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### Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

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**Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties  
in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant**

### List of issues relating to the second periodic report of Honduras

#### Addendum

### Replies of Honduras to the list of issues\*, \*\*

[Date received: 7 April 2016]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present document may be consulted in the files of the Secretariat. They are also available on the Committee's website.

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### Annexes\*\*\*

Annex 1: Judicial rulings made on the basis of the Covenant

Annex 2: Budget of the Ministry of Education for the period 2000-2016

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\*\*\* The annexes to the present report are held in the files of the Secretariat and are available for consultation. They may also be found on the website of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

## Introduction

1. The Republic of Honduras submitted its second periodic report to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 5 May 2014.

2. This document contains the replies to the list of issues regarding the second periodic report of Honduras. In order to prepare this document, working sessions were held in February and March 2016, in which the representatives of the State institutions that make up the Inter-Agency Working Group,<sup>1</sup> coordinated by the Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization, took part.

## Reply regarding general information

3. For information on cases where the rights set out in the Covenant were invoked before the courts and used directly as the basis for judicial decisions, see annex 1.<sup>2</sup>

4. The judiciary has provided training through general courses on human rights, which have become core components of the programming of educational activities by the Judicial Training College. For example, a degree course taught in 2014 and a specialization programme offered in 2015 focused on the training of judicial officials with a view to strengthening awareness of the theoretical and practical aspects of international human rights law and universal, regional and national protection mechanisms. A total of 61 individuals took the degree course, the specialization programme or the courses for human rights instructors of the judiciary. Presentations on domestic violence and trafficking in persons have also been given at rural education centres.

5. In order to address the negative impact of the high rates of violence and civil insecurity, Honduras has, through the various entities of the justice sector, put in place the Vision of the Country Plan 2010-2038, the Plan for the Nation 2010-2022, the National Security and Justice Policy, the Strategic Government Plan, the plan “Together for a Better Life” 2014-2018 and the Institutional Strategic Framework 2015-2022 of the Ministry of Security.

6. Through its various actions to prevent and combat ordinary and organized crime, the National Inter-Agency Security Force has managed to reduce the number of murders. The

<sup>1</sup> The Inter-Agency Working Group comprises the following institutions: the judiciary; National Congress; Ministry of Security; National Prevention, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Programme; Youth Directorate; Directorate for Children, Adolescents and the Family; Counsel-General's Office; Public Prosecution Service; Directorate for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples; National Anti-Corruption Council; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labour and Social Security; National Institute for Women; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; National Migration Institute; National Statistics Institute; Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion; General Directorate for Persons with Disabilities; Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization; Ministry of Health; Honduran Social Security Institute; Inter-Agency Commission to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons; National Agrarian Institute; Property Institute; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock; Ministry of Defence; National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife; Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, the Environment and Mines; Institute of Community Development, Water and Sanitation; National Prison Institute; Ministry of Finance; Directorate for Culture, Arts and Sports; National Telecommunications Commission; and the Office of the President.

<sup>2</sup> Annex 1: Judicial rulings made on the basis of the Covenant.

homicide rate dropped from 67.52 per 100,000 people in 2014 to 56.62 per 100,000 people by the end of 2015.<sup>3</sup>

7. In addition, 176 criminal gangs have been disbanded and 745 of their members have been arrested and brought before the courts. These are criminal organizations involved in extortion, kidnapping, drug possession and distribution, illegal possession of weapons, assault, aggravated robbery, homicide and murder.

8. The Technical Criminal Investigation Agency was established in January 2014<sup>4</sup> as an entity under the Public Prosecution Service, with a view to providing the Service with an active, effective and modern investigative unit that will ensure due process.

9. The Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) programme has benefited 80,000 children and young people from conflict areas where the youth population can be prey to pressure from members of unlawful associations. The programme has been successful in preventing young people from committing offences, engaging in violence and joining gangs and in forging a positive relationship between the police, families and young people in Francisco Morazán, El Paraíso, Comayagua, Cortés, Atlántida and Intibucá Departments.

10. With the support of special agents of the United States of America Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as well as officers of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC), special operations task forces, such as the Special Operations Group, the Anti-Gang Unit, the Tropa de Inteligencia y Grupos de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad (TIGRES), the Abduction Unit and the Investigation and Exclusion Unit, have thwarted drug-related activities by organized crime groups and facilitated the extradition to the United States of Honduran nationals accused of drug trafficking and money-laundering.

11. The National Prevention, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Programme<sup>5</sup> was set up pursuant to the guidelines of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. The National Child and Youth Policy and the National Policy on Harmonious Social Relations and Citizen Security were thereby strengthened.

12. The Prevention, Peace and Harmonious Social Relations Office<sup>6</sup> has been established with a view to ensuring better integration of the security chain. The Office of the President coordinates the following: Community Networking for Better Lives, methodological strategies under the National Prevention, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Programme (these include “The Challenge of Dreaming My Life”, decision-making and conflict resolution, “Think it Through” and “Strong Families”), the “A Clean Slate, a New Life” project, the “Breaking Barriers” project, community ombudsman workshops, the Recreation Routes initiative, the “My First Business” initiative, community empowerment initiatives, the National Campaign to Prevent Child Sex Abuse, the “Truth about Drugs” initiative and the community model of violence prevention.

13. The Ministry of Security has put in place the Institutional Strategic Framework 2015-2022, whose strategic objective is to reduce impunity by implementing effective intelligence and criminal investigation strategies and strengthening the criminal

<sup>3</sup> Source: Ministry of Security.

<sup>4</sup> The Technical Criminal Investigation Agency was established pursuant to Decree No. 379-2013 of 20 January 2014, which was published in Official Gazette No. 33,382 of 18 March 2014. The Decree also introduced amendments to articles 1 and 41 to 44 of the Public Prosecution Service Act (Decree No. 228-93 of 13 December 1993).

<sup>5</sup> Legislative Decree No. 141-2001 of 2 October 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Executive Decree No. PCM-021-2014, which was published in the Official Gazette of 24 July 2014.

investigation police. The Police Investigation Directorate became operational on 1 September 2015.

14. In order to effectively protect human rights defenders who monitor the situation of economic, social and cultural rights, the Government has adopted the Act on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Officials.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the National Council for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders has been set up as a deliberative and advisory body under the National System for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, whose 14 members include the Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Public Prosecution Service, the judiciary, the Counsel General's Office, the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Defence, one representative each of the Bar Association of Honduras, the Association of Journalists of Honduras, the Honduran Press Association, the Association of Judges, the Prosecutors' Association and two representatives of civil society organizations in the field of human rights.

15. The Counsel General's Office, together with three other State entities, coordinates the compensation awarded to victims of human rights violations in cases brought against Honduras before the Inter-American Human Rights System by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Human Rights through settlements based on articles 48 and 49 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

## **Reply regarding article 1, paragraph 2**

16. The National Confederation of Indigenous Peoples drafted a bill on consultation and free, prior and informed consent, which was endorsed in La Ceiba by representatives of the Miskito and Garifuna peoples and English-speaking persons of African descent, in La Esperanza, Intibucá Department, by representatives of the Tolupan, Lenca and Maya Chorti peoples, and in Catacamas, Olancho Department, by representatives of the Pech, Tawahka and Nahoja peoples. The following government institutions participated in the process: the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, the Environment and Mining, the National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, the National Agrarian Institute and the Directorate for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples. The National Confederation has submitted the bill to the Directorate and a commission — made up of the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, the Environment and Mining, the National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, the National Agrarian Institute, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Counsel-General's Office and the Office of the President — was set up for its dissemination.

## **Reply regarding article 2, paragraph 1**

17. Efforts to strengthen the Public Information Institute, which is responsible for promoting transparency and accountability as a means of combating corruption and enabling the exercise of fundamental rights, continued in 2014. The Institute actively publicizes the Transparency and Access to Public Information Act, the Public Service Code of Ethics and the inter-American and United Nations anti-corruption conventions.

18. The legislative and other measures taken to prevent and combat corruption include:

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<sup>7</sup> Legislative Decree No. 34-2015.

- The Collaboration and Good Faith Agreement between the Government of Honduras and Transparency International for the promotion of transparency, the fight against corruption and the strengthening of the integrity system;
- Agreement No. FGR-01-2015 on the restructuring of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Corruption, now called the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Transparency and Public Corruption.

19. The following shows the number of complaints prosecuted at the national level between 2010 and 31 January 2016:<sup>8</sup>

- 2010: 37 prosecutor applications;
- 2011: 44 prosecutor applications;
- 2012: 47 prosecutor applications;
- 2013: 39 prosecutor applications;
- 2014: 27 prosecutor applications;
- 2015: 48 prosecutor applications;
- 2016: 8 prosecutor applications.

20. The following shows the number of cases, at the national level, that have led to a conviction since 2010:<sup>9</sup>

- 2010: 3 convictions;
- 2011: 8 convictions;
- 2012: 10 convictions;
- 2013: 6 convictions;
- 2014: 13 convictions;
- 2015: 27 convictions;
- 2016: 8 convictions.

21. The Public Prosecution Service has stated that one person (witness AB-214) is currently under protection.

## **Reply regarding article 2, paragraph 2: Non-discrimination**

22. The Ministry of Education implements the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) in the relevant schools through the allocation of funds for the exclusive appointment of indigenous and Afro-Honduran teachers in order to provide instruction in the mother tongue of children from these groups and to respect their culture.

23. The General Subdirectorate of Education for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples was established to address the needs of these population groups.

24. The social and political participation of indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans and the exercise of intercultural citizenship are given the highest priority in the National Policy

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Public Prosecution Service.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Public Prosecution Service.

on Racism and Discrimination against Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples 2014-2022, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 21 September 2015.

25. The General Subdirectorate of Education for Differently Abled Persons and Exceptionally Gifted Persons has done the following:

(a) Kept updated statistics since 2010; the form used to gather information on students with disabilities has been integrated into the national statistics system of the Ministry of Education;

(b) Set up the Education Centre Administrative System, through which a total of 42,008 students with disabilities were tallied in 2014, 16,318 fewer than in 2013. In 2015, the number rose to 63,119 and is disaggregated by disability;

(c) Declared 2014 the year of inclusive education, thereby increasing the opportunities for students with disabilities (enrolled in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) to have access to, remain in and succeed in education, with priority being given to the provision of support services and the opening of education centres to all, without discrimination of any kind;

(d) Strengthened the National Resource Centre for the Educational Inclusion of Visually Impaired Persons to provide care for students with a visual impairment and their families, produce texts in Braille, macro type and audio formats and distribute training materials, technical aids and bespoke tools and equipment (e.g. canes, Braille frames and styluses, magnifiers, writing templates for students with low vision, computer software, educational games) to visually impaired students who attend education centres across the country, with a view to facilitating their educational inclusion and the implementation of the Global Campaign on Education for All Children with Visual Impairment, in cooperation with a national working group operating under the overall coordination of the Subdirectorate; as at 2015, sessions to detect visual impairments have been held in schools in 17 departments, benefiting 688 blind or low-vision students.

(e) Rolled out the Regional Inclusive Education Programme as part of the School Management Strategies for Universal Accessibility project proposed by Mexico for the 2013-2014 biennium with a view to broadening the range of services and identifying barriers to learning and participation in order to improve school settings, in fulfilment of the commitments made at the Meso-American Inclusive Education Network.

26. Under an agreement between the Directorate for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples and the National Agricultural University, over 500 young indigenous persons and Afro-Hondurans received scholarships in 2015 and 2016.

27. Regarding the Act on Equity and Comprehensive Development for Persons with Disabilities, introduced under Decree No. 160-2005, persons with disabilities are still issued with an identity card giving them easier access to benefits. The Disability Directorate lends technical assistance and supports non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on disability issues by providing funds and including them in government programmes such as "Together for a Better Life".

28. The various ministries responsible for policy implementation are taking meaningful measures to harmonize structures so that they function in a coordinated manner for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

29. The education provided for indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans by the national educational system helps preserve and strengthen their language, world view and identity. The State is committed to enforcing Bilingual Intercultural Education regulations.

30. Relevant provisions are found in:

- The Ministry of Education regulation contained in Executive Decision No. 1359-SE-2014, which was adopted on 22 August 2014 and published in the Official Gazette of 17 September 2014;
- The regulations on the various alternative teaching methods for young people and adults contained in Executive Decision No. 1371-2014 of 22 August 2014, which was published in the Official Gazette of 17 September 2014.

31. Indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans are covered under the national literacy campaign “Honduras Learns for a Better Life”, for which an implementation action plan has been designed as part of the National Plan on Compulsory Literacy, Academic Underachievement and Popular Education<sup>10</sup> 2014-2014.

32. The Ministry of Health is taking steps to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS through a series of measures targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals, women sex workers, persons deprived of their liberty and the Garifuna indigenous people. These measures include offering one-to-one assistance, providing HIV testing and counselling, promoting the use of condoms and distributing them to all who visit health centres, and ensuring that vulnerable persons have access to services under the Sentinel Surveillance Strategy on Sexually Transmitted Infections.

33. The Ministry of Health has allocated funds for the purchase of antiretroviral drugs in order to ensure that adults, adolescents and children receive care. It currently covers 93 per cent of total demand, the rest being paid out of external funds (300 first-line treatments and 17 second-line treatments). The cost of cluster of differentiation (CD) 4 testing is 60 per cent covered by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and 40 per cent by the State, while viral load testing is entirely funded by the Global Fund. Opportunistic infections are fully treated.

34. In order to provide assistance to Hondurans returning to the country, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Consular and Migratory Affairs was established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in February 2015 to put into effect the Act on the Protection of Honduran Migrants and their Families, which provides for the establishment of the General Directorate for the Protection of Honduran Migrants, the Office for the Protection of Honduran Migrants and the Office of Assistance for Returning Migrants.

35. In order to provide comprehensive assistance to returning adults, two support centres for returning migrants have been set up, one at Ramón Villeda Morales airport to receive those returning by air and the other in Omoa, Cortés Department, to receive, house and assist those returning overland. The support centre for returning migrant children operates in San Pedro Sula, Cortés Department, while families returning by air from the United States are taken to Soto Cano airbase in Comayagua. The support centres provide the following services:

- Biometric registration of migrants;
- Registration based on the standardized participation form of the National Centre for Information on the Social Sector;
- Food;
- Transport;
- Accommodation;

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<sup>10</sup> Executive Decision No. PCM-015-2014, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 22 April 2014 and published in the Official Gazette of 2 June 2014.



- Medical care;
- Free telephone calls;
- Information on education and work opportunities;
- Information on social services;
- Specialized assistance for specific cases where protection is required.

36. One of the principal rules of the Migrant Children Task Force is to treat with dignity any human being, whether a national of Honduras or a foreign national, who undertakes a migration process, including irregular migrants.

### Reply regarding article 3

37. The National Plan to Combat Violence against Women 2014-2022 was adopted in 2014 and is now being publicized. Protocols on service delivery and procedures for existing shelters were drafted and adopted and, in 2015, two new shelters were established: one in Tegucigalpa that can house up to 50 women with their children and one in San Pedro Sula that is operated by the mayor's office, can house up to 40 women with their children and has been operational since 15 June.

38. The National Solidarity Loan Programme for Rural Women<sup>11</sup> aims to promote rural women's engagement in productive activities and services that will help to improve living conditions for their families and communities.

39. The Gender and Employment Board was established, comprising public and private sector organizations and women's organizations. The purpose of the Board is to provide a forum for coordination and strategic partnerships to implement the second Gender Equality Plan 2010-2022 as it relates to women's advancement and independence and their economic rights, including their access to employment under suitable and equal working conditions.

### Reply regarding article 6

40. In 2014, a total of 53,339 jobs were created through continued implementation of the National Hourly Employment Programme, which has created 177,369 jobs since 2010.

41. Since 2014, the "You Live Better with Work" programme has created 51,196 jobs in partnership with the private sector and with consistent support from the Government in the form of payment of half the minimum wage for up to three months. The Community Service Jobs programme, which is run by municipal councils and associations of local authorities, creates economic benefits by providing employment for the duration of specific projects, thereby creating 18,774 jobs in seven months. The "*Chambita*" programme, meanwhile, provides support to unemployed persons and builds their capacities through training provided by the National Institute for Vocational Training. As at June 2015, a total of 1,183 young people have been trained through the programme.

42. In addition, in order to provide support to workers with children under 6 years of age, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security runs nine childcare centres across the country that offer food, education, recreation, health and early stimulation services free of charge. Between 2010 and July 2015, a total of 24,882 children were cared for, which benefited 25,426 workers.

<sup>11</sup> Adopted by Legislative Decree No. 110-2015 of 30 September 2015.

43. The Act on Protection, Benefits and Regularization of Informal Activities was adopted in January 2014. The Act seeks to incorporate many informal workers into the health-care and social security systems and provide them with access to bank loans through a simple mechanism, run by local governments, for formalizing their employment.

## Reply regarding article 7

44. According to the Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey, there are 3,647,637 employed persons in the country. Of these, 28 per cent are employed in agriculture, 18.5 per cent in trade and 14.3 per cent in industry. Together, these three sectors account for 60.7 per cent of employment nationwide.

45. Forty-six per cent of employed persons carry out their work activities in exchange for wages, which is to say that they have an employer. Meanwhile, it was found that 40 per cent of Hondurans work for themselves, which is to say that they are self-employed and do not have an employer. The remaining 13 per cent are unpaid workers.

46. One of the problems faced in the labour market is unemployment, which is measured by the open unemployment rate. In June 2015, unemployed persons represented 7.3 per cent of the economically active population. The urban open unemployment rate is estimated at 8.8 per cent, while in rural areas it is 5.6 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

47. The in-bond assembly (*maquila*) plant sector is one of the country's main job-creating sectors. Through a tripartite consensus, a minimum wage adjustment programme was adopted to cover the next four years, from 2015 to 2018, and an agreement was signed on investment promotion, employment protection, health care and access to housing for Honduran textile workers in in-bond assembly plants, providing for a series of economic and social benefits.

48. In January 2014, the Economic and Social Council Act was adopted in application of the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). The Economic and Social Council provides a forum for dialogue among representatives of the Government, employers and workers and is authorized to issue opinions and make recommendations regarding strategic issues dealt with by the State, such as wage, employment and occupational training policies. Also, following the deposit of the instrument ratifying the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) on 2 November 2012, the National Public Employees' Retirement and Pensions Institute Act was adopted in January 2014. This updated the legislation on the subject, which had previously dated from 1971.

49. With regard to the situation in La Mosquitia, the Counsel-General of the Republic supports the Inter-Agency Commission on Dive Fishing, which is made up of various State institutions and is coordinated by the Directorate for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples. These bodies have promoted the conciliation process in case No. 12.738, *Opario Lemonte Morris et al (Miskito divers) v. Honduras*, before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which sets out 20 commitments that the State of Honduras must undertake, including measures of satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.

50. In coordination with the Inter-Agency Commission on Dive Fishing, inspections of fishing vessels on the high seas are carried out during the fishing season to verify compliance with the standards set out by each of the Commission's member institutions to regulate the occupational health and safety of workers in the dive fishing industry and the

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey, 2015.

protection of maritime resources. Appropriate legal action is taken in the event of a violation of those standards.

51. Through a tripartite consensus, a minimum wage adjustment programme was adopted to cover the next four years, from 2015 to 2018, and an agreement was signed on investment promotion, employment protection, health care and access to housing for workers, providing for a series of economic and social benefits.<sup>13</sup>

## Reply regarding article 8

52. Article 128, paragraph 14, of the Constitution guarantees the right of workers to form trade unions or professional associations for the exclusive purpose of furthering their economic and social activities. Paragraph 13 recognizes the right of all unionized workers to strike and to call a lockout. The exercise of this right is regulated and may be subject to special restrictions in certain public services.

53. Chapter II of the Labour Code, which deals with the subject of trade unions, recognizes the right of all workers to form and join such unions. Article 469 guarantees this right. Articles 470 to 549 of the Code reaffirm these rights and specify the various types of association and the regulations and definitions relating to the establishment and dissolution of trade unions. Articles 551 to 590 recognize a trade union's right to strike and set out the relevant definitions, the legal effects of strikes and the restrictions imposed on the right to strike of the public services, given that they provide a service to the public and that suspension of that service could result in a violation of human rights.

## Reply regarding article 9

54. There are two technical and political instruments that guide State action with respect to the right to an adequate standard of living: the Social Protection Policy and the Framework Act on Public Social Policies. Both are implemented by the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion and both focus on population groups facing poverty, vulnerability, exclusion and social risk, the intention being to create a single register of beneficiaries of State social programmes.

55. Initiatives launched within this policy framework include the "Better-Life Voucher" Presidential Programme on Health, Education and Nutrition, which grants cash transfers to households on the condition that shared responsibilities in the areas of health, education and nutrition are fulfilled by programme beneficiaries, thus helping to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. The Programme was first implemented by the Government in 2010 and taken up again by the present Government. Through this mechanism, education grants in the amount of 10,000 lempiras per year are given to families with school-age children between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age, provided that the parents send their children to at least 80 per cent of classes in the course of a school year. Health-care grants in the amount of 5,000 lempiras are also given to pregnant women or to women with children 5 years of age or younger, provided that they go for prenatal check-ups or for check-ups to measure the child's weight and height, as appropriate. There are currently 270,000 households participating in the Programme, 90 per cent of which are living in

<sup>13</sup> This national minimum wage will be in effect throughout the country for the period 2014-2016. Tripartite Agreement on the Revision of the Minimum Wage for the Years 2014, 2015 and 2016, adopted under Agreement No. STSS-599-2013 of 20 December 2013, published in Official Gazette No. 33,313 of 26 December 2013.

extreme poverty; in 98 per cent of cases, the grant is paid in cash to women heads of household.

56. Between 2014 and June 2015, the Healthy Housing Programme run by the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion benefited 193,280 families living in extreme poverty by building and delivering 1,866 homes, 16,183 sturdy roofs, 43,704 sturdy floors, 24,255 latrines, 26,105 washbasins, 37,272 eco-friendly stoves and 43,895 water filters.

57. Along the same lines, implementation of the “Let’s Develop Honduras” programme, which seeks to generate additional income in rural and marginalized urban areas, is continuing. Under the programme, participants carry out projects that benefit the community.

58. Remaining challenges in this sector include improving and integrating information systems; regularizing the amounts paid out and the payment periods, particularly for cash transfers; improving monitoring and verification of beneficiaries’ fulfilment of their shared responsibilities; developing better coordination with the Ministry of Health; and conducting regular assessments to measure the impact on beneficiaries after several years of participation in the Programme.

59. The National Centre for Information on the Social Sector, which is part of the Office of the President, comprises three components: the Single Register of Participants, the National Early Childhood Registry and the Register of Social Investment Programmes and Projects.

## **Reply regarding article 10**

60. With regard to measures taken by the State to ensure that all working women are accorded special protection during and following pregnancy, those enrolled in the social security system receive 42 days of prenatal and postnatal maternity leave, while those who are party to collective bargaining agreements are entitled to a longer period of leave. The rest are subject to the provisions of the Labour Code, article 135 of which states that “any female worker who is pregnant shall be entitled to compulsory leave on full salary for four weeks prior to the birth and six following the birth, her job shall be kept open for her and she shall retain all the rights inherent in her employment contract”.

61. She may not be dismissed on the grounds of pregnancy or breastfeeding (article 144 of the Labour Code). She may breastfeed her child for one hour per day for 180 days, until the child reaches six months of age. If she is a member of the Honduran Social Security Institute, the latter pays 66 per cent of her salary during her maternity leave, while her employer pays the remaining 34 per cent; if she is not a member, the employer must pay 100 per cent of her salary during her maternity leave before and after she gives birth.

62. The Office of the First Lady has promoted the Multisectoral Plan for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy 2014-2018 as a strategy involving coordinated action by various institutions and communities aimed at creating better opportunities for children and adolescents in Honduras.

63. February 2011 saw the adoption of the Road Map for the Prevention and Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as the nation’s policy on this issue. The Road Map is an action plan that outlines key objectives, outcomes, indicators, targets and strategies. It was drafted with the technical assistance of ILO and is based on consultations with numerous State institutions, NGOs, trade unions and Honduran business associations. The follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of its implementation is a responsibility that falls mainly to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, with support from the National

Commission for the Progressive Elimination of Child Labour and the Inter-Agency Commission to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons.

64. The Government of Honduras, mindful of the need to address the issue of child labour in the country through a comprehensive approach leading to effective action, has established a mechanism that seeks to incorporate the National Commission for the Progressive Elimination of Child Labour into its overall structure.<sup>14</sup>

65. The national policy is put into practice through concrete actions taken over the short and medium terms. The current strategic plan 2016-2020 (which is in the process of being approved by the various sectors) is a planning tool that enables the relevant stakeholders to engage in quadripartite, coordinated efforts between the Government, workers' organizations, employers and NGOs working on the issue, through a series of actions aimed at preventing child labour and removing children from such labour and its worst forms.

66. In 2013, the Ministry of Security launched the 911 emergency telephone number as part of the Safe Cities project. Between 2014 and July 2015, there were 46,323 complaints of domestic violence and 5,404 arrests. In 2014, the judiciary, in coordination with the member institutions of the Inter-Agency Commission to Combat Gender-Based Violence against Women, established in Tegucigalpa the first Centre for Support and Protection of Women's Rights. The Centre offers free counselling services, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, legal assistance, psychosocial support, forensic examinations and clinical health care. Also in 2014, the Protocol for the Implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, the Protocol for Comprehensive Assistance to Women Victims of Violence in Cases of Domestic and Family Violence and the technical guide on its use were adopted.

67. In 2010, the Public Prosecution Service adopted guidelines on conducting psychiatric and psychological assessments in cases of violence against women. In 2011, it adopted the Gender, Justice and Human Rights Training Manual and the Staff Training Programme as part of its induction process. That same year, the Comprehensive Care Model for Women Survivors of Gender-based Violence was implemented in La Ceiba, with technical teams deployed in the municipalities of Tela, Jutiapa and Arizona. It was introduced in the Central District Municipality in 2012 and technical teams were deployed in the municipalities of Talanga and Sabana Grande. Between 2012 and 2014, care was provided to 3,451 victims and 964 measures were applied. The instruments on the implementation and use of Gesell chambers and their procedural protocol were also adopted.

68. The Specialized Comprehensive Care Model was established within the Public Prosecution Service under Decision No. FGR-15-2015 of July 2015, with a view to modernizing its procedures. Under this model, victims belonging to vulnerable groups, women, children and elderly persons are given comprehensive care, with the support and participation of prosecutors and interdisciplinary professional staff.

69. Another significant step forward with regard to policies on equality is the adoption of the National Plan to Combat Violence against Women 2014-2022, which is the main public policy document aimed at preventing, punishing and eliminating gender-based violence. The Plan reflects principles of international law such as non-revictimization, shared responsibility and zero tolerance of offences of violence against women.

70. In coordination with the Ministry of Security, the National Institute for Women takes part in the regional project known as Project B.A.1, which forms part of the Central American Security Strategy and focuses on the prevention of violence against women, with priority given to preventing all forms of violence, trafficking and femicide. Under the

<sup>14</sup> Executive Decree No. PCM-057-2015 of 1 September 2015.

project, priority is given to 10 municipalities with high rates of violence against women and aims to prevent the occurrence of these multiple forms of violence in each of the communities targeted. The 10 municipalities are Tela, La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula, Choloma, Omoa, Ocotepeque, Copán Ruinas, Santa Rosa de Copán, Trojes and Central District.

71. Various agencies have been working together since 2015 to implement the Women's City Programme, which aims to improve women's living conditions by providing quality services with a focus on gender and human rights. This should meet women's basic needs and strategic interests by giving them access to facilities that enhance the services provided to them by government institutions.

72. On 26 August 2014, article 23, paragraph 5, of the Domestic Violence Act was amended to ensure that victims do not have to face their attackers if their emotional state prevents them from doing so. In addition, in 2014 the quality of administrative and jurisdictional proceedings before the Domestic Violence Court of Tegucigalpa was assessed under international supervision and in accordance with international standards. Together with the Labour Division of the Supreme Court, it became one of the first two courts in the country to obtain certification in this regard.

73. As for cases prosecuted and investigated, in 2015, the judiciary received 2,049 applications for the prosecution of domestic violence offences, 1,383 for the prosecution of disobedience offences, 788 for the prosecution of rape cases, 289 for the prosecution of acts of lechery and 44 for the prosecution of statutory rape cases.<sup>15</sup>

74. The Office of the Special Prosecutor for Women in Tegucigalpa received 865 complaints, submitted 1,238 applications for prosecution, which led to 590 initial hearings, and obtained 550 compensation agreements.

75. Nationwide, the judiciary received 19,170 complaints of domestic violence in 2015. In Francisco Morazán Department, a total of 5,627 complaints were received, 4,900 of which were heard by the specialized domestic violence courts. Of these 4,900, a total of 2,221 resulted in convictions, 1,906 of which were upheld. Of these 1,906, 1,461 were prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service and 315 were dismissed.<sup>16</sup>

76. Jointly with the Department of Planning and External Cooperation, the Prosecutors' Training School, the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Women and the Comprehensive Care Model Unit, the Public Prosecution Service carried out a series of gender-mainstreaming workshops on femicide, awareness-raising, sexual offences and Gesell chambers for the benefit of prosecutors, administrative staff, judges, hospital administrative staff, mayors and other bodies with the common objective of providing support to victims. Some 900 people involved in victim support received training.

77. The National Institute for Women has conducted training in the form of university courses on gender-based violence and launched campaigns to prevent violence in schools, with the emphasis on dating violence, in the face of social patterns that legitimize violence against women in domestic contexts by various social players.

## **Reply regarding article 11**

78. Article 4, paragraph 10 of the Framework Act on the Social Protection System, which was adopted under Decree No. 56-2015, specifies that adequacy and sustainability are among the fundamental principles of the Social Protection Policy. It therefore imposes a constitutional obligation on the State to contribute to the funding, improvement and

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<sup>15</sup> Source: Public Prosecution Service.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Public Prosecution Service.

expansion of the social protection system in order to ensure its solvency and its ability to provide a person with decent and comprehensive social security benefits and services for life. The system's coverage, described in article 5 of the same Act, will be phased in through the integration of the five basic elements of the social protection regime. Social security contribution ceilings and rates will be introduced in stages, with the aim of ensuring financial sustainability and the social well-being of all citizens.

79. The Social Protection Floor Regime, as set out in article 7 of the Act, is a non-contribution-based element that guarantees access to basic services and social transfers, with an emphasis placed on the poorest and most vulnerable persons. While the aim is the universal extension of social protection, care for persons in a situation of poverty or high vulnerability is given priority in the budget. The Social Protection Floor has two major components: first, a basic package of essential rights and social transfers, in cash or in kind, which serves as a progressive platform for mutually supportive and inclusive social development to ensure access to essential benefits and services and the security of a minimum level of income and opportunities; and second, the provision of a basic level of goods and social services, such as health, water and sanitation, education, food, social housing, recreation, job creation, financial inclusion and other services, according to national priority requirements.

80. The figures for June 2015 show that 63.8 per cent of Honduran households were living in poverty, with incomes lower than the cost of the basic basket of consumer goods, which includes food and other goods and services. Although poverty is more serious in rural areas, it also affects more than half the households in urban areas (63.0 per cent in urban areas and 64.8 per cent in rural areas).<sup>17</sup> The goal of the Solidarity Promotion and Mutual Aid Plan is to bring about universal coverage through the gradual and progressive enrolment of workers excluded from the social security system.

81. Regarding paragraph 124 of the State party report, the Honduran Tourism Institute has set out five objectives in its National Sustainable Tourism Strategy: (1) economic, (2) cultural and social, (3) promotion and marketing, (4) environmental and (5) institutional management.

82. The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, through the Directorate for Indigenous and Afro-Honduran Peoples, has contributed to improving the living conditions of 2,450 indigenous and Afro-Honduran families through the development, management and execution of social, cultural and educational production projects and their integration into the "Better Life" programme.

83. Activities include:

- Provision of annual grants of 450 lempiras to the children of 33 disabled divers, as proposed by the board of directors of the Honduran Miskito Disabled Divers' Association;
- Training for 242 divers on a basic course for safe diving;
- Provision of housing for the Garifuna people in Masca, Cortés Department;
- Distribution of solidarity food parcels to the Lenca, Tolupán and Garifuna peoples;
- Support for microenterprises run by women belonging to the Tolupán people, in the form of a potato-growing project.

84. The National Agrarian Institute has put into effect a mass land titling programme for small producers, particularly those in coffee production, with support from the Honduran

<sup>17</sup> Source: National Statistics Institute, Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey 2015.

Coffee Institute, which provides the funding for payment for the land. The Institute provides free legal services to producers with fewer than 50 hectares of land. The programme, which also covers producers of staple grains, issued 15,000 land titles in 2015.

85. With support from the Honduran Land Administration Programme (Phases I and II) of the Property Institute, the following results have so far been achieved: 784,458 urban and rural plots of land in Comayagua, Cortés, Francisco Morazán and Yoro Departments have been surveyed for right of use or ownership and registered in the Unified Registry System. Also, as part of the Nacaome Valley Irrigation Project, 5,112.76 hectares of land — the equivalent of 1,165 plots of land — have been the subject of a cadastral land survey. Furthermore, 263,711 urban and rural plots in Comayagua, Cortés, Francisco Morazán and Yoro Departments have been given a registration number and cross-referenced with the Land Registry entry. With support from the Programme, 85,797 families in urban and rural areas have received title deeds, 56 per cent of which have been issued in the woman's name.

86. Under the Nacaome Valley Irrigation Project, the sites of Nombre de Dios de Nagarejo, Potrereros de Ganso, La Isla de Apintal, San Bartolomé del Tular, El Guayabo, Las Moras and San Lorenzo, amounting to 26.78 per cent of the total area of the Nacaome municipality, have been examined and geo-referenced with a view to establishing their original legal status.

87. The Property Institute, in conjunction with the National Agrarian Institute, has helped extend the process of land titling to cover nine regional councils and a federation. As a result, the National Agrarian Institute has been able to issue intercommunal titles, a mechanism set up following participation in two South-South exchanges, which also involved free, prior and informed consultation. In order to document the lessons learned, a standardized procedure for issuing land titles to the Miskito peoples and the Katinasta and Auhya Yari regional councils was put in place.

88. The conflict between peasant farmers and large-scale exporters of African palm oil in the Lower Aguán River Valley in Colón Department is the most serious agrarian issue that Honduras has faced in over 35 years. In addition to adopting the social measures implemented by the National Agrarian Institute, in September 2011 the executive branch set up the Xatruch II Joint Task Force. Comprising members of the armed forces and the national police, the Task Force is responsible for carrying out patrols and manning checkpoints in the conflict zone, confiscating weapons in accordance with Legislative Decree No. 117-2012, presenting to the public prosecutor's office cases in which an offence may have been committed, arresting people for whom warrants have been issued, disbanding criminal groups and carrying out evictions ordered by judicial authorities. According to reports from lead members of the Task Force, efforts have been made to foster a dialogue between peasant farmers' organizations and large-scale exporters, with the result that, since 2014, very few illegal farm occupations have occurred. For its part, in 2014 the Public Prosecution Service created a unit for the investigation of violent deaths in the Lower Aguán Valley. Based in the city of Tocoa, the unit's purpose is to coordinate and concentrate action to investigate homicides committed in the region.

89. The Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, the Interior and Decentralization has headed up a comprehensive strategy on conflict in the area involving on-site visits and the deployment of an inter-agency team made up of State agencies, civil society organizations and private businesspeople, all having spheres of competence, work and interests in the Lower Aguán Valley. These efforts, in which the departmental government plays a major role, have resulted in the creation of a justice officials' committee and a network of human rights defenders in the Aguán Valley. This has made it possible to create forums for dialogue and improve follow-up on the commitments made by all parties.



90. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock operates the Food and Nutrition Security Strategy, adopted in 2010, and the Food and Nutrition Security Act of 2011, which was adopted under Legislative Decree No. 25-2011. It is currently giving greater prominence to the Policy on Food and Nutrition Security by establishing the Dry Corridor Alliance for a Better Life. This Alliance has facilitated international cooperation and support for tackling the problems of chronic childhood malnutrition and poverty in the most vulnerable areas of the country.

91. On that issue, the Government of Honduras has adopted a range of measures:

(a) The Country Investment Plan for the Agrifood Sector, the Strategic Plan for the Agrifood Sector and the Public Sector Agrifood Implementation Strategy;

(b) These plans work in combination with the 2010-2022 Food and Nutrition Security Strategy;

(c) The various institutional structures — the National Food and Nutrition Security Council, the Food and Nutrition Supervisory Commission, the National Commission on Food and Nutrition Security and the Food and Nutrition Security Task Force — together form an institutional system. These structures currently take the lead on policy, on behalf of the Ministry of General Government Coordination;

(d) The Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion reports that 2,450 people have received food and nutrition training.

92. Through the provision of production solidarity vouchers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has contributed to staple grain production, with the aim of ensuring the availability of a secure and nutritionally adequate food supply for families living in rural areas. In 2014 and 2015, the Ministry's Agricultural Science and Technology Directorate issued a total of 147,120 production solidarity vouchers to the same number of families in 17 of the country's departments.

93. As a result of the Sustainable Rural Development Programme for the Southern Region and the project entitled "Improving the Competitiveness of the Rural Economy in Yoro Department", 4,378 families have, in 2014 and 2015, benefited from comprehensive investment plans, which help families to generate sources of income, thereby facilitating sustainable access to food in the areas that fall within the scope of those projects.

94. The National System of Protected Areas and Wildlife, which comprises 91 areas, was set up in implementation of the Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Act.<sup>18</sup> The declaration of two marine areas on the country's Atlantic coast is currently under way, while management plans are already in place for 51 areas. Thanks to the high level of government and local stakeholder participation and inclusion, one of the most successful drafting processes has been the formulation of a management plan for the protected areas subsystem in the southern region.

95. Certification of private nature reserves is another important process and is underpinned by the following legal and policy framework: Executive Decision No. 107-A-2013 establishing the rules governing the certification of private nature reserves and Decision No. 024A-2013, issued by the National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife, adopting the manual of procedures for the certification and registration of private nature reserves.

96. Two properties have received certification to date: the Katias nature reserve, which has its own management plan, and the Hacienda Tara private nature reserve. Headway is also being made on the establishment of biological corridors, a concept that also has the

<sup>18</sup> Decree No.98-2007, art. 66 of the Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Act.

protection of various technical and legal standards. These methods of protection and management enable the public and private sectors to work together in implementing improved, environmentally friendly agricultural practices, with the aim of ensuring the conservation of natural resources and the provision of ecosystem-based goods and services that are essential to the development of communities.

97. An influx of 1,175,007 tourists in 2015 generated economic benefits for the communities living in or near protected areas. Tourism has been growing since 2010, and protected areas have slowly but surely been making their mark at both the national and the international level. A 12 per cent increase in the number of visits compared with the previous year was recorded in 2015.

98. In order to develop, monitor and regulate tourism activities in protected areas, rules and policies are in place, such as the National Sustainable Tourism Policy and the Guidelines on the National System of Protected Areas and Wildlife, which form part of the National Sustainable Tourism Strategy. The Policy, as well as the Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Act and its regulations, contains guidelines on the development of tourism. Planning procedures relating to tourism in protected areas have been redrafted to make them more participatory and inclusive and to ensure that communities, indigenous peoples and persons of African descent play the largest role in the development and implementation of such plans and derive benefit from them.

99. The National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife handles environmental licence applications for the development of mining projects and, as is the case for the areas under the National System of Protected Areas and Wildlife or for the microbasins declared as protected areas, decisions on these requests are based on international conventions, national legislation, decrees, area-creation agreements, the respective management plans and impact assessments conducted in the field.

100. Regarding the measures adopted to ensure the availability of drinking water in the northern region of the country, where the African palm is extensively cultivated, the following steps have been taken:

- Declaration of water sources (microbasins) to be forest protection areas;
- Provision of support for the development of management plans for protected microbasins;
- Provision of support for the preparation and implementation of annual operating plans, in coordination with the various groups working in the field of natural resources in such protected areas;
- Coordination with drinking water and sanitation management boards;
- Identification, delimitation and demarcation of microbasins;
- Compilation of biophysical and socioeconomic assessments;
- Development of action plans for addressing issues identified in such assessments;
- Establishment of cooperation agreements between the National Institute for Conservation and Forestry Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife, municipal authorities and community organizations, such as water boards and welfare foundations.

101. Since 2012, the Government has adopted a series of measures to ensure that persons deprived of their liberty have an adequate standard of living. These include the enactment in March 2015 of the National Prison System Act and its implementing regulations and the development of the National Prison Policy, following a broad process of consultation with the various groups working in the prison sector. Moreover, in 2014, the budget allocated for

food for inmates was increased from 13 lempiras to 30 lempiras per day. In the same year, a cooperation agreement on tuberculosis management in the Tamara national penitentiary was signed with the Honduran Red Cross in order to improve the quality of and basic access to the right to water and sanitation in six prisons.

102. To improve health-care services, in 2015 doctors and nurses were hired for prisons with on-site clinics. Inmates in prisons without clinics are treated by regional Ministry of Health doctors, who provide health-care services two or three times a week.

103. Cultural and educational activities, including access to libraries, are also available in all the country's prisons, with a view to encouraging the full development of the human personality. Classes continue to be provided in all prisons for persons deprived of their liberty who voluntarily enrol in existing first- to ninth-grade education programmes. For example, first- to sixth-grade education is covered by the Alfasic programme, sixth- to ninth-grade education is provided under the "Education for All" programme, and stages one and two of the high school baccalaureate are provided by the Honduran Institute of Radio Education.

104. As part of the rehabilitation, social reintegration and occupational therapy processes, the Act on Work for Persons Deprived of their Liberty and Guaranteed Employment for Highly Dangerous Prisoners has been adopted, with the aim of ensuring that persons deprived of their liberty receive monetary remuneration.<sup>19</sup>

## Reply regarding article 12

105. Immunization programmes are among the achievements in the area of health in recent years. The social security and public health services provide 15 vaccines to protect Honduran families. These include the basic package of vaccines against tuberculosis (BCG), diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, haemophilus influenza type b, hepatitis B, poliomyelitis (Sabin oral polio vaccine) and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). Eighty-five per cent of children aged between 12 and 23 months have received all the essential vaccinations, which is a significant increase of 10 percentage points in comparison with the 75 per cent recorded in the previous health survey. In addition, vaccines have, in 90 per cent of cases, been administered at the appropriate time for children aged between 18 and 59 months. In fact, in many cases, Honduras has achieved immunization coverage of close to 100 per cent for children of the appropriate ages. For example, the rate of coverage stands at 99 per cent for the BCG vaccine, 95 per cent for the pentavalent vaccine (type 3), 96 per cent for the oral polio vaccine (type 3) and 88 per cent for the MMR vaccine. It is worth noting that, since there were no recorded cases of neonatal tetanus in 2014, that illness could be added to the seven vaccine-preventable diseases that have already been controlled in the country. In line with the priority consistently given to immunization programmes, in January 2014 the National Congress adopted the Vaccines Act, which provides a legal foundation for children's right to be vaccinated and the duty of parents and the State to give effect to that right. The Act has thus reinforced the legislative framework of the country's immunization system. In addition, health centres and hospitals have been strengthened and restructured nationwide and the health of children under 5 years of age improved through health-care promotion, prevention and recovery.

106. At the national level, the Ministry of Health has implemented a methodological strategy on family planning services, which has as its core objective the systematization of procedures at the various levels of care and administration in health regions and integrated health-service networks in each and every health-care facility, enabling an improved range

<sup>19</sup> Decree No. 101-2015, published on 14 January 2016.

of contraceptive methods and better access by potential users. The overall aim is to help reduce the rate of maternal and perinatal mortality and the number of unplanned pregnancies by addressing the unmet need for family planning.

107. The country currently has provision for a variety of contraceptive methods, as described in the handbook on standards of care for family planning, perimenopause, menopause and infertility. Emergency contraception is not available: while moves have been made at the legislative level, the debate has not led to approval of such contraception.

108. Under the National Adolescent Care Programme, mechanisms have been introduced to develop adolescent care facilities providing family planning services, with Leonardo Martínez Hospital in San Pedro Sula and the Alonso Suazo health facility in Tegucigalpa leading the way.

109. According to the latest health survey, 97 per cent of women who had given birth in the five years prior to the survey had received prenatal care from qualified personnel. This figure represents an increase of 5 per cent, up from 92 per cent.

## Reply regarding articles 13 and 14

110. The Government of Honduras has, through the Ministry of Education, adopted measures to ensure the accessibility and availability of education. These include:

(a) Supporting the process of teacher redeployment, through a budgetary provision that enables the full cost of a post to be reassigned — in the event of its being terminated as a result of resignation, retirement or death — to other places where the need is greater, with a special emphasis on preschool posts;

(b) Increasing the 2016 budget and allocating funds with a view to:<sup>20</sup>

- Universalizing preschool education and expanding preschool education for 34,139 children under the age of 5 years;
- Ensuring that 600,000 illiterate Hondurans become literate by 2018;
- Establishing secondary schools in 36 municipalities to ensure 100 per cent secondary education coverage in all 298 municipalities;
- Supporting 31,500 students learning English under the English for a Better Life programme: 11,500 under the Ministry of Education and 20,000 with the National Institute for Vocational Training;
- The Ministry of Education will, in 2016, start with 7,500 students and have 72 secondary school teachers trained and certified in the teaching of English;
- A total of 200 days of classes were provided in the public education system during the 2013, 2014 and 2015 school years.

111. The School Snack Programme, which, in 2014, covered 96.64 per cent of preschool and primary school pupils, has been strengthened and consolidated. This is no mean feat, since, with support from the World Food Programme, the School Snack Programme reaches 1,230,681 children in 18,528 kindergartens and schools.

112. Preschool education: the authorities at departmental, district and municipal level and school principals organize campaigns in conjunction with municipal mayors' offices, NGOs and other education stakeholders to ensure that children who are 5 years old, or who will celebrate their fifth birthday before 31 March 2016, are registered in the administrative

<sup>20</sup> Annex 2: Budget of the Ministry of Education for the period 2000-2016.

system for educational centres. They can then be enrolled in their preparatory education and complete their mandatory year of preschool, either in a kindergarten or in a community preschool education centre.

113. Primary education: in communities where no preschool education is available, all children who are 6 years of age, or will turn 6 by 31 December 2016, must be enrolled in the first grade, even if they have not completed the preschool preparatory stage, and be registered in the system for the administration of educational centres.

## Reply regarding article 15

114. The Government of Honduras upholds the fundamental right to the enjoyment of and access to cultural products, goods and services as a platform for social cohesion and civic education and as a means of fostering coexistence, a culture of peace and an appreciation of the arts.

115. The services provided in State-owned facilities, such as theatres, libraries, cultural centres and galleries, and in public spaces are free of charge and open without restriction to the public. With support from academies and foundations, the Government promotes technology fairs and encourages creativity, innovation, expansion and the use of new information and communications technology (ICT) in the development of creativity.

116. Programmes and services have been enhanced in the Juan Ramón Molina National Library of Honduras, including activities aimed at encouraging children to read; the Mercedes Agurcia Membreño National Dance School; the National School of Drama; the Intibucá Indigenous Centre for Handicrafts Training; the Francisco Ramón Díaz Zelaya National Conservatoire; the National Cultural Centre Network, which has a presence in 61 municipalities; the Honduran Anthropology and History Institute; and Radio Honduras. In addition, the Government has supported a number of cultural non-profit bodies, such as the Morazán House Museum (Casa de Morazán), the Museum of Honduran Civilization (Museo del Hombre Hondureño), the San Pedro Sula Philharmonic Orchestra and the Choral Philharmonic Association of Honduras. Three museums have also been opened in Copán and Lempira Departments, on the Maya people and on Lenca culture, respectively.

117. Acting on behalf of the State of Honduras, the National Telecommunications Commission has taken the following measures:

(a) Amended the Telecommunications Framework Act<sup>21</sup> to provide funding for connectivity and ICT application projects;

(b) Issued Regulatory Decision No. 31/34 regarding broadband, which provides for the principle of net neutrality and guarantees pluralistic, diverse and uncensored content, ensuring that communications over the telecommunications networks are treated equally and without discrimination;

(c) Issued Regulatory Decision No. 4/11, amended by Regulatory Decision No. 19/14 on internet service providers and computer network access, which together make a mandatory contribution to the “Internet for All as a Connection to the World” social cooperation programme, providing access to the Internet, free of charge, in schools, colleges, community centres and public internet centres, among others;

(d) Restored community centres in rural areas, providing connectivity and establishing Wi-Fi networks in public areas;

<sup>21</sup> Adopted under Legislative Decree No. 325-2013.

(e) Implemented the “People’s Internet” programme, which provides free Internet in the following places:

- 139 public squares across the country;
  - 2,309 public educational centres across the country;
  - 31 vocational training centres run by the National Institute for Vocational Training.
-