



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 June 2015

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Fifty-fifth session

Summary record of the 35th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 10 June 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Sadi

Contents

Consideration of reports (*continued*)

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

Fourth periodic report of Chile (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages of the United Nations. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of the present document* to the English Translation Section, room E.6040, Palais des Nations, Geneva (trad_sec_eng@unog.ch).

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.15-09739 (E) 160615 160615



* 1 5 0 9 7 3 9 *

Please recycle A symbol consisting of three arrows forming a triangle, used to encourage recycling.



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

Consideration of reports *(continued)*

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

Fourth periodic report of Chile (continued) (E/C.12/CHL/4; E/C.12/CHL/Q/4 and Add.1)

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

2. **Ms. Salinas Vega** (Chile) said that, according to both international and national estimates, and contrary to what had been stated earlier by one of the Committee members, poverty in Chile had not increased. In fact, the income poverty rate had fallen from 29.1 per cent in 2006 to 14.4 per cent in 2013. The Government of Chile had updated the income poverty line and incorporated multidimensional poverty indicators, which measured other factors such as health, education and employment and thus provided a better basis for the protection of the right to an adequate standard of living. The adjustments made for differing household sizes and changing consumption habits, together with the adoption of a more exacting methodology, had actually raised the poverty line, yet, even so, poverty was down substantially in all regions of the country and in both rural and urban areas. The poverty rate for the indigenous population, which made up 9 per cent of the total population, had dropped from 44 per cent in 2006 to 23.4 per cent in 2013, and the large gap that existed between the poverty rates for indigenous groups and for the rest of the population had narrowed by 20.6 percentage points. A basic allowance was paid to all households living in extreme poverty. In addition to that allowance, conditional transfers were made under the Security and Opportunities System to families who sent their children to school and ensured that they had regular medical check-ups. That kind of system had a long tradition in Chile and was the reason why it had attained such good results in the area of mother and child health, for example.

3. The coverage rate for access to water and sanitation was quite high in both urban and rural areas. As of 2011, 8.14 per cent of the rural population still lacked clean drinking water, but that nonetheless represented a vast improvement, as the figure had been 54 per cent in 1990. A well-funded rural water programme was installing water systems in remote areas and providing the requisite training. In addition, a 50 per cent price subsidy for drinking water supplies was provided for poor urban and rural households, and the 700,000 most vulnerable households received a 100 per cent subsidy. Chile had been experiencing a long drought which had resulted in some interruptions of service, and the Ministry of the Environment was conducting programmes to raise awareness about water conservation in cooperation with schools and municipalities. The President had appointed an adviser to work on the formulation of a national water policy that would reflect the concept of water as a human right.

4. The number of people living in makeshift dwellings had dropped by 40 per cent. The figures had worsened following the 2010 earthquake, but heavy government investment in the construction of new housing and the refurbishment of existing dwellings since then was turning the situation around. Strict instructions had been given to regional governments to refrain from carrying out evictions in the approximately 600 irregular settlements that existed in Chile. The Ministry of Housing was working with landowners and the inhabitants of those settlements to find workable solutions. Only 1 per cent of those settlements were involved in legal disputes.

5. As to the rights of refugees, Chilean law incorporated the principles of non-refoulement, non-discrimination, confidentiality, non-penalization of illegal entry and family reunification, as well as a prohibition against turning people back at the border. Refugees enjoyed the same constitutional rights as did all other persons in Chile.

6. Her delegation had been surprised by the statement made earlier to the effect that Chile was not reaching the targets for the Millennium Development Goals. In 2010 the Secretary-General of the United Nations had drawn attention to the progress made by Chile. In 2014, the representative of the United Nations system in Chile had also noted that it had already met most of the targets and was very close to most of the rest. One indicator for the Goals that the Government was not, however, going to be able to achieve before the end of 2015 was the targeted proportion of women in Congress, since elections had recently been held and there would be no others in 2015. However, the President intended to reform the electoral system to ensure that more women would stand for office.

7. The situation with regard to child labour was difficult to assess because the results of the two surveys on child labour that had been carried out in 2003 and 2012 were not comparable. That was because, in the intervening years, the Government had modified the methodology used for that purpose to incorporate the principles and guidelines established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the standards set out in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

8. **Ms. Flores Serrano** (Chile), replying to questions raised about the wage gap between men and women, said that, unfortunately, horizontal and vertical labour segregation existed in Chile; women rarely reached high-level posts, nor did they work in such highly paid sectors as construction and mining. The labour, finance and gender equity ministries were working with representatives of employees and employers on designing a pilot programme to help introduce women into non-traditional professions. A major new capacity-building programme offering basic and continuing education, as well as technical training and job-placement assistance, would vastly increase the skills of a large number of people, in particular women and youth. The Government had also made a commitment to amend the Equal Pay Act, which had proven difficult to implement. The regulation under which employers were required to provide childcare facilities if they employed 20 women or more was going to be amended to eliminate the 20-person threshold and to cover both men and women.

9. The Government was revising the legal framework for collective bargaining and, as part of that change, it was incorporating a gender perspective by, as a minimum, making it a requirement that collective bargaining groups included women, who would then be able to defend women's interests in those negotiations. In addition, 14 ministries were participating in an equal rights and gender equity committee chaired by the Ministry of Labour. The Government was committed to using the quota law to attain a gender balance in Congress, political parties, State-owned companies, ministries and regional governments.

10. **Mr. Huneeus Lagos** (Chile) said that, in late 2014, the Government had introduced the most sweeping reform bill on collective bargaining rights in the past 40 years. That bill provided for a prohibition on the replacement of striking workers, regulations on worker benefits and the introduction of new legal safeguards. Passage of the bill was expected as soon as August 2015.

11. As to the questions raised about trade union rights, 48,000 cases had been brought before the labour courts in 2013, only 1 per cent of which had involved anti-union practices. The Labour Directorate levied fines when anti-union activities were detected; recently, more than 20 companies had been fined for violating union rights. The Government had also put a stop to the practice whereby companies would split into a number of different

entities in order to prevent workers from negotiating collectively. There had been a number of court judgements upholding the right of workers in different corporate entities administered by the same company to organize and bargain collectively. The reform of 2015 had substantially raised the minimum wage (with adjustments for increases in the cost of living), unemployment insurance benefits and wage levels for workers with open-ended contracts. Another new provision was that the pension contributions of unemployed workers were covered as part of their unemployment insurance benefit.

12. **Mr. Barraza Gómez** (Chile), in reply to questions concerning social security, said that the reform of 2008 had introduced a set of five types of non-contributory pensions targeting the most vulnerable 60 per cent of the population, with pensions for older and disabled persons and vouchers for women with children. There had been 1.5 million applications for non-contributory pensions between 2008 and 2014, and 81 per cent of those applications had been accepted. Women, in particular, had benefited. Despite the highly beneficial impact of the pensions and vouchers, however, there was still a troubling gender gap, since the average old-age pension for men was about a third higher than the average for women. In fact, the average pension for women was below the statutory minimum income level. Thus far, the commitment made at the time of the changeover from a pay-as-you-go pension system to an individually funded system — which had been to provide a replacement rate of at least 70 per cent — had not been honoured, since current replacement rates were around 40 per cent for men and 35 per cent for women. The President had therefore convened an expert advisory committee to review the pension system and address the problem.

13. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** (Chile), in reply to questions regarding the mining industry in Chile, the possibly negative impact in terms of respect for human rights of Chilean companies' operations abroad and, in that connection, the issue of the extraterritorial application of the Covenant, said that Chile had undertaken to abide by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. A national action plan on business and human rights was currently being formulated. That effort was being coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the context of the work of the Council on Social Responsibility for Sustainable Development, which was currently chaired by the Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs. A public seminar had been held in April to discuss the action plan which had been attended by representatives from civil society, the business community, the National Human Rights Institution and the regional office of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, among others. Given the multisectoral nature of the plan, an interministerial working group had also been set up to develop measures for inclusion in the plan. The Danish Institute for Human Rights had provided valuable advisory assistance and support in that connection.

14. The National Human Rights Institute had been awarded “A” status accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 2013 and had seen its budget double to US\$ 6.1 million in 2015. While it was true that a group of members of Congress had sought the removal from office of the Director of the National Human Rights Institute, the Chamber of Deputies had subsequently rejected that request. As to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant, the Government hoped to ratify it in the near future.

15. **Ms. Walker Echeñique** (Chile) said that levels of violence against women had remained unchanged in recent years. The Government had adopted a number of preventive measures, including national awareness-raising and information campaigns, in an attempt to reduce the number of cases and intended to further strengthen the definition of habitual violence contained in Domestic Violence Act No. 20.066 in order to make it easier for victims of domestic violence to bring their cases to court. As to the effort to combat gender discrimination, the Government had taken a number of steps to promote gender equality,

including the introduction of numerous cross-cutting gender policies. Lastly, in respect to the national ban on abortion, the President had recently submitted a bill to Congress to legalize the procedure in selected cases.

16. **Ms. Muñoz Sánchez** (Chile) said that women made up 60 per cent of the judges in the Court of First Instance, 41 per cent in the Court of Appeal and 25 per cent in the Supreme Court. All judges received training on gender issues and incorporated a gender perspective into their rulings. The national judiciary played an active role in addressing gender issues at the regional level and had contributed to the formulation of gender-related guidelines and policies that took into account the intersectionality of the discrimination faced by certain groups of women based on their race, ethnicity and/or social status.

17. **Ms. Catalán Rivas** (Chile) said that the Government had introduced numerous initiatives to uphold child rights, including the establishment of the National Children's Council, which was responsible for addressing the inequalities and challenges faced by disadvantaged or vulnerable children. It had also put in place a robust monitoring mechanism for use in evaluating the implementation of national child protection measures and had held consultations with different stakeholders, including children, on various key topics.

18. **Mr. Crocco Abalos** (Chile) said that obesity represented a major health threat in Chile, particularly for children. The Government had therefore taken steps to mainstream health awareness in national policies and had devised a long-term national strategy to promote healthy living. It had also launched a teenage pregnancy prevention programme and had introduced sexual and reproductive health education in schools. Regarding the forced sterilization of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, steps had been taken to amend mental health legislation in order to prohibit the sterilization of minors who were unable to give their free, prior and informed consent. As to access to affordable medicines and medical care, the Government had made emergency contraception readily available at national health centres and had recently adopted new legislation which provided for State funding for the treatment of high-cost diseases.

19. **Ms. Bras Gomes** said that she would like clarification on the steps taken to define the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. She would also like further information on the eligibility requirements for conditional cash transfers and their impact on access to the social security system.

20. **Ms. Shin** said that she welcomed the State party's efforts to address gender-based occupational segregation and would like to know what measures had been adopted to encourage men to enter traditionally female-dominated professions. She also enquired as to whether the proposed prohibition on the sterilization of minors would apply to both girls and boys and whether there were plans to extend the provision to include adults. Lastly, she wished to know what action had been taken to combat and prevent operations on intersex children without parental consent.

21. **Mr. De Schutter** asked whether the National Council for the Promotion of Health played a key role in the Global Strategy against Obesity. He wished to know what specific measures had been taken under the Strategy to combat obesity among children.

22. **Mr. Ribeiro Leão** asked what legislative provisions had been introduced to protect domestic workers. He also wished to know whether anti-discrimination legislation included gender as a prohibited ground for discrimination and, if so, what remedies were available to victims.

23. **Mr. Mancisidor** said that he would like to invite the delegation to comment on the alarming statistics on violence against children contained in the annual report on the State party prepared by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The meeting was suspended at 11.24 a.m. and resumed at 11.42 a.m.

24. **Mr. Barraza Gómez** (Chile) said that, in response to nationwide protests calling for free, quality, inclusive public education in 2011, the Government had taken steps to cut student loan interest rates. The reform of the education system had been launched in 2014. Historically, the education system had been made up of both public and private components; during the 1980s, the former had been deregulated, and an educational voucher system introduced. Work was under way to bolster the public education system and overhaul the university selection procedure.

25. **Mr. Soffia Vega** (Chile) said that the Ministry of Education was amending the laws on the education system in order to reassert State control over the sector and was developing stronger anti-discrimination policies. As to the preservation of indigenous languages and the implementation of bilingual intercultural education programmes, paragraph 86 of the State party's replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/CHL/Q/4/Add.1) provided details on the relevant legislation and agencies in that regard. Grants were being provided to ensure access to basic, secondary and higher education for indigenous youth and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The number of such students in primary, secondary and higher education receiving grants had risen by 14.3 per cent, 3.3 per cent and 27.8 per cent during the reporting period, respectively. Wide-ranging consultations with indigenous peoples and the Afro-descendent community had been carried out in order to take into account their opinions and to safeguard their rights when setting up a unit for the promotion of their cultures, traditions and art.

26. The Office of the Superintendent of Education was responsible for keeping a public record on all complaints of discrimination on the basis of the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of children or adolescents and on the outcomes of those cases, as well as for monitoring educational establishments to ensure compliance with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation.

27. A bill providing for the creation of a school programme on the promotion of human rights, equality and inclusion, civic education and social harmony was currently before Congress. A number of goals had been set for 2015 relating to equal treatment for child and adolescent members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex community, including the amendment of existing regulations on sex education in schools, the provision of training and support materials to teachers, and the preparation of a protocol on respect for gender identity in educational establishments. As part of the effort to safeguard the rights of students with special educational needs, in 2015 the Ministry of Education had issued a directive that provided guidelines for the adaptation of preschool and primary school curricula to meet the needs of such students. Members of civil society had been invited to work with experts and schools to strengthen the policy on special education in order to make the education system more inclusive. In total, 117 educational establishments had been provided with technological support and advice and, in 2014, over 1,600 blind or visually impaired students had received Braille and large-print textbooks. In addition, a school integration programme had been launched to improve the quality of special education modules with the help of additional human resources and materials. Information on access to the Internet was provided in paragraphs 87 to 92 of the State party's replies to the list of issues.

28. The education reform programme was based on a four-pronged approach. The first focused on establishing the principle that education was a social right and asset. A law had been enacted just a few days before that regulated student admission, did away with the educational voucher system, would prohibit State-subsidized schools from charging school fees as of 2018, provided that primary and secondary education must be made available free of charge and set in motion provisions designed to do away with segregation based on

social and economic factors. Selective admissions screening would be phased out starting in 2017.

29. The second major component of the reform focused on ensuring quality public education for all. A bill on the creation of decentralized local education services that would work closely with their communities was currently under discussion. The idea was for those services to take over the job of administering the nation's public schools from the municipalities. Legislation had been enacted to strengthen and upgrade the preschool system as well. Preschool coverage was to be expanded to 60 per cent by 2018. A multidimensional plan to raise public education standards and to strengthen the public education system had been set in motion which called for improvements in infrastructure and Internet access, teacher training and support for student participation. In total, US\$ 496 million in funding had been made available for the plan's implementation. That component of the reform also included a quality assurance system. In 2014 a pilot project designed to lay the groundwork for that system had been launched. The project had first focused on conducting a needs analysis, but in 2015 it was concentrating on quality assessments and indicators. Emphasis would also be placed on relying more on teacher evaluations of students' academic performance and on ensuring the correct use of standardized tests in order to see to it that schools focused on improving individual students' learning experiences rather than on competing with one another.

30. The third component focused on achieving excellence in teaching and fostering a heightened recognition of the valuable contribution that teachers made to society.

31. The fourth and final component revolved around higher education. Efforts would focus on strengthening the teaching of the sciences, promoting links between universities and other sectors of society, and transferring research-based knowledge and innovation. A bill on the reform of the public and private higher education systems would be submitted in 2015 that would cover funding, regulation, accreditation, quality, the strengthening of scientific and technological research and the provision of a free university education for all within a time horizon of six years. As from 2016, students belonging to the most vulnerable 60 per cent of the population who were studying in universities belonging to the Council of Rectors or in accredited, not-for-profit vocational institutes would be able to study free of charge. The scholarship and student-loan system was being expanded, with the number of students receiving scholarships having increased by 55 per cent in 2015.

32. **Ms. Muñoz Sánchez** (Chile) said that the Chilean courts had recognized the right of everyone to education, in line with article 13 of the Covenant. Based on the courts' case law, a number of decisions to expel students on arbitrary and/or discriminatory grounds had been overturned, with the courts stating that expulsion constituted a punitive measure which was contrary to the guiding principle of the best interests of the child. The courts had also invoked the right to educational freedom when blocking the closure of a number of schools and reversing decisions to refuse applications for re-enrolment.

33. **Ms. Flores Serrano** (Chile) said that the law on equal pay for equal work was being amended in order to shift the focus to equal pay for work of equal value. The Ministry of Labour was looking into the issue of how best to define "equal value". As part of that effort, it had consulted with a Canadian expert on the subject and was monitoring a related ILO pilot project in Peru. A bill containing a definition of "equal value" should be ready by the end of 2015.

34. As to legislation covering domestic workers employed by private individuals, Act No. 20.786 had reduced the permissible work week for non-live-in domestic workers from 72 to 45 hours (with the possibility of up to 15 hours' paid overtime). Under that law, which covered approximately 370,000 persons, employers were obligated to register work contracts, labour inspections were to be carried out, and bed and board was to be provided

free of charge by the employer for live-in workers. To date, 107,700 contracts had been registered. In addition, Chile had recently become party to the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

35. **Mr. Barraza Gómez** (Chile) said that, of the 2.3 million pensioners in Chile, 1.2 million were covered by the non-contributory pension system. Many of the problems associated with the pension system stemmed from the changing demographic profile of the country, since the current working-age population was not large enough to support the growing number of retirees. Mandatory pension contributions, which amounted to roughly 10 per cent of monthly income, were too low. Moreover, of the 9.6 million persons eligible to contribute to a private pension fund, only around 5 million were doing so regularly. Of those with no pension coverage, 70 per cent were informal-sector workers. Many of the shortcomings of the pension system were attributable to structural flaws that could not be resolved by means of isolated measures. In recent years, the Government had made significant progress in terms of pension regulation. By launching a tender system for new pension affiliates, it had succeeded in progressively lowering the fixed fees charged by pension fund administrators. The number of administrators had fallen from 22 in the 1990s to just 6 in 2015, indicating that further efforts were needed to boost competition. With that in mind, President Michelle Bachelet had signed a bill, which was currently before Congress, that would create a State-run, nationwide pension fund.

36. The introduction of the individually funded pension system had been coupled with a commitment to achieve a net pension replacement rate in excess of 70 per cent. In reality, the rate was much lower, partly because the system relied on high rates of return that were difficult to obtain. Not even the most optimistic forecasts for rates of return were high enough to suggest that the system could cover its future liabilities. The Presidential Advisory Commission for the Protection of the Rights of Persons had conducted a sample survey on the social security system which had indicated that people valued pension plans based on both personal and collective models. The competing loyalties of society underscored the complexity of the task facing the Government, namely to determine the extent to which the pension system could support a non-contributory pillar, upon which greater emphasis had been placed since the 2008 reform. It was clear, in any case, that approaching the social security system from the point of view of social Darwinism had not yielded the desired results.

37. **Ms. Salinas Vega** (Chile) said that, pursuant to the Anti-Discrimination Act, courts were empowered to decide whether discrimination had taken place, disallow any action that was found to be discriminatory, order that such an action could not be repeated and order discrimination by omission to be rectified within a given time frame. They could also order such other measures as they deemed necessary to ensure the needful protection of persons who had been discriminated against. If arbitrary discrimination were found to have taken place, the courts would fine those directly responsible for the discriminatory act or omission between 5 and 50 monthly tax units. Under Anti-Discrimination Act No. 20.609, all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity were punishable offences. The Government acknowledged that there were flaws in that law and was well aware of its duty to develop anti-discrimination and affirmative action policies and to provide reparation to victims. Amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act were being drafted, and it was hoped that the amended Act would provide a framework that would be conducive to the closer alignment of the various other anti-discrimination laws.

38. The Ethical Family Income Programme, which offered financial assistance to families living below the poverty line and facilitated access to schools, health-care facilities and the labour market, had been designed by the previous Administration, and the current Government did not agree with how it was structured. It was therefore reviewing the programme with the aim of mainstreaming a gender perspective and a rights-based

approach into it. It would, however, have to wait until the first cohort of participating families had begun exiting the programme before it could conduct an impact assessment.

39. **Ms. Catalán Rivas** (Chile) said that the UNICEF study on the prevalence of child abuse had been carried out in six regions and had focused on children in a specific age group. It was therefore not representative of the whole country, but the Government considered it to be a valuable piece of research nonetheless. A bill that would establish a series of safeguards for the rights of children and adolescents was being drafted. The bill would prohibit corporal punishment in all settings and establish measures for the prevention of child abuse, the punishment of persons committing such abuse and the provision of reparation to victims. The Civil Code had been amended in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child to prohibit the physical or psychological ill-treatment of children.

40. No official statistics on operations on intersex children were available. On birth certificates, babies could be classified as being of indeterminate sex, thereby relieving pressure on hospital staff and allowing time for each case to be clinically evaluated. Neonatal guidelines were being updated to establish procedures for dealing with congenital adrenal hyperplasia from a human rights perspective, and the bill on guarantees for the rights of children and adolescents would seek to foster respect for the physical and psychological integrity of intersex children.

41. **Mr. Crocco Abalos** (Chile) said that the ban on forced sterilization, which covered minors with intellectual disabilities, would be extended to cover men and women of all ages.

42. The National Council for the Promotion of Health, Vida Chile, had been set up under the Ministry of Health in 1998 to serve as an intersectoral body for the coordination of efforts to improve the population's health. In recent years, the Council and the Ministry had made progress in combating obesity thanks, in part, to improved nutrition labelling and restrictions on the sale of unhealthy foods and drinks in certain settings. The Government was aware that the promotion of a healthy lifestyle had to be accompanied by effective regulatory measures.

43. **Ms. Muñoz Sánchez** (Chile) said that national courts had gradually adopted an approach that reflected the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and that social security policies were based on the principles of progressive realization and non-regression. In a recent judgement, the Supreme Court had extended the application of the procedure to protect fundamental rights that had been introduced under Act No. 20.087 to civil servants. Within the judiciary, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was applied. It was becoming increasingly common for the children of persons in an irregular situation, also known as foreign nationals in transit, to be granted Chilean citizenship in accordance with the principle of *jus soli*, and for the remedy of *amparo* to be granted during expulsion proceedings in the interest of family reunification.

44. **Mr. Barraza Gómez** (Chile) said that, despite strong ideological resistance from some quarters, a rights-based approach to social policy was starting to gain hold in Chile. The orthodox neoliberal view of the State was that it should play a subsidiary role and support the most disadvantaged groups, in contrast with the modern emphasis on promoting the universality of human rights. The challenge for Chile was to strike the right balance between universal policies and policies targeting the most vulnerable members of society. The conception of the State as a subsidiary actor was expressed in the Constitution, which was part of the legacy of the military dictatorship. The comprehensive process that would be involved in rolling back that approach would start in September 2015.

45. Turning to the issue of corruption, he said that a presidential advisory council on integrity and transparency created by President Michelle Bachelet had recently delivered a set of recommendations leading to the establishment of an integrity agenda, the aim of

which was to resolve problems such as conflicts of interest and restore public faith in the Government.

46. **The Chairperson** said that he wished to encourage the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant. The process of formulating a new Constitution offered a perfect opportunity for taking on board the Committee's concluding observations.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.