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Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 12 May 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Schrijver (Vice-Chairperson)

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

Consideration of reports

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant *(continued)*

Fifth periodic report of the Russian Federation (continued) (E/C.12/RUS/5; E/C.12/RUS/Q/5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of the Russian Federation took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 6 to 15 of the Covenant (continued)

2. **Mr. Kolbanov** (Russian Federation), replying to a question on extreme poverty, said that according to the United Nations Development Programme, the Russian Federation had a high level of human development and extreme poverty was not a mass phenomenon in the country. Since 2000, the number of persons living on less than \$2 a day had been reduced tenfold and the number of persons living in extreme poverty was now less than 1 per cent of the population. It was true, however, that some forms of extreme poverty still existed. He clarified that the term “antisocial elements” referred to those homeless persons who abused alcohol and drugs.

3. He noted that his Government had already achieved in 2008 the Millennium Development Goal to halve poverty by 2015. It was now trying to improve social benefits, and was increasing guaranteed minimum wages and pensions.

4. With regard to poverty among the small indigenous minorities of the North, the lower average income levels among that group as compared with the rest of the country could be explained by the sheer size of the national territory and drastic differences in natural and climatic conditions. He noted that a system for adjusting the wages and social benefits of persons living in areas where conditions were particularly harsh had been in place since Soviet times. The Government was doing its utmost to reduce the income gap, particularly through social benefits. Pensions in that region were higher than in other parts of the Russian Federation – indeed, there were practically no poor pensioners in the country.

5. Another reason for the high level of poverty among minorities in the North was the fact that they tended to engage in activities such as hunting, fishing and agriculture, which were less remunerative than the oil and gas sector. However, the tax revenues from the latter helped step up the support and social assistance provided to the indigenous persons in the region. Indigenous people in the Chukotka Autonomous Area had benefited greatly in that regard, especially through the development of their infrastructure.

6. To address the greatest poverty challenge the country faced, which was that among large families with many children, a range of measures were in place, including increased family allowances and food distribution, and free school uniforms, materials and meals in the relevant constituent entities.

7. The system of social contracts that had been introduced in 2010, whereby social assistance bodies provided resources to families and, in exchange, families committed themselves to find work and refrain from alcoholism and drug abuse, was expected to be extended throughout the country by 2012.

8. Every effort was being made to increase life expectancy, for example through a project launched in 2007 which had included measures to increase birth rates and reduce mortality rates. Over the past four years the birth rate had risen by 22 per cent and mortality

had dropped by 10 per cent. Life expectancy over that period had increased by 2.10 years to age 69. Those efforts would continue, in particular to address the wide gap between men and women, since women lived 12 to 15 years longer than men, and the smaller gap that existed between persons in rural and urban areas.

9. A healthy lifestyle was not yet commonplace in the Russian Federation, and the mortality rate among the working age population was high, particularly due to cardiovascular disease caused by alcohol and tobacco abuse. The Government had a programme in place to promote healthy living, which was publicized inter alia through the mass media, and had adopted concept papers on alcohol and tobacco use and on nutrition. Moreover, there were health centres that provided check-ups for all, and could prepare customized programmes to help persons to overcome habits harmful to their health.

10. There had been a steady decline in infant and maternal mortality rates, as indicated in paragraph 159 of the replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/RUS/Q/Add.1), and there were plans to further improve that situation, particularly through the demographic programme adopted in 2007.

11. The number of children left without parental care was constantly decreasing – 114,000 in 2009 as against 145,000 in 2004. A plan had been implemented to encourage foster care rather than institutional care for those children.

12. Health spending as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) had been increasing steadily: from 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2003–2005 it had risen to 3.9 per cent in 2011 and was expected to reach 4.8 per cent in 2013. Cutting health expenditures was not something the Government would tolerate.

13. Concerning the estimated 400,000 homeless persons in the country, the Government had done its utmost to improve their situation, for example by setting up specialized centres to provide them with food and beds, helping to register them in the general area in which they resided and giving job placement assistance.

14. **Ms. Skachkova** (Russian Federation), replying to a question on ambulatory care for indigenous persons in the North, said that all urban or other areas where such persons lived were equipped with medical facilities: 736 such facilities had been established in that region to date, 30 more would be opened soon, and an additional 29 would be set up by 2013. There were 167 hospital-type institutions and efforts were being made to improve access to hospital care. Approximately 300 medical professionals could be called on to travel to areas where specialized care was required.

15. Regarding the medical situation of small indigenous minorities of the North, that group's birth rate had increased by an average of 1 per cent each year, and its mortality rate had decreased on average by 2.8 per cent per year. Moreover, mortality for virtually all classes of disease was dropping each year, which demonstrated the effectiveness of the medical care in place. The Government was seeking ways to ensure the positive natural growth of that population, which had already increased significantly in the period 2005–2009.

16. Funding for measures to combat tuberculosis had been increasing every year. A new programme had been adopted to improve the care provided to tuberculosis patients; an additional sum of about 9 billion roubles had been allotted for the purchase of anti-tuberculosis medicines, particularly to combat drug-resistant forms of the disease, and medical equipment. Over the previous two years, the incidence of tuberculosis had dropped in the country, and patient coverage and tuberculosis screening were on the rise. Tuberculosis-related mortality had been declining, from 22.6 per 100,000 persons in 2005 to 15.2 in 2010, and was expected to drop further to 12 persons or less per 100,000 by

2012. Also, deaths linked to drug-resistant forms of tuberculosis had decreased for the first time in 2010.

17. A similar trend was evident in the prison system, where the number of tuberculosis cases had gone down from approximately 30,000 in 2000 to about 13,000 in 2010. The incidence of tuberculosis in prison had dropped by 20 per cent in 2010 alone, and there were fewer than 10 tuberculosis-related deaths in prisons per year. Those improvements had been achieved through a range of organizational, epidemiological and health measures, including better detention conditions for prisoners, who were given twice-yearly medical examinations for tuberculosis prevention.

18. On the use of replacement therapy for the treatment of drug addicts, her Government maintained its firm position that the treatment of drug addicts was only possible if they first fully rejected taking drugs, and that included methadone and other such narcotics proposed as replacement therapy. Those persons could then be treated through detoxification programmes, the use of special medicines which inhibited physical and psychological cravings, and rehabilitation and psychological support. Annually, 30,000–40,000 addicts were fully cured and the Government saw no reason to change its position.

19. Measures had been taken to prevent drug dependency among young people, including through the extension of awareness and education programmes. Efforts were being made to identify risk factors for occasional drug abuse so that timely measures could be taken to combat that phenomenon.

20. There was no scientific study to prove that replacement therapy was effective in treating addicts, and countries including the United States, Norway and Sweden did not recommend the use of such therapy. Nor was it mentioned in World Health Organization guidelines for combating drug abuse.

21. With regard to waiting times in hospitals and clinics, national health plan measures had helped to halve the waiting time for receiving hospital care from 14 to 7 days. Waiting times for ultrasounds, X-rays and laboratory tests had also been reduced. Any medical examinations relating to emergency care were provided within 24 hours.

22. Concerning the treatment of orphan diseases, a special programme was in place to provide appropriate free medicines, and the law on available medicines was being amended in order to facilitate imports. A new bill for the protection of citizens' health had been prepared, which included the concept of orphan diseases and set out comprehensive measures for treating them. The list of diseases for which free medicines were available was being expanded. Persons suffering from those diseases were thus provided with medicines and given health and welfare support.

23. Special offices had been set up to receive adolescents in the context of the reproductive health system. Teenagers could visit such facilities for consultations, check-ups and information, either on their own or with their parents.

24. A range of other activities were also provided through health centres where young people could obtain information and disease screening. Normative provisions were in place on abortion. Moreover, data on the health of young people and children were being monitored. The Government's actions in that respect had been effective and would be continued in the future.

25. **Ms. Chistyakova** (Russian Federation) said some research had shown that 90 per cent of heroin addicts who were given methadone as a replacement drug became addicted to it. A study by the Russian Society of Psychiatrists had shown that drug replacement therapy did not prevent HIV infection among drug users, nor did it help drug users overcome their addiction.

26. In the Russian Federation, numerous cases of successful treatment of drug addicts existed. Such treatment took place in specialized institutions run by the State or the regions, where services were provided free of charge. She cited the example of a programme in Moscow, where drug addicts were treated by specialized doctors and worked with former addicts to overcome their dependency.

27. The Russian Federation allocated resources from the federal budget for the implementation of preventive programmes on HIV and other infectious diseases that were spread through the misuse of drugs. As part of the priority national health-care project, between 2006 and 2010, 1.5 billion roubles had been allocated to such programmes. Analysis had been undertaken into the effectiveness of the programmes by both international and national organizations. National data had shown that harm reduction programmes had not effectively prevented the spread of HIV and that HIV rates had actually increased in some areas. The approach that was now being taken focused on prevention campaigns and awareness-raising among school and university students on the risks of HIV infection.

28. Data showed that the HIV infection rate among 14 to 20 year-olds had decreased considerably over the previous 10 years. The Ministry of Health and Social Development, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, was implementing training programmes for teachers on the preparation and distribution of sets of awareness-raising and educational materials to students. More than 1,500 teachers and higher education students had been trained to give the courses.

29. Another priority action to combat HIV infection was preventing transmission from mothers to their unborn children. Since the priority national health-care project had begun in 2006, more than 50,000 healthy babies had been born to women with HIV.

30. The Russian Federation was committed to providing assistance to developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goal on reducing child mortality, which included reducing HIV infection from pregnant women to their babies. Two medical centres were being established to train medical personnel who applied to take part in that assistance.

31. Workers involved in the clean-up following the Chernobyl disaster and persons living in the contaminated areas had received the medical care they required from the State. Federal data had not shown any increase in the relevant mortality figures.

32. More than 90 per cent of the security equipment used at airports for passenger security checks did not use a source of ionizing radiation. The small amount of equipment that did use ionizing radiation sources was constantly monitored. Human beings would have to be exposed to the equipment over 100 times to receive the minimum dose that might affect their health.

33. City and federal authorities were taking a series of measures to improve air quality in Moscow. Analysis had shown that the main source of air pollution was vehicles, and therefore incentives were being offered to encourage people to replace their old vehicles with new, less polluting ones.

34. A State clean water programme had been implemented, under which the Government was intending to allocate significant budgetary resources to provide good-quality water to the population. Most of the activities related to the programme were the responsibility of the constituent entities.

35. Considerable work had been undertaken on modernizing blood services. State reports for 2008 and 2009 had shown that no cases of HIV infection as a result of blood transfusions had occurred in the Russian Federation. Checks were carried out to ensure that donated blood was free of HIV and other infectious diseases and technical regulations had

been issued in 2010 that harmonized and clarified the methods and rules governing the monitoring of blood for transfusions.

36. **Mr. Gladkin** (Russian Federation) said that Federal Act No. 162 of 8 December 2003 on amendments and additions to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation had been introduced to implement the provisions of international conventions to combat human trafficking. The Criminal Code had been further amended in 2008 and 2009, in particular to increase the sanctions for human trafficking and to expand the definition of the phenomenon. Legislation had also been amended to reinforce the fight against organized prostitution and the import of pornographic materials; to bring the laws of the Russian Federation into line with international standards; and to establish the legal basis for prosecuting anyone who infringed the rights and freedoms of others.

37. Russian law enforcement agencies considered combating human trafficking to be a fundamental part of guaranteeing the integrity of individuals and the rights and freedoms of citizens. Work to improve the legal normative basis in that regard was also conducted in cooperation with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. In 2010, a cooperation programme on combating human trafficking among CIS countries had been approved, which included administrative, legal and practical joint activities and a set of measures to prevent human trafficking and provide assistance to victims.

38. In 2010, Russian law enforcement agencies had registered 73 crimes of human trafficking, which was 3 per cent higher than in 2009, and 53 persons had been arrested for those crimes. Also in 2010, police had identified 20 criminal groups involved in human trafficking and 100 criminal cases related to trafficking in persons had been opened.

39. In response to concerns that the Russian Federation did not have a sufficient legal basis for dealing with sexual violence in families, he said that an amendment had been made to the Criminal Code in 2009 to strengthen the provisions on crimes against the sexual freedom and integrity of adolescents. Crimes against the family and minors were protected under a specific chapter of the Criminal Code.

40. Russian law enforcement agencies were actively engaged in combating domestic violence and figures showed that the phenomenon had decreased between 2003 and 2010. Law enforcement agencies and federal ministries were also involved in preventative work with regard to domestic violence, especially against children. Early detection of family problems was carried out by federal and local bodies and children were removed from harmful environments.

41. **Ms. Taradanova** (Russian Federation) said that physical and psychological violence against minors was prohibited, as was the use of measures designed to humiliate.

42. Bodies and institutions caring for minors were required to observe the rights and legitimate interests of the minors in their care, to protect them from discrimination, violence and ill-treatment, and to inform the competent bodies of any occurrence of such practices. Parents or legal guardians who failed to provide appropriate nutrition or mistreated a child could be fined 100,000 roubles, their income could be seized for up to one year, or they could be required to do 220 hours of community service. They could also lose their jobs or be required to carry out particular activities for up to five years. In accordance with the Labour Code, pedagogical activities could not be carried out by persons convicted of a crime affecting the life, health or dignity of families or children.

43. The law on education prohibited the use of physical or psychological violence against students. Teachers found guilty of such acts faced possible dismissal. The Ministry of Education and Science had developed methodological recommendations on the organization of work to prevent cruelty to children and to protect their rights and interests, as well as to ensure effective cooperation with child protection bodies.

44. In accordance with the Family Code, parents found guilty of allowing their children to be subjected to cruelty could be deprived of their parental rights. In such cases, the children concerned were covered by the federal law on guardianship, which ensured the rights of children without parental care. The Ministry of Education and Science had put forward methodological recommendations on the care of children without parental supervision at the municipal and regional levels. A model for a regional interdepartmental programme had also been proposed in the same regard which covered legal and financial issues. Programmes for the protection of children without parental supervision and orphans existed in all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

45. Regarding measures for the provision of housing to particular categories of citizen, a bill in that regard was currently before Parliament.

46. **Ms. Mayorova** (Russian Federation) said that, in 2010, prices of consumer goods had risen by 8.8 per cent, which represented a slowdown in price rises, a trend which had begun in 2009. That tendency had been the result of a fall in demand in the Russian Federation. During the economic crisis, the Government had increased social benefits and that measure had resulted in an increase in income in 2009. However, in the same year the economy had experienced a significant slowdown, GDP had fallen by almost 8 per cent and unemployment had reached 8.6 per cent. As a result, citizens had preferred to save their money, a trend which had led to a fall in demand which, in turn, had led to a slowdown in the increase of inflation. At the current time, prices were rising owing to the poor harvest in 2010. The authorities had taken customs and tariffs measures, including a ban on the export of cereals, the increase of taxes on the export of certain types of foods and the lowering of customs duties on food imports in general.

47. Forecasts for the 2011 harvest in the Russian Federation were good and it was estimated that inflation for 2011 would not exceed 8 per cent. A programme had been set up to provide targeted assistance for disadvantaged sections of the population, which included the distribution of food in certain regions.

48. Electricity and gas prices had increased significantly, driving up the price of goods manufactured in the Russian Federation. Private individuals benefited from subsidized electricity and gas and prices were set based on income per capita. With regard to national manufacturers, gas and electricity prices were determined in such a way as to ensure that the products of those manufacturers remained competitive. Tripartite commissions, made up of representatives of the trade unions, Government and employers, also analysed price rises and their impact. Price levels were only set once a consensus had been reached.

49. **Mr. Yurakov** (Russian Federation) addressed the issues of the right of Roma to housing and the registration of the Roma population. He said that Roma had the same right to housing and modern social infrastructure as any other citizens of the Russian Federation. A federal targeted housing programme had been adopted for 2011–2015. A number of Roma families had been classified as forcibly displaced persons and had, as a consequence, benefited from housing assistance under that programme. Roma also had the right to special housing credits under article 49 of the Housing Code. Efforts were ongoing to register Roma families. Home ownership had been identified as a means of preventing coercive eviction. The task of social workers was complicated by the fact that some Roma did not wish to be registered, or to be issued with identity papers. Work to regularize the situation of Roma was being carried out at all levels, and there were regular meetings between the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation and representatives of Roma groups to discuss the social and cultural adaptation of Roma. Moreover, Roma were represented on the consultative council that had been established by that Ministry.

50. **Mr. Voronin** (Russian Federation), referring to the question of Supreme Court legal statistics on prosecutions of medical personnel, said that doctors who had been accused of

harming patients were prosecuted on the grounds of incompetence, or causing injury or death through neglect. Existing statistics on such matters were of a general nature and did not make provision for a separate category of medically-related incidents. In the case of patients who had suffered as a result of inadequate health care, the priority was to ensure that those individuals received compensation. The Ministry of Health and Social Development had prepared a bill on insurance to cover unsuccessful medical treatment. Under that bill, private medical practitioners and establishments would be required to take out such insurance in order to ensure the timely payment of compensation.

51. The Russian Federation had a mixed health insurance model that was managed and coordinated by a State fund for compulsory medical insurance. Each region had a regional fund for compulsory medical insurance which collected insurance contributions. Employers paid their employees' contributions and the constituent entities of the Russian Federation paid the contributions of those not in work. Private insurance companies funded medical care and monitored the quality of private and public health-care provision. Their work was coordinated by the State fund for compulsory medical insurance.

52. As of 2011, insurance contributions to compulsory medical funds had been raised by 2 per cent and represented 5.1 per cent of wages.

53. **Mr. Sadi** observed that the success rate for treatment of drug addicts in the Russian Federation was not particularly high. He asked how much progress the Russian Federation had made with regard to changing eating habits, reducing the consumption of alcohol and tobacco and tackling obesity.

54. He also enquired as to why there were so many children in foster homes in the Russian Federation and requested information on the psychological effect on such children of separation from their parents.

55. He asked to be provided with data on the ratio of social to private housing and on the affordability of private accommodation for the average citizen.

56. **Ms. Shin** asked whether the Russian Federation was considering signing a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Korea on human trafficking and whether there had been any attempts to conclude bilateral agreements with other countries in that regard.

57. **The Chairperson** opened the floor for questions on articles 13 to 15.

58. **Mr. Kerdoun** said that the core document for the Russian Federation (HRI/CORE/1/Add.52/Rev.1) contained no reference to the concluding observations of the Committee from 2003 (E/C.12/1/Add.94), in particular, paragraph 38, which stated that: "The Committee urges the State party to allocate sufficient funds to reinstate basic services, including the health and education infrastructure, in the Republic of Chechnya." Despite the situation in Chechnya, the authorities of the Russian Federation should have been able to make some progress in that regard. He further referred to paragraph 65 of those concluding observations, which read: "The Committee recommends that the State party reinforce its efforts under the federal programme 'Youth of Russia (2001–2005)' to ensure that no child is deprived of the right to education. The Committee notes that a statistical survey of the number of children who do not attend school was introduced in 2003 and it requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report disaggregated data on a comparative basis on enrolment and dropout rates among boys and girls and vulnerable groups." He wished to know why the fifth periodic report of the Russian Federation did not comply with that request and asked to be provided with the data in question, as well as information on the health and education infrastructure in the Republic of Chechnya.

59. He asked whether it was true that many children with disabilities were educated separately from other children, in special schools located far from their homes. Moreover, it

appeared that Roma children were placed in separate classes because of their ethnic origin and because their parents were unable to obtain residency papers and that local authorities were denying those children access to education contrary to the instructions of the Ministry of Education and Science. He asked for an explanation as to how such a situation had arisen and why it was tolerated.

60. The Committee remained concerned that children in the Caucasus and Chechnya had been affected by armed conflict, which had impeded their enjoyment of the right to health and education. The Committee had received reports that children as young as 14 had been recruited into military units. He asked how the Government planned to resolve that problem, given the context of the conflict with the separatists.

61. The State party appeared to have a serious problem with children who were absent from school for no valid reason, which was doubtless linked to the number of juvenile delinquents. He requested statistics on the number of children concerned in both categories and asked whether the school inspectors and the Federal Education and Science Supervisory Service would be able to put an end to that problem.

62. While the Government appeared to consider the educational provision for the indigenous peoples of the Russian North, Siberia and the Far East to be sufficient, some 48 per cent of indigenous people in the State party received only elementary education. About 17 per cent of them were totally illiterate, compared to 8 per cent illiteracy in the total population. Well below half of indigenous people were apparently able to study in their mother tongue. He asked what measures the Government planned to take to improve the education system offered to indigenous people, including the provision of mother-tongue teaching.

63. **Mr. Marchán Romero** drew the State party's attention to the Committee's general comments No. 17 on the right of everyone to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he or she was the author, and No. 21 on the right of everyone to take part in cultural life. He asked whether any of the different legal systems offering protection to indigenous communities and minorities provided for land titles to be granted to the peoples that had traditionally lived on the land concerned. The fact of being allowed to use the land but not owning it put them in an extremely vulnerable situation. As recalled in general comment No. 21, the strong communal dimension of indigenous peoples' cultural life was indispensable to their existence, well-being and full development, and included the right to the lands, territories and resources which they had traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

64. He requested clarification of the basis on which the inventory of 47 minority groups had been drawn up in the State party. The process would not appear to have involved any element of consultation or self-identification on the part of such groups.

65. The Committee would be interested to learn whether there was an intellectual property regime protecting the specific rights relating to the traditional knowledge and customs of indigenous and minority groups in the State party.

66. Given the high degree of technological expertise in the State party, he failed to understand why that knowledge had not been applied to ensuring that persons with disabilities could participate fully in cultural life.

67. **Ms. Shin** asked how the State party addressed the potential conflict of interest between its policy on the preservation and development of cultural heritage and the need to extract minerals and other natural resources for the purposes of economic development. It would be useful to know whether there was a mandatory procedure for conducting cultural impact assessments, especially concerning indigenous peoples.

68. **Mr. Abdel-Moneim** asked whether the cost of education made it accessible to people on average and low incomes.

69. He welcomed the State party's recognition of the fundamental role of the dramatic arts in the humanization of society, given that the humanization process raised people's awareness of human rights. However, the periodic report and the written replies contained little information on international contacts and cooperation in the scientific and cultural fields, despite the significant contributions the State party had made in those areas. He commended the State party for its promotion of museums as non-commercial cultural institutions and their high visitor numbers, its impressive public library system, including 70 libraries for the blind, and its support of cultural events with disabled access. He wished to know whether all high-quality arts events remained affordable for the general public, as had traditionally been the case.

70. **Mr. Kedzia** asked whether human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, constituted a systemic element of the curricula at the different levels of education and in the training of professionals such as teachers and law enforcement officials. It would be useful to know whether the Government funded informal human rights education.

71. **Ms. Taradanova** (Russian Federation) said that primary, secondary and vocational education were free of charge. Everyone had equal access to education, regardless of race or any other consideration, including disability. In order to guarantee that right for children with disabilities, special schools were available for those who could not be provided with the learning conditions they required in the mainstream system. Many children with special needs were integrated into mainstream schools. Children with disabilities had the right to take the school leavers' examination, which enabled them to apply for entry to higher education establishments, or a specially modified leaving examination. A nationwide project was currently being launched to promote disabled access to schools.

72. While there were no restrictions on access to mother-tongue education, suitable textbooks in minority languages were not always available. Significant resources had been allocated to the publication of reading books and textbooks for the indigenous peoples of the Russian North and for the Roma.

73. Human rights education began at preschool and continued throughout primary and secondary levels. Human rights textbooks, which had been approved by the Human Rights Commissioner, had been distributed throughout the country. Human rights were also taught at higher education establishments, particularly for law students. Students in other disciplines could also register for a basic course in human rights issues. School teachers and university staff were also offered in-service training in human rights.

74. **Mr. Proksh** (Russian Federation) said that the federal service in charge of protecting cultural heritage sites monitored and supervised all applications for the extraction of minerals and other natural resources.

75. The rights of indigenous peoples were protected, inter alia with regard to the development and use of land and its preservation for those communities. Permits had to be requested before archaeological digs could be conducted on any of the lands used by indigenous groups.

76. The Government was currently focusing on access to culture and was planning to increase the budget allocation for cultural events in the future.

77. In 2004, legislation had been adopted on earnings from intellectual activities, copyright and related rights, which had been internationally recognized as progressive. The intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples were therefore fully protected on the same basis as other elements of cultural heritage.

78. Many libraries, museums and other cultural facilities had disabled access and work was being undertaken to provide remote access to them.

79. **Mr. Voronin** (Russian Federation) said that the barrier-free environment project would extend access for persons with disabilities to all public facilities. The problems concerning access to health and education in Chechnya had been resolved as a result of the end of the armed conflict there. The remaining isolated terrorist acts were being handled by the law enforcement agencies.

80. His delegation would send written replies to any questions which it had not had time to answer. He appreciated the Committee's questions and recommendations and looked forward to receiving the concluding observations, which the Government would strive to implement.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.