the violation of sexual and reproductive rights. Depending on the circumstances, an intervention team is formed, whose tasks include making the curriculum more flexible and ensuring that students remain in the education system.
- Decision No. 11646/17 on the creation and coordination of the ÑaÑe'eke Programme for the prevention of sexual violence and teenage pregnancy across all levels and modalities of education.
- Decision No. 22446/2017 establishing the protection measures applicable in the event of complaints of alleged punishable acts against school children and adolescents by teachers or officials of the Ministry of Education and Science. It provides for emergency measures in the event that any such violation is confirmed.
- Decision No. 25664/17 on the establishment of the network for prevention and a comprehensive response to violence against children and adolescents in an educational setting. These networks are being set up in departments around the country, made up of professionals trained in effective intervention in child protection cases. They are currently in operation in 12 of the country's departments.

53. The dissemination of these regulations has encouraged the educational community to report these acts of violence against children and adolescents to the authorities.

54. Note should also be taken of Act No. 4633/12 on bullying in public, private and subsidized private educational institutions, pursuant to which the Ministry of Education and Science issued Decision No. 8353/2012 on the care protocol for cases of violence and bullying in institutions under the Ministry's authority. This protocol is activated in all educational institutions in cases of peer violence and/or bullying. Various training sessions

have been conducted on bullying and school violence, providing information on the regulations and the process for supporting the affected child.

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 6 of the list of issues

55. Paraguay is committed to improving the situation of women and girls with disabilities, based on the concept of gender violence in the strict sense. Efforts are being made to ensure that institutions guarantee access to the justice system for women with disabilities in order to safeguard their rights, taking into account the multiple vulnerabilities they face.

56. In this regard, the Gender Secretariat of the Supreme Court of Justice reports that, in relation to the registration of data on domestic and intra-family violence against women, the form for registering acts of violence, adopted by Court Decision No. 454/2007, has been reviewed. Amendments were proposed concerning the mandatory completion of certain fields. For example, including information on persons with disabilities in case files means that it will be possible to have data on women with disabilities who are the victims of domestic and intra-family violence to inform the development of specific policies to ensure access to justice for persons with disabilities in accordance with the principles of due process.

57. The aforementioned form has been redesigned in accordance with article 30 (a) of Act No. 5777/16 on the indicators to be included in the reports of the single, standardized registration system, namely the identification and number of women complainants by age, disability, marital status, territorial origin, language, ethnicity, education, profession or occupation, relationship with the aggressor, nature of the facts, and their quantification. In other words, disability is among the variables to be taken into account. A request for the adoption and entry into force of the redesigned form has been submitted to the highest judicial body and is pending approval.

58. Article 36 of Act No. 5777/16 establishes the obligations of the judiciary in this area; paragraph (f) specifically provides for the duty to create a database with information on all complaints of violence against women filed in the judicial system and to transmit them to the single, standardized registration system.

59. The Ministry for Women, through the Mercedes Sandoval shelter for women in situations of violence, provides the following services: temporary housing, security of person, psychological care and support, legal advice and support, medical care and support, occupational therapy, information and training on their rights, support to enable children admitted with their mothers to continue their education, and an introduction to income-generating programmes with a view to achieving economic independence for themselves and their children. Work is conducted in coordination with 17 Secretariats for Women nationwide.

60. From 2014 to November 2018, five women with disabilities were housed in the Mercedes Sandoval shelter for women in situations of violence: one has a hearing impairment, one has a physical disability, and three have visual impairments.

61. The Ministry for Women coordinates with the judiciary's gender mechanism on the implementation of Act No. 5777/16 on the comprehensive protection of women against all forms of violence. The Gender Observatory has been created to promote the application of international instruments. There are plans to appoint specialized public defenders.

62. The Ombudsman's Office works with the Ministry for Women to support women with disabilities, in cooperation with various State agencies, and requests their inclusion in various programmes through which they can receive financial benefits. In addition, the Office's Department for Action against Discrimination has signed an agreement with the National Coordinating Office for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to promote respect for the rights of this sector of the population and makes recommendations to institutions concerned to that end.

63. The following table shows the number of students with disabilities enrolled in the education system. Of the total number of students enrolled in the education system, 1.6 per cent of girls and women reported having a disability.

Table 6
Number of enrolled students with disabilities

Category	Number
Students enrolled in special schools (preschool and basic education)	603
Students enrolled in special classes in mainstream schools	244
Students enrolled in mainstream schools who report having a disability (preschool, primary and secondary)	22 586

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, Directorate of Educational Planning. Unified Student Registration System, 2018. Cut-off: 18 December 2018.

Number of enrolled students with disabilities	
Details	Number
Number of students enrolled in special schools – service programme	3 679

Note: A student enrolled in service programmes may also be enrolled in any grade of preschool, primary or secondary school.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science, Directorate of Educational Planning. Unified Student Registration System, 2018. Cut-off: 18 December 2018.

64. Of the more than 300,000 positions in the public administration, 0.611 per cent are occupied by persons with disabilities. Of the 1,947 civil servants with disabilities, 1,303 are men and 644 are women.

65. In other words, of the total number of civil servants with disabilities, 33 per cent are women and almost 67 per cent are men. When broken down by type of employment relationship, 69 per cent of civil servants with disabilities are in permanent positions, while almost 31 per cent are in temporary contractual positions.

Table 7
Civil servants with disabilities in State bodies and agencies by sex (December 2018)

Persons with disabilities	Number	Percentage of total
Men	1 303	66.92 %
Women	644	33.08 %
Total	1 947	100 %

Table 8
Civil servants with disabilities in State bodies and agencies by type of employment relationship (December 2018)

By type of employment relationship	Male	Female	Total	%
Permanent	880	467	1 347	69.2 %
Temporary (contracted)	423	177	600	30.8 %
Total	1 303	644	1 947	100 %

Source: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in State bodies and agencies - Centralized Integrated System for the Civil Service.

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 7 of the list of issues

66. The Government has strived to promote and protect the human rights of the most vulnerable groups through the programmes of the Ministry of Social Development. Since

2014, the administration and implementation of these programmes has incorporated a human rights approach, initially through training workshops for officials and rights holders organized in cooperation with OHCHR.

67. In this context, the Government has adopted a protocol for the consultation of Indigenous communities and families and modules for the inclusion of Indigenous families and persons with disabilities in the Tekoporã Programme. It has also designed a scheme of human rights indicators and produced a handbook for addressing violence against women, children and adolescents.

68. In recent years, the Ministry of Social Development has significantly stepped up investment in its programmes. The annual budget of the Tekoporã Programme has gradually risen so that it is now about 70 per cent higher than it was originally, enabling an increase of about 80 per cent in the number of families protected and the expansion of coverage to include vulnerable groups such as Indigenous families and persons with disabilities.

69. The coverage of the Tenonderã Programme has increased almost eightfold in terms of the number of families assisted. Since 2016, the Ministry has run a support programme for canteens set up by community organizations, delivering inputs for food production. Since April 2017, families participating in the Tekoporã Programme have been offered a life microinsurance policy. Tekoporã has covered 100 per cent of Indigenous households since April 2018.

70. The Tekoporã Programme is essentially geared towards the protection of children and adolescents through shared responsibilities in the areas of health and education. It affords protection for approximately 664,000 people, half of whom are children and adolescents, including 5,396 children and adolescents with disabilities (3,085 male and 2,311 female).

71. Persons with disabilities are included in the programme through a module adopted by the Ministry of Social Development. A methodology is applied that targets, includes and retains persons with disabilities, providing them with specific benefits, with shared responsibility. Families with one or two members who have a severe disability receive an additional amount. Reasonable accommodation is provided on a case-by-case basis. As of April 2018, the Tekoporã Programme covered 541 Indigenous persons with disabilities (166 children and adolescents) who were included after giving their free, prior and informed consent.

72. Shared responsibilities are applied progressively and appropriately, with the State ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to the rights to health, habilitation and rehabilitation, education and protection, to the extent that their disability allows.

73. All services provided by the Ministry for Children and Adolescents cater for children and adolescents with disabilities. The Ministry administers and coordinates measures for their comprehensive care and the restitution of their rights.

Table 9

Assistance provided to children and adolescents with disabilities by the Ministry for Children and Adolescents

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Number of children and adolescents</i>
Abrazo Programme	147 children and adolescents
Comprehensive Care Programme for Children and Adolescents Living on the Street	2 adolescents
Programme on Comprehensive Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation	1 adolescent
Special Protection Directorate	4 children and adolescents in foster care 69 children and adolescents in institutional care
Adoption Centre	7 children and adolescents

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Number of children and adolescents</i>
Case Referral Centre	4 children and adolescents 2 adults
147 helpline	5 children and adolescents

74. The aim of the Abrazo Programme is to eradicate hazardous child labour in public spaces, brick factories, dumps and the agricultural sector by supporting families and referring them to public and/or private institutions for specialized assistance.

75. The Programme is geared towards children and adolescents aged up to 17 years old, especially children from households in which one or more adult members has a disability and is unfit to work, a situation requiring the family to provide special care. Households benefit from family support, conditional cash transfers and basic food baskets.

Table 10

Children and adolescents with disabilities registered in the Abrazo Programme

	<i>Number</i>		<i>Families</i>
Children aged up to 17 years old with disabilities	147		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
	86	61	140

76. The Comprehensive Care Programme for Children and Adolescents Living on the Street includes emergency protection mechanisms with care provided by four shelters and protection centres in Asunción, Lambaré, San Lorenzo and Ciudad del Este, where children and adolescents receive meals, accommodation, health and hygiene and psychological support services and participate in recreational and educational activities. Four children and one adolescent are currently under the protection of the Programme at the Jorge Patiño Palacios “Ñemity” Pedagogical Centre.

77. The Programme on Comprehensive Assistance to Victims of Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation has a protection centre that provides care for girl and adolescent victims of trafficking. It currently has two adolescents with disabilities under its protection.

78. The Directorate for the Promotion of *Buen Vivir* of Indigenous Children and Adolescents addresses the problem of Indigenous children in street situations by providing comprehensive care that disconnects them from their lives on the street. Indigenous children and adolescents and their families benefit from assistance that focuses on the restitution, protection and promotion of their rights. Between May and November 2018, the Directorate provided care for an 8-year-old boy with a physical disability and a 3-year-old girl with a psychomotor disability.

79. The 147 helpline is a telephone assistance and guidance service for children and adolescents that specializes in providing psychological, social and legal counselling in cases of rights violations such as physical and sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and neglect. It also addresses issues related to the genuine interests of children and adolescents.

80. The Case Referral Centre, now called the Immediate Response System, is a set of strategies for providing ongoing assistance and taking prompt action in cases of violations of the rights of children and adolescents. Once a complaint is received, an assessment is performed of the risk to which each child is exposed, so that the case may be referred if necessary to other State protection bodies. Through this System, the Ministry for Children and Adolescents has supported children in obtaining access to identity procedures, health services, basic food baskets and protection measures provided by the justice system.

81. Between June 2018 and February 2019, the System responded to 19 cases. They included those of four girls and three boys aged up to 8 years; one girl and six boys aged between 9 and 13 years; one girl aged between 14 and 17 years; and four adults with disabilities who were being exploited on the street.

82. All departments of the Ministry for Children and Adolescents coordinate with SENADIS and the Ministry of Urban Planning, Housing and Habitat to ensure access to decent housing that meets functional needs, and with the Ministry of Social Development for the inclusion of the child's family in social programmes.

83. Pursuant to a cooperation agreement between the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture, the Inter-American Children's Institute, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Technical Planning Secretariat, the Ministry for Children and Adolescents, the Andean Development Corporation and others, audiovisual materials on the rights of the child were produced in Spanish, Guaraní and sign language in the framework of the project "Generating Synergies for Expanding Initial Education and Improving Teacher Qualifications: Educating Children Better". Audiovisual materials and radio spots aimed at families were produced with a view to strengthening positive parenting skills and practices.

84. Under an agreement between the Technical Planning Secretariat and the Ministry for Children and Adolescents, the Relay Centre – an accessible communication service for deaf persons – coordinates measures with the 147 helpline in order to facilitate communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and adolescents or, alternatively, their relatives, so that they can have access to psychological, social and legal counselling services and can report rights violations via video call using an online platform. In addition, the Relay Centre, which is attached to the Technical Planning Secretariat, adapts information from the Ministry aimed at deaf children and adolescents so that it is available in accessible format.

85. The action lines set out under the different strategies of the National Health Policy 2015–2030 include the strengthening of social protection measures with a rights-based approach and emphasis on vulnerable groups at different stages of the life cycle (children, adolescents and older adults), including persons with disabilities, incorporating the gender perspective and interculturality; and the development of an integrated information and cross-sectoral analysis system to generate and organize data disaggregated by population groups according to age, sex, disability, demographic distribution, socioeconomic level, ethnicity and other variables, in order to advocate for health and reduce inequities.

86. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare implements all its programmes nationwide, especially among the most vulnerable in society. Coverage of comprehensive and integrated health-service networks has been expanded on the basis of the primary health-care strategy. The Social Welfare Institute contributes to the design and implementation of plans and programmes that may deliver improvements in living standards through social services that ensure free access to high-quality, humane care, based on the principles of universality, comprehensiveness, equity and participation.

87. The Directorate General for Indigenous Schooling takes steps to ensure that children with disabilities, especially those belonging to the Indigenous population, have access on equal terms with others to community-based programmes and services in the sphere of education.

88. In this regard, between 2013 and 2018 an education plan was implemented to improve the schooling of Indigenous Peoples in Paraguay, ensuring high-quality, culturally and linguistically relevant education in accordance with the legal framework in force. This plan was prepared with the participation and consent of Indigenous Peoples, including community leaders, members of Indigenous organizations, NGOs, young people, adults, the educational community and the technical team of the Directorate General for Indigenous Schooling; it committed to the improvement of school infrastructure and facilities and the educational inclusion of all persons on an equal basis.

89. The technical team of the Directorate General for Indigenous Schooling, during fieldwork carried out in the context of training for teachers and mothers under the early childhood care programme, was able to confirm that children and young people with disabilities are attending classes in schools in Indigenous communities, where they have access to education with special attention.

90. Teacher training activities on issues related to the Inclusive Education Act (No. 5136/13) and its regulations have been coordinated with the departmental educational

oversight offices with a view to improving learning for children and young people with disabilities, providing pedagogical tools, conducting awareness-raising regarding the inclusive education model, and advising schools.

91. In accordance with the first strategic component of the National Education Plan 2024, on “equal access and guaranteed conditions for the timely completion of studies by students at different levels and in different modalities of education”, the Government plans to increase the number of Inclusion Support Centres by gradually transforming special education schools and to expand the activities of the Remedial Education Support Service in hospital classrooms, centres/homes and shelters. Additional support will be provided to technical staff, teachers, students and families associated with educational institutions that include students with specific educational support needs.

92. Under Decree No. 2837/14 regulating the Inclusive Education Act, the Ministry of Education and Science, as the governing body for education, has the power to take actions and establish mechanisms with a view to the creation and implementation of an inclusive educational model within the mainstream system, at all educational levels, in order to ensure accessibility and the attendance, learning, participation, advancement and timely completion of students with specific educational support needs.

Awareness-raising (art. 8)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 8 of the list of issues

93. SENADIS implements an “Equality in Disability” training programme for government officials and members of civil society.

94. The aim of this discovery-based learning programme is to ensure the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, applying the concept of the social model of disability, according to which disability is caused not by a person’s impairments but by society. The programme takes a unique approach to the empowerment of persons with disabilities and the incorporation of perspectives relating to disability issues.

95. The programme is led by persons with disabilities themselves. Twenty individuals from different parts of the country were trained as facilitators, considering that disability is best understood by persons with disabilities, given the many challenges they face, such as physical barriers and discriminatory attitudinal barriers among persons without disabilities.

96. A total of 124 “Equality in Disability” training sessions, with 4,199 participants, were held between 2017 and July 2018. Of these, 78 sessions were led by SENADIS facilitators, with 3,688 participants from different departments.

97. During this period, the training participants made visible changes to the places for which they are responsible, such as the installation of ramps and the painting of murals, with a view to promoting equality for persons with disabilities. To achieve this goal, the programme has two main components, one of which is to encourage participants to develop their own specific action plan to break down and prevent barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in their work and private lives.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 9 of the list of issues

98. The Government has adopted Decree No. 3891/15, which contains the implementing regulations of Act No. 4934/2013 on the Accessibility of the Physical Environment for Persons with Disabilities.

99. This Act authorized the National Institute of Technology, Standardization and Metrology (INTN) to establish the Advisory Council on the Accessibility of the Physical Environment as an expert body to advise the Government on the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of accessibility policies. The Act also gives INTN the power to certify the physical accessibility of public buildings; accordingly, it has established a certification scheme that is based on inspection reports.

100. To carry out its activities more efficiently, the Advisory Council adopted a strategic plan for the period 2016–2018, which outlined the measures to be taken and the organizations responsible for them. The Advisory Council is chaired by the Director General of INTN and is composed of representatives of INTN, the Ministry of Justice, SENADIS, the Paraguayan Organization for Intermunicipal Cooperation, the construction sector, universities, organizations of persons with disabilities and the National Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

101. The Advisory Council commenced its activities on the premises of INTN on 30 September 2015. All Paraguayan Standards on the accessibility of the physical environment for persons with disabilities have now been formulated and are available on the INTN website.²

102. An accessibility certification office has been established and its inspectors have been trained in evaluating the accessibility of the physical environment. This training was delivered to an initial group between July and December 2018 by a team put together for that purpose, consisting of accessibility experts from INTN, SENADIS, the municipality of Asunción, the National Secretariat for Tourism, the Itaipú Binacional energy company and Fundación Solidaridad, with technical assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

103. As a result of the training, 49 inspectors (including 28 persons with physical or visual impairments) were registered with INTN to carry out the procedures of evaluating and certifying the physical accessibility of public venues.

104. On 3 December 2018, the municipality of Asunción adopted Ordinance No. 186/2018 on mandatory basic standards and conditions for the accessibility of the physical environment for persons with disabilities. The Ordinance, which is in conformity with the Act on the Accessibility of the Physical Environment for Persons with Disabilities, requires the certification of new buildings.

105. Regarding the extent to which the accessibility and investment action lines of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been implemented, SENADIS, by Decision No. 4004/2017, has approved indicators for all lines, which were incorporated into the results-based planning system of the Technical Planning Secretariat. The process of developing metadata records is under way.

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 10 of the list of issues

106. Decree No. 3891/15 was adopted to regulate the Act on the Accessibility of the Physical Environment for Persons with Disabilities following its entry into force. These instruments were a precedent for Ordinance No. 186/2018 of the municipality of Asunción, which was drafted with the aim of fulfilling the provisions of the Act.

107. In order to broaden the scope and application of this municipal ordinance, the Advisory Council on the Accessibility of the Physical Environment decided to launch a campaign for it to be replicated by all municipalities. For this purpose, INTN and SENADIS plan to provide training for the country's 252 municipalities and to distribute copies of a guide to physical accessibility prepared by the team of experts. The municipality of Fernando de la Mora has had an ordinance on physical accessibility since 2014.

108. Under a plan for a renewal of the bus fleet, the Government has acquired some 350 new buses with air conditioning and ramps for access by persons with disabilities. These buses comply with a standard developed by the relevant INTN technical committee (No. 39 on the automotive industry), which sets out the technical requirements that means of public transport must meet in order to be considered accessible.

109. The standard in question is Paraguayan Standard PNA 3900612 on accessible passenger transport vehicles. It is available from the INTN Technological Information and Technical Standards Centre.

² <https://www.intn.gov.py/index.php/organismos/organismo-nacional-de-normalizacion/consejo-consultivo-de-accesibilidad-al-medio-fisico>.

110. SENADIS, in coordination with the Office of the Deputy Minister for Transport (under the Ministry of Public Works and Communications) and the Metropolitan Area Transport Entrepreneurs Centre, has organized talks to raise awareness of appropriate treatment of persons with disabilities among public transport drivers, 300 of whom were sensitized, trained and certified as “inclusive drivers”.

111. On 29 January 2016, the Office of the Deputy Ministry for Transport issued Decision No. 20/16, extending its Decision No. 03/14 of 16 May 2014 on the technical and legal requirements applicable, for authorization purposes, to buses owned by passenger transport companies in the metropolitan area of Asunción.

112. The aim of this Decision is to fulfil the requirements established by INTN in Paraguayan Standard PNA 3900612 on accessible passenger transport vehicles. This standard requires passenger transport vehicles to have systems for boarding and alighting and reserved seating next to the doors for persons with disabilities and/or reduced mobility, while there must be no obstacles or technical impediments that may constitute a physical barrier for persons with disabilities.

113. Thus, in order to promote inclusive public transport by road, in the context of the Government’s plan to modernize public transport and adapt it to the needs of all users, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Transport expanded the technical requirements laid down in Decision No. 03/14, stipulating that for authorization purposes new buses must have access ramps for persons with disabilities, in compliance with Paraguayan Standard PNA 3900612.

114. The Ministry of Education and Science has a handbook on accessible schools, adopted by Decision No. 118 of 4 February 2015 in the framework of the inter-institutional cooperation agreement between the High Court of Electoral Justice, SENADIS, the Saraki Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Science.

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 11 of the list of issues

115. The Ministry of Social Development has a social microinsurance programme designed to protect persons of limited means from certain contingencies. The programme’s special characteristics include prompt payment and small insured sums and premiums. Simplified mechanisms considerably reduce administrative and management costs with the aim of keeping premiums low, while subscription is quick and easy so that the insurance covers as many people as possible.

116. Social microinsurance acts as a tool for combating poverty and is a mechanism that can mitigate the impact that chance events may have on the assets of persons of limited means. Beneficiaries are insured against risk of death from all causes and total and permanent disability due to illness or accident. Funeral expenses are also covered, benefiting the insured person’s family members. At the end of 2017, 13,109 families in six departments were covered by social microinsurance.

117. The Secretariat for National Emergencies is responsible for implementing the action lines under area 15, “Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies”, of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this regard, the National Risk Management and Reduction Policy was adopted by Decree No. 1402/14.

118. The Decree tasks the Secretariat for National Emergencies with implementing the Policy, whose objective is to embed disaster risk reduction and management in all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and the community at large and mainstream it in the design and implementation of public policies and development plans and programmes.

119. To achieve this objective, the Policy has two strategic areas: risk management and disaster risk reduction. This structure is based on the experiences of the Secretariat for National Emergencies and the conceptual frameworks agreed by stakeholders.

120. The strategic areas are supported by four mutually reinforcing pillars with eight cross-cutting themes that cover all issues, thus giving the Policy a comprehensive vision.

Table 11
National Risk Management and Reduction Policy



121. The cross-cutting themes represent conceptual frameworks for human development processes; they have an interdisciplinary and convergent character; and they permeate and connect all actions and management areas of the Policy. The following cross-cutting themes relate to persons with disabilities:

(a) A rights-based approach: the Policy is underpinned by international human rights standards and is designed to promote, protect and give effect to human rights. Through this approach, international norms, principles and standards are integrated into legislation and development programmes, plans and processes.

(b) A disability perspective: the Policy envisages actions to ensure that persons with disabilities will benefit equally from measures taken in the areas of risk management and disaster risk reduction, although differentiated approaches and reasonable accommodation may be necessary for this purpose.

122. On 1 April 2014, the Secretariat for National Emergencies signed an inter-institutional cooperation agreement with SENADIS, by virtue of which the former will conduct a census of persons displaced by natural phenomena living in camps located on State property and will transmit the data collected on persons with disabilities to SENADIS so that it can provide them with appropriate assistance.

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 12 of the list of issues

123. The Justice, Labour and Social Welfare Committee of the Chamber of Deputies is studying Act No. 9379/16 on the promotion of personal autonomy of persons with disabilities of Costa Rica, which seeks to promote and ensure the full and equal exercise of the right to personal autonomy of persons with disabilities. The Committee is currently analysing the Act with a view to drafting a bill and submitting it to the National Congress for consideration.

124. In the meantime, the legislative branch has created the Permanent Committee for Defending the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to ensure the review and proposal of bills that incorporate a rights-based approach for persons with disabilities in different areas, without any distinction.

125. In addition, in May 2017 and November 2018, a seminar on the legal capacity of persons with disabilities was held with a view to analysing possible measures to advance the implementation of article 12 of the Convention.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 13 of the list of issues

126. In order to move forward in the design and implementation of mechanisms to support decision-making with the participation of persons with disabilities, through their representative bodies, the National Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has created the following subcommittees:

- Inclusive education
- Health and social welfare
- Labour and social security
- National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Information, communication and sign language
- Children and adolescents
- Communication, works and transport
- Departmental and municipal affairs

127. Through the technical working groups of the Commission's subcommittees, a participatory space providing a direct channel has been established between civil society organizations representing persons with disabilities and high-level representatives of the executive branch along with departmental and municipal governments, in order to ensure that the actions, laws and policies to be implemented respond to real and current needs and to the vision of an inclusive society.

Access to justice (art. 13)

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 14 of the list of issues

128. Pursuant to Decision No. 633/10 ratifying the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People, the judiciary has facilitated and removed obstacles to guarantee effective access to justice for persons in vulnerable situations, identified in groups according to age, disability, Indigenous communities, gender and persons deprived of their liberty, among others. Work is under way to raise awareness among administrators of justice in order to ensure compliance with the Regulations. The Directorate of Human Rights of the Supreme Court of Justice is developing a protocol on access to justice for persons with disabilities that seeks to guarantee respect for human rights. It will be presented to the judiciary at the end of this year, after consultation with civil society organizations and other actors representing the rights of persons with disabilities.

129. The judiciary is also focused on promoting good treatment in order to prevent any type of attitudinal barrier among justice operators towards users of the justice system with disabilities. In this regard, the Directorate of Human Rights has held meetings and refresher courses for officials, in particular those working in user-facing roles (front desk, security guards, etc.), on the importance of good treatment and the use of inclusive language.

130. In December 2015, a nationwide campaign entitled "Put yourself in their shoes" was launched to promote the good treatment of users belonging to vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. Using posters, leaflets, banners and wraps, it involved a visual communication campaign aimed at raising the awareness of justice officials and operators about the difficulties that persons belonging to vulnerable groups encounter when accessing court buildings.

131. In 2018, the "Hechakua'á" (Considerate) campaign was launched in different departments of the judiciary, divided into two stages. The first consisted of human rights training and the distribution to justice officials of a manual on inclusive language for different

vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. The second involved opening priority service counters for older persons, persons with disabilities and pregnant women, among others. The judiciary also has a Judicial Information and Guidance Office, which is responsible for informing and supporting users in the formalities they are required to carry out in the administration of justice, with special emphasis on supporting persons in vulnerable situations.

132. Over the course of 2018, a total of 760,021 consultations were made both within the judiciary and via other cost-free channels such as the INFO-JUSTICIA phone line and email, and support was provided for persons in vulnerable situations. Of the total number of persons assisted, 3,166 were older persons and 125 were persons with disabilities.

133. The Public Defence Service has issued Decision No. 886/14 calling on public defenders to enforce the application of the rights and guarantees set forth in the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto and instructing them to ensure that their provisions are disseminated.

134. The Decision includes a reference to the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People, approved by Decision No. 43/2013, regarding the accessibility of disabled persons to the justice system, including measures aimed at using all required judicial systems and having all resources that guarantee for them safety, mobility, comfort, understanding, privacy and communication (rule 8), as well as the need for accessibility for disabled people when celebrating proceedings in which they have to intervene; in particular, every effort will be made to overcome architectural barriers, making it easier to access and to be present in the judicial premises (rule 77).

135. Pursuant to Decision No. 90/16, the use of new reporting formats for defenders in civil, child and adolescent and labour matters were introduced, in accordance with the Organic Act on the Public Defence Service and the priorities of the institutional policy; the United Nations recommendations on the importance of collecting data on persons with disabilities were taken into account in this questionnaire. It also includes an instructional guide.

136. By Decree No. 3296/15, the National Council for Access to Justice was created, comprising the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry for Women, the Youth Secretariat, the Ministry of Social Development and SENADIS, under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Justice. This provision establishes the National Houses of Justice Programme, which aims to facilitate access to justice for vulnerable communities and persons. The Directorate of Access to Justice of the Ministry of Justice provided support to 7,972 people in 2018.

137. The Houses of Justice provide priority attention to vulnerable persons, with comprehensive support for certain groups: women, children, persons with disabilities and Indigenous people. Seven such Houses of Justice have been set up in the cities of Concepción, San Juan Bautista (Misiones), Ybycuí, San Francisco, Ciudad Mujer and, more recently, in Quiindy and Presidente Hayes department. The Houses of Justice and their “Mobile House of Justice” mode are physical multidisciplinary centres for information, guidance, referral and provision of services, especially conflict resolution and free legal guidance.

138. Five new Houses of Justice are planned for 2019 in the departments of Ñeembucú, Alto Paraná, San Pedro, Caazapá and Asunción (Zona Sur), in keeping with the priorities of the National Development Plan 2030.

Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 15 of the list of issues

139. Act No. 4288/11 on the National Preventive Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is in force in Paraguay.

Article 10 of this Act permits both the national preventive mechanism and its collaborators to have unannounced and unrestricted access to places where persons are deprived of their liberty and to their places of confinement.

140. Senior officials of the Ministry of Justice hold regular meetings with the expert members of the national preventive mechanism in order to strengthen constructive dialogue, receive specific requests and report on the progress of recommendations received.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 16 of the list of issues

141. Taking into account the report published by the national preventive mechanism, the Ministry of Justice and SENADIS are promoting a cooperation agreement to coordinate actions aimed at providing adequate support for persons with disabilities deprived of their liberty. Using monitoring methodology at custodial establishments and juvenile detention centres, the Directorate General of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and the Directorate of Human Rights of the Supreme Court of Justice are coordinating actions to provide access to justice for persons with disabilities deprived of their liberty.

142. The Ministry of Justice has established an internal working mechanism to promote implementation of the recommendations of the national preventive mechanism, as well as technical support for the directors general and managers responsible for persons in State custody in the prison system. Quantitative indicators are currently being developed to measure progress.

143. Decision No. 731/15 on the approval of the protocol on support for persons with disabilities deprived of their liberty establishes guidelines for providing adequate support to persons with disabilities deprived of their liberty. In addition, awareness-raising workshops were held for prison officers to promote the application of the instrument and encourage proper treatment. Around 100 prison officers were trained over the course of 2018.

144. Decision No. 223/15 on the approval of the protocol on supporting access to justice for persons with psychosocial disabilities was also issued.

145. The Adolescent Offenders Welfare Service implements the Action Plan for the Areas of Mental Health and Addiction in the country's custodial establishments, as the entity in charge of policies adopted in correctional facilities.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 18 of the list of issues

146. Through the Mercedes Sandoval shelter for women in situations of violence, the Ministry for Women, working in coordination with 17 Secretariats for Women nationwide, provides women with temporary housing, security of person, psychological care and support, legal advice and assistance, medical care and support, occupational therapy, information and training on their rights, support to enable children admitted with their mothers to continue their education, and an introduction to income-generation programmes that enable them to achieve economic independence.

147. In the period between 2014 and November 2018, five women with disabilities of between 18 and 34 years of age from three departments – the Central, Caazapá and Paraguari departments – were provided with shelter. Similarly, five sons and three daughters with disabilities, aged between 1 month and 7 years, from two departments – the Central and San Pedro departments – were provided with shelter.

148. Although it does not have disaggregated data, the Ministry of the Interior, at the request of its Directorate of Human Rights, the National Observatory for Security and Civic Harmony, which is officially responsible for collecting and analysing the country's crime-related information in order to guide and support the actions proposed in the National Strategy for Public Security, is committed to including statistical data on persons with disabilities in relation to different crimes, once complaints enter the police information system in the country's police units. This will provide reliable information updated in real time and will also facilitate and simplify the process whereby citizens file complaints at police stations.

Liberty of movement and nationality (art. 18)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 19 of the list of issues

149. The Ministry of the Interior's Directorate of Population, in coordination with the Identification Department of the National Police, runs the "Right to an Identity" programme. One of its main objectives is to promote and ensure access to an identity for persons with disabilities, in a straightforward way and at no cost to them, through campaigns to issue identity cards in which mobile identification teams travel to the most remote communities, visiting the homes of persons with disabilities in order to collect the data required to issue the documentation.

150. Through a cooperation agreement between the Vice-President of the Republic, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of the Interior, the Director General of the Civil Registry of the Ministry of Justice is implementing the "Everyone Is Someone" campaign within the framework of the "Right to an Identity" programme. This initiative has the general objective of initiating, coordinating and consolidating cooperation between these institutions in order to ensure that all children born in the country are registered in the Civil Registry and obtains their national identity card from the day they are born.

151. Health-care establishments offer registration services on a permanent basis, providing a quick and simple process that offers an immediate solution. Furthermore, in order to curb the rate of unregistered births (under-registration), mass registration campaigns and the issuance of birth certificates continue throughout the country.

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 20 of the list of issues

152. Currently, the neuropsychiatric hospital has an average of 255 inpatients (30 per cent fewer than in the past) and handles around 24,000 consultations a year. It is the only inpatient facility for the treatment of persons with mental disabilities.

153. Under the Mental Health and Addiction Plan implemented by the prison health system, approximately 350 inmates with mental disabilities are provided with medical care by four on-staff psychiatrists in charge of delivering a multidisciplinary treatment plan.

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 21 of the list of issues

154. The psychiatric hospital of Asunción is pursuing the deinstitutionalization of adults, children and adolescents. This includes the delivery of outpatient care to older persons. Several public-health psychiatrists are involved in this work, providing follow-up and monitoring the process.

155. The "Niños de Acosta Ñu" general children's hospital has doctors specializing in paediatric neuropsychiatry, who provide specialized outpatient care to children. It operates an emergency unit for children who, once discharged can return to their families.

156. The Social Welfare Institute under the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare runs six home-based care facilities for persons with psychosocial disabilities: two in the Capital District, three in the Central Department and one in a rural area.

157. In the third health region (Cordillera), 4 physical rehabilitation units have been opened in the cities of Atyrá, Ascurra, Cabañas and Caacupé; in the seventh health region (Itapúa), 10 units have been opened; and in the eleventh health region (Central), the following physical rehabilitation units have been opened:

- Two in Itauguá: Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities and school No. 707.
- Two in Ypacaraí: Centre for Visual Impairments and Association of Parents and Friends of Persons with Different Abilities.
- One in Zeballos-Cué.

158. The Ministry for Children and Adolescents, through the Directorate of Special Protection, implements the National Special Protection Policy for Children and Adolescents Separated from their Families. The policy sets forth three strategic priorities: maintenance of family ties as the guiding principle; family placement as the protection model; and deinstitutionalization as the strategy.

159. In this context, the regulations on alternative care for children in foster care programmes and shelters, which is modelled on the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, were adopted by Decision No. 632/15.

160. The Directorate of Special Protection authorizes, registers and inspects shelters in implementation of the regulations on alternative care for children in foster care programmes and shelters, and the seven annexes thereto, namely:

- Annex I. Protocol on the search for and tracing of birth families of children and adolescents separated from their families
- Annex II. Protocol on the maintenance of family ties of children and adolescents separated from their families
- Annex III. Protocol on the care of children and adolescents in alternative care settings
- Annex IV. Protocol on foster care for children and adolescents separated from their families
- Annex V. Protocol on working with children and adolescents separated from their families in care institutions or residential shelters
- Annex VI. Protocol on tracing the origin of children and adolescents
- Annex VII. Protocol on the granting of allowances to children and adolescents in foster care

161. The alternative care regulations establish the core principles, technical criteria and administrative rules to be taken into account by all persons and legal entities that afford protection and care, in foster care or in a shelter, to children and adolescents who, for any reason, have been separated from their nuclear family or whose right to live and grow up with their family has been violated.

162. The Directorate of Special Protection has the statutory mandate to authorize, register, inspect and, where appropriate, revoke authorization for the operation of shelters. To this end, it conducts on-site inspections of shelters to verify compliance with infrastructure requirements and psychosocial and legal aspects.

163. The database is kept up to date on the basis of inspections of shelters and the reporting of the admission or discharge of children to the Directorate of Special Protection. Currently, 42 children and adolescents with disabilities are living in shelters.

Table 12

Children and adolescents with disabilities living in care institutions

<i>Care institutions</i>	<i>Female</i>			<i>Male</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>0–8 years</i>	<i>9–13 years</i>	<i>14–17 years</i>	<i>0–8 years</i>	<i>9–13 years</i>	<i>14–17 years</i>	
Albino Luis Home	2	3	4	4	1		14
Pequeño Cottolengo		1	1			2	4
Misiones SOS Villages			4		.	4	8
Las tías (Alto Paraná)	2	1	3				6
Chiquitunga	1	2	1				4
Niños Actos de Amor (Amambay)		1					1
Villa del Sol		1			1		2
Vientos de Esperanza					1		1

<i>Care institutions</i>	<i>Female</i>			<i>Male</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>0–8 years</i>	<i>9–13 years</i>	<i>14–17 years</i>	<i>0–8 years</i>	<i>9–13 years</i>	<i>14–17 years</i>	
Santa Elena					1		1
Mita Roga San José						1	1
Total	5	9	13	4	4	7	42

164. The Directorate of Special Protection implements the foster care programme by engaging with and raising awareness among families wishing to care temporarily for children who, for various reasons, cannot remain in the care of their nuclear family. At the same time, efforts are made to locate extended family members who could care for the children.

165. Currently, most of the 70 children enrolled in the programme are infants or very young, and three of the children have some type of disability. The foster families are duly assessed and supported by psychologists and social workers. Support is also provided in the form of visits to doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists, among others. Material support is provided in the form of cash transfers, basic food baskets and other supplies.

Table 13

Children in foster care

<i>Children and adolescents in foster care</i>				<i>Material support</i>			
<i>Number</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>0–8 years</i>	<i>9–13 years</i>	<i>Cash benefits</i>	<i>Dairy</i>	<i>Diapers</i>	<i>Basic food basket</i>
1	Female	1			Receive	Receive	Receive
2	Male		1	Receive			
3	Male	1			Receive	Receive	Receive

166. The Ministry for Children and Adolescents maintains an up-to-date nationwide database on care institutions and foster care programmes; the data on children and adolescents are disaggregated by sex, age, reasons for admission, identity and other information required under the aforementioned alternative care regulations.

167. A campaign was launched recently under the motto “Experience being a foster family, change a life story”, whereby the Directorate of Special Protection is calling for solidarity to realize the right to live in a family of children and adolescents who, for various reasons, have been separated from their own families.

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (art. 21)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 22 of the list of issues

168. The National Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has a subcommittee for information, communication and sign language, which is made up of different State bodies and agencies (the Secretariat of Language Policy, SENADIS, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Relay Centre of the Technical Planning Secretariat) and civil society organizations (the National Federation of Deaf Persons and the National Association of Sign Language Interpreters, Deaf Interpreters and Interpreter-Guides for Deafblind Persons in Paraguay, among others). The subcommittee is responsible for developing the national sign language plan and has made progress on the draft law on the formal recognition of Paraguayan Sign Language, which provides for the training and accreditation of interpreters.

169. The Technical Planning Secretariat has concluded an agreement with the National Federation of Deaf Persons and the National Association of Interpreters to create internship opportunities for sign language interpreters at the Relay Centre. It is also creating accessible versions of the teaching and information materials of public institutions with which it maintains agreements.

170. In August 2018, the first digital volume of Paraguayan Sign Language was published, with around 2,500 signs validated by the Paraguayan deaf community. The Secretariat of Language Policy, the Technical Planning Secretariat and the Ministry of Education and Science participated in the initiative. Given its scope and the fact that it is a living, constantly growing language, the content will be updated and expanded regularly.

171. The Department of Inclusive Communication of the Technical Planning Secretariat delivers training to promote the use of technology to make information accessible for the deaf community. It also provides sign language interpreters to Paraguay TV to ensure that the information it broadcasts is accessible to the deaf community and to public institutions organizing activities and events in which persons with disabilities participate.

172. The Relay Centre is a free telephone service accessible to persons who are deaf; it facilitates communication between deaf persons and hearing persons, institutions and services. The Centre is attached to the Technical Planning Secretariat.

173. In March 2017, an online interpreting service was established using Skype, offering direct videocalls accompanied by an interpreter via a smartphone. The service has 10 sign language interpreters and operates Monday to Friday from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

174. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, through the National Labour Training System, constantly generates new and innovative employment opportunities. In October 2015, the Ministry set up a division to manage inclusive vocational training, which has helped improve the quality and increase the availability of training for persons with disabilities. Thirty-one courses were delivered nationwide in 2016 and 2017 together with the Saraki Foundation; an additional 10 courses were held in the second half of 2017. At the beginning of 2018, the National Labour Training System signed another specific agreement with the Saraki Foundation to deliver 38 courses for a total of 950 beneficiaries with disabilities.

175. The outcome of these measures is as follows:

- 2016: 3 courses that were put out to public tender, with 79 graduates; 9 courses based on a specific agreement, with 232 graduates. Total: 12 courses with 311 beneficiaries.
- 2017: 12 courses in the first semester, with 285 graduates; 10 additional courses in the second semester, with 223 graduates. Total: 22 courses with 508 beneficiaries.
- 2018: 38 courses based on a specific agreement, with 950 beneficiaries.

176. Specific agreements involve supported employment schemes where graduates are provided with support to carry out internships in line with their specialty and profile, by liaising with companies and promoting the employment of persons with disabilities.

177. The specific agreement on opportunities for effective inclusion concluded in 2018 provided for training in basic sign language; three courses were delivered to both the public and private sectors.

178. Since 2011, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, together with SENADIS and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has been conducting training workshops on inclusive language for State and freelance communicators. All public media outlets disseminate awareness-raising campaigns on the subject. Since February 2018, through an agreement with the Technical Planning Secretariat, all news broadcasts on Paraguay TV HD include sign language interpretation.

179. The Ministry of Education and Science has reported the following progress:

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Programme: R4. A3. Provision of technology kits to 111 fixed laboratories in Indigenous education institutions, institutions providing inclusive education (69 kits) and continuing education institutions (318 kits).
- Planning of a course on accessible use of technology for teachers (target group: inclusive education institutions).

- Elaboration of a training programme entitled “accessibility and technology” for directors and teachers of education institutions that implement ICT integration projects.
- Creation of an ICT Teachers Network, together with teacher training institutions.
- Establishment of a working group together with teacher training institutions to include the use of technology as an ICT skill in the educational sphere.
- Sign language training for remedial education teachers: 45 teachers working in hospital classrooms, community centres, centre-level technical staff and supervisors trained and certified in sign language in the Capital District and the Central Department.

180. The Supreme Court of Justice, together with the International Centre for Judicial Studies, provides regular training on basic sign language with a human rights perspective to raise awareness of inclusion among officials.

181. In October 2016, the “Legal Guide” digital app was launched as part of the policy on access to justice in order to create an inclusive and accessible justice system. Aside from using simple and clear language, the guide serves as an information tool for persons with sensory impairment as it features explanatory audio content and graphic. Users are offered the following, both in Spanish and Guarani:

- Basic information on judicial procedures, such as: child support; reporting child abuse or sexual abuse; reporting domestic violence; free DNA testing; recognition of parentage; and authorization to travel abroad without parental consent.
- A list of judicial facilitators
- Georeferenced data on all courthouses nationwide
- A list of judicial districts

182. By October 2017, there were 3,931 downloads of the Android version, which was rated 4.5/5 for user-friendliness and content by users.

Education (art. 24)

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 23 of the list of issues

183. By Decision No. 4004/2017, SENADIS approved the indicators for “the right to education” focus area of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which were incorporated into the results-based planning system of the Technical Planning Secretariat, thereby initiating the process of elaborating metadata records for the implementation of these indicators.

184. Under Act No. 5136/13 on inclusive education and its regulatory decree No. 2837/14, an inclusive education model at all levels and across all modalities of the national education system is being developed in order to remove barriers to ensure the retention, learning, participation and advancement of students with specific education support needs.

185. The National Education Plan 2024 was designed to provide equal access and enable timely completion of studies for students at different levels and in different modalities of education. It provides for an increase in Inclusion Support Centres through the gradual transformation of special education schools and the expansion of the activities of the Remedial Education Support Service such as hospital classrooms, centres/homes and shelters. Additional support is provided to technical teams, teachers, students and families in education institutions that serve students with specific educational support needs.

186. In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted Decision No. 17267/2018 approving the guidelines for an inclusive education system in Paraguay in government-run, subsidized private and private institutions.

187. Information and training sessions on the normative framework and implementation of inclusive education were held in the capital and the country’s 17 departments for various

stakeholders: departmental coordinators, supervisors, technical staff, and legal advisors; all in all, 694 persons participated. In parallel, technical support workshops on inclusive education were held across all levels and modalities of education, involving the participation of a total of 3,758 professionals: directors, teachers and technical staff of educational institutions at all levels, as well as parents and 135 representatives of teacher training institutes (data as at November 2015).

188. In the framework of a project to strengthen the institutional administration of bilingual education for persons with hearing disabilities, the Ministry of Education and Science is currently developing the relevant materials.

189. A project aimed at improving learning for persons with visual disabilities and those around them facilitated the identification of children, adolescents and young people who were not attending school.

190. In the early stages, awareness-raising and training campaigns were conducted for professionals in the field; workshops were held for school principals, inclusion support workers, teachers, families, and members of civil society; seven workshops were held for a total of 700 participants. Data were collected on 81 out-of-school children with visual impairments; their families were visited to encourage them to use the education services in their community. Awareness-raising was also conducted among the local education authorities to facilitate the children's inclusion.

191. A total of 291 students with visual impairments are enrolled at different levels of public education. For 241 of these students, individual study plans (individual curricular adjustments) have been approved which set forth the students' specific support needs and the technical and material support required for their learning; the same number of school kits tailored to the children's individual needs have been distributed. These measures have benefited 109 educational institutions, 400 teachers and 532 family and civil society representatives.

192. In addition, a programme on basic communication skills training in Paraguayan Sign Language, with a teaching load of 102 lecture hours, was developed and delivered to 67 educators and technical staff from the Central Department and Capital District.

Conversion of special schools into resource support centres

193. A plan for the conversion of special schools is being developed, which seeks to bring the services provided into line with current legislation. Education specialists from the Ministry of Education and Science are conducting planned visits to educational establishments to collect data on the functioning of the schools, the student body, individual characteristics, infrastructure, staff profiles and services available.

194. The first Paraguayan videobooks in inclusive format have been launched: two books of stories and one book with teaching materials adapted to the sociolinguistic needs of the deaf community. The materials were translated from written Spanish by sign language interpreters and adapted and interpreted into Paraguayan Sign Language by storytellers who are deaf.

195. The materials available feature subtitles, voice-overs and moving images. Work is also under way at the global level to develop a basic and universal protocol for calls for tender for textbooks in accessible formats for children and adolescents with disabilities and an activity guide for teachers and guidance on implementing classroom activities.

196. Inclusion-related topics such as non-discrimination, otherness, respect for human rights, diversity and recognition of people's developmental differences in fields such as sociology, anthropology, ethics and citizenship education and psychology, all of which belong to the social sciences, are mainstreamed across national curricula.

197. The Educator Training Programme to improve learning outcomes for children, young people and adults nationwide seeks to design an inclusive education model that will include training in inclusive education for prospective teachers and teachers already in service. To this end, a specialized course of study on inclusive education was developed for trainers of trainers, along with textbooks for the various modules. A total of 1,100 persons (supervisors,

principals, teachers, psychologists, educational psychologists) participated in the programme implemented under the National Education Plan 2024 and the 2013–2018 education agenda of the Ministry of Education and Science.

198. The Child Development Care Project facilitated the provision of technical assistance to educators from 27 inclusive education institutions and 10 basic education institutions. The provision of reasonable accommodation has also been extended nationwide through the decentralization of decision-making to local oversight bodies.

199. The 2013–2018 National Education Plan for the Indigenous Peoples of Paraguay aimed at improving school-based education for Indigenous peoples, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate quality education consistent with the current legal framework. The Plan was elaborated and negotiated with the participation of Indigenous peoples, NGOs, the educational community and the technical team of the Directorate General for Indigenous Schooling and focuses on improving infrastructure and equipment to enable inclusive, equality-based education for all.

200. Meetings were organized to raise awareness of Act No. 3231/07 on Indigenous education. Indigenous assemblies chose their representatives for the Indigenous School Education Area Council. The National Indigenous Education Council, with representatives of 19 peoples, was formed, and a permanent post for an Indigenous education area director was created.

201. The National Council takes the lead in developing educational content specific to each Indigenous people, with stories about the history of Indigenous peoples told by religious leaders, elders and other knowledge-holders, and short, intense and phased teaching periods based on the child's experience in his or her community. This knowledge is later expanded to incorporate the child's surroundings, thus enhancing interculturalism and the comprehensive care of children and young people at all levels.

202. In cooperation with the educational oversight offices, capacity-building and training on issues relating to Act No. 5136/13 on inclusive education and its regulations were conducted for teachers working in schools in Indigenous communities. The aim was to improve learning outcomes for children and young people with disabilities, deliver pedagogical tools and raise awareness of the inclusive education model.

203. The National University of Asunción has rolled out a project to provide assistance to persons with disabilities with a view to responding to the needs of university students with disabilities and helping them develop their abilities, in order to encourage their admission to and ongoing university attendance and their transition to the labour market.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 24 of the list of issues

204. There are 50 sign language interpreters in Paraguay, 4 of whom are working in university lecture halls, providing study support for students in educational sciences at the University of Asunción.

205. The first deaf young people and adults have been admitted to the lifelong learning programme in two educational institutions that offer this modality; they are supported by four sign language interpreters.

Health (art. 25)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 26 of the list of issues

206. The Social Welfare Institute under the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare participates in the design and implementation of plans and programmes aimed at improving quality of life and the standard of living through social services that enable access to high-quality, humane care, in accordance with the principles of universality, comprehensiveness, equity, and participation. The Social Welfare Institute operates six home-based care facilities for persons with psychosocial disabilities: two in the capital, three in the Central Department, and one in a rural area. Each of these facilities has 10 residents.

207. All Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare programmes are rolled out nationwide and target the most vulnerable segments of the population. By Decision No. 613/2015 and based on the understanding of health as the social product of the interaction of social, economic, cultural and environmental factors, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, with technical cooperation from the Pan-American Health Organization, is implementing comprehensive and integrated health-service networks. These are based on the universal health coverage strategy and are implemented through mechanisms such as land-use planning; reorganization of services; coordination and development of networks; strengthening of comprehensive networks of primary health-care services; management processes; and investment in institutions.

208. The comprehensive and integrated health-service networks, known as “Tesai Pyahura Paraguay”, comprise a range of health-care services that are linked to each other by their unique mission, shared objectives and cooperative and interdependent approach, which enables the continuous and comprehensive delivery of humane, safe and equitable care to the population. They build a bridge between the entities under the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare and other public and private health-care providers, such as the Social Security Institute, the police health service, the military health service, and municipalities and governorates. Agreements and partnerships have been established to this end.

Comprehensive and integrated health-service networks:

- Individual, family and community care – Complexity: low.
- Level of care: primary level.
- Correspondence: three types of family health units: satellite, standard and mobile family health units.
- Hospital care – Complexity: low. Level of care: primary level.
 - Operational correspondence: extended family health unit.
 - Complexity: medium. Level of care: secondary level.
 - Operational correspondence: district hospitals.
 - Complexity: high. Level of care: tertiary level.
 - Operational correspondence: regional hospitals.
 - Complexity: high. Level of care: tertiary level.
 - Operational correspondence: national hospitals; general hospitals; specialized hospitals, institutes, others (central hospital of the Social Security Institute).
- Logistics system:

209. Operational correspondence:

- Regulated access emergency outpatient services, Emergency and Disaster Assistance Coordination Centre health information system (online).
- Electronic health record (medical appointments), emergency outpatient services.
- Mobile health units: land, water and air.

Support systems

210. Operational correspondence:

- Diagnostic, therapeutic and biomedical support systems, pharmaceutical care system.
- Tele-support/telemedicine health information system.
- Environmental services: National Environmental Sanitation Service, National Malaria Eradication Service, the General Directorate of Environmental Health, among others. System of laboratories for clinical and bacteriological analysis. Diagnostic imaging system.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 27 of the list of issues

211. The key lines of action of the different strategies under the National Health Policy for 2015–2030 are: strengthening social protection measures with a rights-based approach and a focus on vulnerable populations, including different age groups (children, adolescents and older persons) and persons with disabilities, integrating a gender and intercultural perspective; and the development of an integrated information system and intersectoral analysis to generate and systematize data disaggregated by population groups based on age, sex, disability status, demographic distribution, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and other criteria.

212. The Government is firmly committed to taking on the challenge of generating disaggregated data on persons with disabilities. As part of the implementation of pillar 2 of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, inter-institutional workshops were held in the course of 2017 to review and validate the Plan's indicators for the development and consolidation of data generation and systematization mechanisms. SENADIS is currently working to generate disability data with a view to the establishment of an integrated management and information system.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 28 of the list of issues

213. The State budget allocated to disability accounts for 4 per cent of the total annual budget.

214. The table below sets out the budget of the SENADIS since its inception.

Table 14

SENADIS budget

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Budget</i>
SENADIS	2013	65 032 041 326
SENADIS	2014	54 882 232 173
SENADIS	2015	54 600 651 114
SENADIS	2016	54 099 485 743
SENADIS	2017	54 099 485 743
SENADIS	2018	54 099 485 743

Table 15

Budget for persons with disabilities (for the national mechanism and specific programmes)

<i>SENADIS budget</i>		
<i>Budget</i>	<i>Average dollar rate Dec. 2018</i>	<i>Budget in USD</i>
54 099 485 743 PYG	5.841,71726 PYG	9 260 887 USD

Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 29 of the list of issues

215. In addition to the psychiatric hospital and the National Centre for Addiction Prevention and Treatment located in the capital, the integrated health service networks of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare operate the following services that provide specialized psychological and psychiatric care at:

- 25 regional, general and specialized hospitals (Niños Mártires de Acosta Ñu General Paediatric Hospital, Dr. Arnaldo Bendlin National Centre for Burns and Reconstructive Surgery (CENQUER), Profesor Dr. Manuel Giani Trauma Hospital, the Indigenous hospital, 2 specialized centres).
- 28 district hospitals.
- 26 health centres.

216. Outpatient care is delivered in 17 of the 18 health regions; one of the regional hospitals – Pedro Juan Caballero regional hospital – provides inpatient crisis services for persons with mental illness. In addition, the mobile mental health unit delivers specialist care and medication in 12 of the country's districts. A total of 91 health facilities are delivering specialized mental health care, with 45 psychiatrists and 220 psychologists on staff.

217. Investment in mental health and illness accounts for 1.84 per cent of the overall health budget; 65 per cent of this investment goes to the psychiatric hospital and the National Centre for Addiction Prevention and Treatment, and 35 per cent to the remaining services.

218. As concerns hospitalization based on informed consent, a protocol was adopted by Decree No. 164 of 28 April 2014, which establishes guidance and criteria for hospital admission and management of persons with mental disorders.

219. In addition, SENADIS and the Ministry of Social Development worked on a protocol for assessing the level of disability in persons with psychosocial disabilities to facilitate access to the Tekoporã Programme for low-income families of persons with a severe disability.

220. By Decision No. 001 of 4 January 2017, another protocol was adopted for use by family health units in skills assessment of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Habilitation and rehabilitation (art. 26)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 30 of the list of issues

221. SENADIS currently runs seven habilitation and rehabilitation facilities in the departments of Cordillera (Caacupé), Caaguazú (Coronel Oviedo), Guairá (Villarrica), San Pedro (Santaní), Paraguarí (Tebicuarymi) and Ñeembucú (Pilar).

222. As part of the implementation of the comprehensive and integrated health-service networks, SENADIS and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare have started to transfer rehabilitation services run by the Ministry. Some rehabilitation services have been set up within regional hospitals with the involvement of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare.

223. In the third health region, four physical rehabilitation centres were opened in Atyrá, Ascurra, Cabañas and Caacupé; 10 centres were established in the seventh health region. In the eleventh health region, a support centre for persons with disabilities, school No. 707 (Itaiguá), a centre for visual disabilities, and the centre of the Association of Parents and Friends of Persons with Different Abilities (Ypacaraí) and a rehabilitation centre (Zeballos Cué) were established.

Work and employment (art. 27)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 31 of the list of issues

224. With the establishment of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security,³ the new labour, employment and social security policy of Paraguay focuses on ensuring access to decent work based on conditions of equality, security, freedom and dignity for all, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups. The policy also seeks to consolidate and maintain working conditions that foster formal employment, compliance with labour regulations and tripartite social dialogue.

225. Between 2014 and May 2018, the Directorate General of Employment of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security organized 100 job fairs in the capital and the interior of the country, thus facilitating access to decent work and pay, social security and safe and healthy workplaces.

³ Established by Act No. 5115/13 on the establishment of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

226. In 2017, the first public and private sector employment portal entitled “Paraguay puede más” (Paraguay can do better) was launched, which gives interested persons quick and easy access to job profiles wanted by companies.⁴

227. Job fairs for persons with disabilities were held in May 2016, May 2017 and August 2017. Employment advice was provided to 207 persons with disabilities in 2016 and to 226 persons in 2017. A fourth job fair is planned for September 2018.

228. Twelve persons with disabilities took up employment in private companies in 2016; 14 persons were hired in 2017.

229. Measures taken to promote employment opportunities, including for vulnerable groups, in line with the public policy whereby all segments of the population deserve employment opportunities include the following:

- Decent job fairs, which resulted in 4,061 job placements in 2015; 5,008 in 2016 and 7,343 in 2017. Job fairs, for rural employment, industry, export clothing factories and the IT sector were open to persons with hearing impairments, single mother heads of household, people who had an accident, young breadwinners, domestic workers, and others.
- Four actions taken in municipal markets to encourage informal traders to join the formal economy.
- The launch of a National Formal Labour Day with discounts in formal businesses for people in formal employment.
- The launch, as part of a public-private partnership, of the “Juego Súper Vale” game to raise awareness among young people aware that true heroes are those who abide by all laws.
- The use of tutorial tests and aptitude tests to help identify profiles and job skills of young people and adults; 4,265 such tests were conducted in 2016, 7,343 in 2017 and 1,805 as at July 2018.
- The EMPLEPAR gathering of business leaders, ministers and job seekers with the slogan “Improve your employability, train with the country’s top employers”. Four meetings were held during which approximately 10,000 young people learned about key values and qualities that are taken into account during the selection process and about ways to develop and advance in their careers.
- Visits to schools: more than 12,000 young people participated in on-site awareness-raising on the importance of legal employment and received information on their rights and obligations. The newsletter produced jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science reached 60,000 people.

230. Regarding career advancement, between January 2014 and May 2018 the National Career Development Service issued 40,347 certificates nationwide to persons who attended training designed for specific groups, such as persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, companies and persons deprived of their liberty.

231. The AGORA Paraguay project is an initiative of the ONCE Foundation in Latin America (FOAL) and is being implemented in 14 countries in the region; its local partners are the National Career Development Service and the rehabilitation centre for blind persons attached to the Ministry of Education and Science. Its objective is to strengthen the rights of persons with visual impairments by enabling access to decent employment.

232. According to data provided by the AGORA Paraguay project management, which operates under the National Career Development Service, 275 people graduated from the programme in 2016, and 331 persons participated in 66 different courses in 2017. As at July 2018, 40 courses were held with a total of 161 participants.

⁴ Web portal: <http://paraguaypuedemas.mtess.gov.py/>.

233. In 2017, the National Career Development Service arranged job placements for 19 persons with visual impairments – 14 men and 5 women – in public institutions and private companies. In 2018, 10 persons – 7 men and 3 women – found jobs.

234. In 2017, support was also provided to 70 persons with visual impairments – 36 men and 34 women – who operate micro enterprises, such as manufacturing cleaning and household products and handicrafts. As of July 2018, seven persons – one man and six women – have received support.

235. The Ciudad Mujer (Women's City) centre which delivers comprehensive support to women, implements five modules that correspond to different institutional competences. The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security coordinates the economic empowerment module, which is designed to support income generation through capacity-building and training.

236. As at May 2018, 55 civil servants with disabilities – 16 contractual staff and 39 permanent staff – were working in the judiciary; 27 per cent are female and 73 per cent are male. Of those, there are 4 staff members with intellectual disabilities, 6 with hearing impairments, 2 with visual impairments, 36 with physical disabilities, 4 with multiple disabilities, and 3 with psychosocial disabilities. In terms of age distribution, there are two persons over 60 years of age, ten aged 50 to 59 years, fourteen aged between 40 and 49, sixteen aged 30 to 39, and twelve between 20 and 29 years of age.

237. The geographical distribution by judicial districts is as follows: 2 in Alto Paraná, 6 in Amambay, 25 in the capital, 4 in the Central Department, 3 in Caazapá, 4 in Cordillera, 3 in Concepción, 2 in Itapúa, 1 in Misiones, 2 in Ñeembucú and 3 in Paraguari.

238. Overall, 0.611 per cent of the more than 300,000 posts in public administration are held by persons with disabilities. Of the 1,947 civil servants with disabilities, 1,303 are men (67 per cent) and 644 are women (33 per cent). In terms of employment relationship, about 69 per cent of staff are permanent, while just under 31 per cent have temporary employment contracts; 144 institutions report having persons with disabilities on staff.

239. Public policy of affirmative action for labour inclusion: Act No. 4962/13 provides for benefits for private-sector employers to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities. SENADIS, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, civil society representatives (Saraki Foundation) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Paraguay launched the National Day for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Workplace, which is commemorated on 20 May and seeks to raise awareness of the advantages and benefits of including persons with disabilities in the world of work. The bill on the establishment of the National Day has been submitted to the Justice, Labour and Social security committee of the Chamber of Deputies in plenary, which has pledged to support the initiative.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 32 of the list of issues

240. In order to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the regulations implementing Act No. 4962/13 on tax incentives for private companies is currently being revised, primarily to allow for consultations with all stakeholders and to harmonize and align its terminology and procedural and practical scope with other national and international standards in force. In view of its scope and impact, the Ministry of Finance, SENADIS and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, together with stakeholders from various sectors and institutions, are working hard to design an efficient, universally relevant regulatory framework to translate the objectives of the Act into practice.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 33 of the list of issues

241. Decree No. 6369/2011 regulating Act No. 2479/04, which lays down the obligation to employ persons with disabilities in the civil service, and Act No. 3585/08, which amends articles 1, 4 and 6 of Act No. 2479/04, establishes the procedures and mechanisms whereby the Civil Service Secretariat exercises its functions and responsibilities as they relate to the implementation of these acts. Article 5 provides that at least 5 per cent of job openings in

public institutions must be reserved for persons with disabilities, along with the corresponding budget lines.

242. The Civil Service Secretariat has adopted temporary measures requiring State institutions that apply for approval of profiles to set aside 30 per cent of their vacancies for persons with disabilities. The Secretariat has also made progress in the promotion of plans and timelines for the progressive inclusion of persons with disabilities in State institutions; provided support by monitoring public tenders concerning persons with disabilities; established the civil service subcommittee in the National Council for Persons with Disabilities; become a member of the inter-institutional round table on the rights of persons with disabilities; prepared and published regular reports on the extent to which public institutions comply with the minimum quota for the employment of persons with disabilities.

243. The Supreme Court of Justice, by Decision No. 960/2015, created the department of inclusion and employment support for persons with disabilities, whose tasks include with taking the necessary measures to remove all barriers that prevent or hinder the inclusion, retention and/or promotion of persons with disabilities in the judiciary; acting as employment facilitator for persons with intellectual disabilities working in the judiciary; and identifying and remove obstacles to the physical mobility of persons with disabilities in the premises of the judiciary.

244. This department is responsible for carrying out pre-recruitment procedures and for monitoring the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities, regardless of whether or not they are permanent members of staff.

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 34 of the list of issues

245. Since 2014, the administration and implementation of the programmes of the Ministry of Social Development have incorporated a human rights approach, initially through training workshops for officials and rights holders organized in cooperation with OHCHR. In this context, a protocol for the consultation of Indigenous communities, villages and family groups; a module for the inclusion of Indigenous families in the Tekoporã Programme; a module for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Tekoporã Programme; a human rights indicators framework; and a manual for addressing violence against women, children and adolescents have been adopted.

246. The Tekoporã Programme, a social initiative implemented by the Ministry of Social Development, is designed to protect and promote poor and vulnerable families, who are identified and classified using current selection instruments (up to stratum II on the Life Quality Index). The main objective of the programme is to improve the quality of life of these families, helping them to exercise their rights to food, health and education, by increasing their use of basic services and strengthening social networks in order to end the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

247. The programme is made up of two components:

- Social, family and community support provided by family guides, monitored on an ongoing basis by district-based coordinators
- Cash transfers with shared responsibility, whereby the State provides direct financial support in the form of a grant paid every two months to poor, extremely poor and vulnerable households.

248. The module for the inclusion of persons with disabilities has been in place since 2015. Its methodology is based on a targeted approach prioritizing inclusion and continuity, with shared responsibility and specific benefits for this sector of the population. Families with one or two members with severe disabilities receive an additional sum. Reasonable accommodation is provided on a case-by-case basis.

249. The shared responsibilities are applied on a gradual basis according to suitability, to the extent necessary for the State to guarantee access for persons with disabilities to their

rights to health, habilitation, rehabilitation, education and protection, according to the possibilities allowed by the disability.

250. The State has significantly increased investment in its social programmes aimed at combating extreme poverty, raising the budget allocated each year, especially that of the Tekoporã Programme, with 80 per cent of the money being earmarked for transfers and 20 per cent for operating costs.

251. As of the end of 2017, the programme provided protection to a total of 152,132 families (approximately 664,000 persons), covering 19,595 persons with disabilities (2,176 of them with severe disabilities). As of April 2018, the programme has invested G 1,609,360,000 in persons with disabilities, with coverage reaching 20,068 persons with disabilities (8,944 of them women).

252. Requirements for access to the programme: Once the selection mechanism has been applied, the programme prioritizes families whose members include:

- Children between 0 and 14 years of age; and/or
- Young persons between 15 and 18 years of age; and/or
- Pregnant women; and/or
- Persons with disabilities; and/or
- Indigenous persons.

253. Inclusion of persons with severe disabilities: A specific cooperation agreement signed between the Ministry of Social Development and SENADIS has approved the module for the inclusion of persons with severe disabilities in the Tekoporã Programme. Its inclusion criteria are as follows:

- (a) Families including members with severe disabilities, whether physical, intellectual, sensory, psychosocial or multiple disabilities
- (b) In conditions of poverty
- (c) Of all ages
- (d) Anywhere in the country

254. Regarding shared responsibilities, the families of persons with severe disabilities undertake to keep the documentation of the person with disabilities up to date, to take care of their hygiene and living environment, and to provide adequate nutrition, health treatment, habilitation and/or rehabilitation, education and access to care, as appropriate in each case.

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 35 of the list of issues

255. Regarding the legislative measures adopted to guarantee the political rights of persons with disabilities, it is worth mentioning that the bill on the recognition of the civil and political rights of persons with disabilities is under consideration.

256. In this context, the restriction contained in article 91⁵ of the Electoral Code is being considered for amendment. The proposal was presented in 2014, and has been championed by legislative committees, advisers, officials of the High Court of Electoral Justice and civil society organizations.

257. Regarding measures put in place to increase the participation of persons with disabilities, SENADIS Decision No. 270/2014, which was passed in 2014 in conjunction with the High Court of Electoral Justice, established the Accessible Voting Pilot Plan, in compliance with the Electoral Code, article 118 of the Constitution and article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its implementation included the

⁵ “The following persons may not vote: (b) deaf persons who cannot make themselves understood in writing or by any other means...”.

setting up of voting from home, priority voting, assisted voting, voting at accessible polling desks, voting with Braille templates and information and service desks.

258. Applicants are required to fill out a form provided by the High Court of Electoral Justice and provide proof of the disability in the form of a certificate from SENADIS or medical certificates approved by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare. After on-the-spot verification, the list of eligible voters is published on the websites of SENADIS and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare. These mechanisms have an accessible web page (including a sign language interpreter for persons with hearing impairments), and provide information on the voting procedure.

259. In its Decision No. 41/2017, the High Court of Electoral Justice established the rules for accessible voting in the 2018 general and departmental elections, which included making it possible to vote at an accessible polling desk or from home and setting up information and service desks, in addition to the assisted and priority voting procedures established in the Electoral Code.

260. All polling stations have an accessible polling desk (No. 1), which is located in an easily accessible place and comprises two polling booths, one dimensioned so as to be accessible to wheelchair users, the other being of standard design. The desk has a list of voters who usually vote there, voters with disabilities and older persons who have applied for inclusion within the period established by resolution the year prior to each election. Nationally, a total of 5,342 persons were authorized to vote at an accessible polling desk.

261. Voting from home involves bringing the polling desk to the homes of persons with severe physical disabilities or serious health problems who have applied to cast their votes in this way. These persons must meet the requirements established in accessible voting regulations for the 2018 general and departmental elections and undergo an on-the-spot verification process carried out by doctors appointed by the High Court of Electoral Justice, accompanied by representatives of the Accessible Voting Commission and, optionally, by representatives of the political parties and movements.

262. The districts authorized to carry out this programme are the cities of Asunción, Fernando de la Mora, Lambaré, Capiatá, Mariano Roque Alonso, Luque, Ñemby, San Lorenzo, Coronel Oviedo, Ciudad del Este and Encarnación.

263. With regard to voting by persons with visual impairments, article 217 of the Electoral Code states: "Persons who are physically unable to mark the ballot paper and place it in the ballot box may be assisted in this task by a person of trust." Persons with visual impairments may for this reason ask polling desk staff to allow a person of trust to accompany them into the polling booth in order to mark their ballot paper.

264. The accessible voting regulations for the 2018 general and departmental elections introduced an information and service desk for persons with disabilities and older persons, staffed by trained volunteers. This desk, which was located in an accessible place at the entrance of the polling station, was provided with instructional materials to help persons with disabilities exercise their right to vote.

265. The desk was also provided with Braille templates so that persons with visual impairments would not need another person to mark their ballot paper for them. The voter was assisted by a member of the information and service desk staff, who took the templates to the president of the desk where the vote was to be cast in order for the ballot paper to be inserted.

266. In addition to the Braille template and instructions in Braille, the information and service desk has magnifying glasses for persons with reduced vision, an ergonomic adapter for persons with upper-limb physical disabilities, videos explaining the voting system step by step in sign language, as well as illustrative posters and signs outlining the procedure and manuals and regulations concerning accessible voting.

267. The accessible voting programme has had a very positive impact on the participation of persons with disabilities: since its implementation, many persons with different types of disabilities have been able to exercise their right to vote.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 36 of the list of issues

268. The process of developing indicators for the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was undertaken in 2016–2017 with the technical cooperation of OHCHR. During the process, indicators were developed for the areas of production of national data, accessibility, the right to education, the right to work and employment and investment. They were approved through SENADIS Decision No. 4004/2017 and incorporated into the Technical Planning Secretariat's results-based planning system.

269. Within the framework of the European Union-funded project Bridging the Gap II – Inclusive Policies and Services for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an action plan was launched to foster the socioeconomic inclusion, equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities through more inclusive and accountable institutions and policies.

270. The aim of the project is to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the strengthening of information systems and the use of disaggregated data. In this context, it has supported the creation of measurable indicators and targets for the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015–2030, which will help promote quantitative and qualitative evaluation as part of an ongoing monitoring process, as well as the evaluation of other plans and programmes.

271. The Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses has been a regular participant in the meetings of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and incorporated specific questions into the 2012 National Population and Housing Census to measure disability from the limitations perspective. Furthermore, the Bridging the Gap II project made provision for technical assistance for the incorporation of disaggregated information on disability in the next census, scheduled for 2022.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 37 of the list of issues

272. In 2017, as part of the working group on the production of national data (the second action area of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses participated in inter-institutional round tables aimed at reviewing and validating the National Action Plan indicators. The indicators of this area relate to the development and strengthening of information systems of the institutions to which the Department of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses is committed to providing technical assistance for the data generation and systematization processes.

273. The Bridging the Gap II project recommended incorporating the set of National Action Plan indicators into the dashboard of the results-based planning system in order to allow more effective monitoring. This was achieved through SENADIS Decision No. 4004/2017, thus initiating the process of establishing metadata records for the implementation of these indicators.

274. Outcomes have been defined in order to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed. These include Outcome 2, which is to increase the capacity of State actors to develop and implement inclusive public policies and services for persons with disabilities, as well as to ensure that organizations of persons with disabilities participate in the process.

275. Paraguay has reaffirmed its willingness to make all necessary efforts to create the conditions required to effectively fulfil the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, approved by General Assembly resolution 70/1, including national support. The provisions of the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Plan are to a great extent aligned and, in December 2017, an expanded version of the Recommendations Monitoring System used by the State since 2014 was launched. Entitled SIMORE Plus, it links the follow-up of international human rights recommendations to the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, as well as the general comments of the Treaty Bodies.

276. This version includes improved functionalities that strengthen the State's follow-up and implementation mechanism, facilitating the preparation of national reports and research on human rights in the country, as well as providing a space for civil society participation and monitoring. Paraguay is currently sharing this initiative with other countries through technical cooperation schemes.

277. SIMORE Plus operates on the basis of a network of focal points distributed across the various public institutions of the three branches of State, including SENADIS, which is responsible for following up on the international human rights recommendations assigned to its respective institutions, as well as the corresponding Sustainable Development Goals.

278. In order to better organize IT resources, working groups have been set up to coordinate State-sponsored policies, plans and programmes relating to international human rights recommendations and the Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of following up on each of them, identifying efforts and progress made, outcomes and challenges. These working groups represent different themes and sectors of the population and include one dedicated to issues affecting older persons and persons with disabilities.

International cooperation (art. 32)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 38 of the list of issues

279. As coordinator of the Human Rights Network of the executive branch, the Ministry of Justice has hosted workshops, with the support of the Technical Planning Secretariat, to validate the link between the current National Human Rights Plan and the National Development Plan. The topics were addressed on the basis of the central themes of the National Human Rights Plan, namely the transformation of structural inequalities, human rights education, the social rule of law and human security, in order to outline strategies for the short, medium and long term. Thirty-eight representatives from 20 State bodies and entities participated.

280. The link between the National Human Rights Plan and the National Development Plan has made it possible to analyse the alignment between actions of both instruments and to shine a light on existing connections between public policies relating to human rights and mechanisms for implementing the country's development agenda. The objectives of this link are: to achieve an integrated system of public policies relating to human rights; to contemplate the country's public policy on human rights as it looks to the future; and to harmonize human rights objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals through the establishment of a dashboard with indicators and targets.

281. In order to strengthen the Human Rights Network of the executive branch, eight State bodies and entities have been incorporated as full members through Decision No. 375/16 of the Ministry of Justice. They include SENADIS, whose participation in the aforementioned linking process has reinforced the establishment of a cross-cutting approach to the rights of persons with disabilities in the coordination of State actions to include them in development policies, in line with the provisions of the Convention.

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 39 of the list of issues

282. In a public ceremony on 3 December 2018, the President of the Republic and the Cabinet signed a pledge to redouble efforts aimed at fulfilling the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This action is a clear demonstration of the Government's commitment to revitalizing the inter-institutional coordination framework that is required in order to promote the implementation of the Plan's objectives aimed at benefiting persons with disabilities.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 40 of the list of issues

283. Following the initiation of activities among member organizations of the National Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with the technical assistance of OHCHR, for the preparation of a draft bill to create an independent national mechanism in accordance with article 33 of the Convention, SENADIS and the Ombudsman's Office are expected to sign a strategic agreement. Under its terms, the Ombudsman's Office will provide leadership to help strengthen efforts aimed at establishing the mechanism, whose functioning and monitoring apparatus may ultimately incorporate a body that acts as comptroller of government compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Reply to the issue raised in paragraph 41 of the list of issues

284. With regard to the efforts adopted to facilitate the registration processes of organizations of persons with disabilities, SENADIS has established administrative management mechanisms and practices providing support and advice to help interested parties meet the essential, legally established requirements. These have enabled organizations to obtain legal status more quickly and easily. Work is currently under way to strengthen organizations of persons with disabilities and there has been a marked increase in the number of registrations with SENADIS.
