



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
3 September 2021

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Twenty-fifth session

Summary record of the 541st meeting

Held via videoconference on Monday, 23 August 2021, at 12.30 p.m. Central European Summer Time.

Chair: Ms. Kayess

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The meeting was called to order at 12.30 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35

(continued)

Initial report of France (continued) (CRPD/C/FRA/1; CRPD/C/FRA/Q/1 and CRPD/C/FRA/RQ/1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of France joined the meeting.*

Articles 21–33

2. **Ms. Cluzel** (France), responding to questions put at the previous meeting, including follow-up questions under articles 11 to 20, said that the Government was committed to strengthening the autonomy of persons with disabilities in every aspect of their lives; in accordance with an interministerial plan, it was developing inclusive housing that ensured full respect for their life choices. A financial support scheme to help cover the cost of living in such housing was being rolled out in pilot departments across France; more than 400 persons were already enrolled in the scheme, which had a budget of €4.5 million. The staff of departmental centres for persons with disabilities were trained to help persons with disabilities assess their housing needs and to propose appropriate solutions.

3. The Government was also committed to improving the accessibility of existing housing and increasing the availability of home support in order to allow persons with disabilities to receive assistance in accordance with their needs and wishes. Currently, only 5,000 adults with disabilities were living in medico-social institutions. The deployment of 360-degree community support platforms across the country reflected the importance of proximity in the provision of assistance. That was also central to the plan on the prevention of undesired departures of persons with disabilities to Belgium, under which financial resources had been earmarked for the provision of local services.

4. Persons with disabilities had the right to request assistive devices to facilitate their autonomy, including in the area of communication. The Government was currently working on the generalization of augmentative and alternative communication to ensure that all persons with disabilities had access to communication tools, regardless of the nature of their disability.

5. The Government had launched a road map on sexual health that included information and guidance on emotional and sexual relations and parenthood for persons with disabilities. Measures were being taken to improve access to gynaecological care for women with disabilities, and adapted parenting and perinatal support was also provided. Forced abortion was illegal in France.

6. Steps had been taken to ensure that all persons with disabilities who wished to receive guidance on life choices had access to specially trained facilitators, who could provide them with assistance in the definition of life goals. A total of 350 facilitator posts had been established throughout France and €14 million would be allocated to the programme by 2023.

7. **Ms. Bryon** (France) said that a study was conducted every four years on the number of children in special institutions who were not attending school, which, in 2014, had stood at around 11,000 children, a decrease of 4.4 per cent compared to 2010. Institutions for children with multiple disabilities had the highest percentage of children not attending school; however, that percentage had decreased from 85 per cent in 2010 to 76 per cent in 2014. The results of the 2018 study were not yet available but were expected to reflect an improvement, since a commitment to promote the schooling of children with multiple disabilities had been made by various ministries at the most recent session of the Interministerial Committee on Disability.

8. Reasonable accommodation could be made in the school environment for children with disabilities, including in relation to infrastructure, timetables, class exercises and examinations, and learning methods and materials. The Cap École Inclusive national online platform provided teachers with guidance on how to identify children's specific needs and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. Where appropriate, students with disabilities could benefit from a personal education plan, which could include, for example, therapeutic or

rehabilitative support provided in the school. Teaching centres for deaf children offering a bilingual programme in French Sign Language and written French were being established in every educational district to facilitate the schooling of deaf children in a mainstream environment. There were currently six such centres offering bilingual education from the pre-primary to the secondary school level. The Government had increased the availability of training in French Sign Language for teachers.

9. With regard to inclusive education, in 2018 the Government had launched a broad consultation on the schooling of children with disabilities, the results of which were reflected in a 2019 law, under which various measures had already been taken: learning support mechanisms had been strengthened to allow for improved adaptation on the part of schools to special educational needs; steps had been taken to allow more children to study in special units within mainstream schools; and the presence of medico-social professionals in mainstream schools had been reinforced. A new inclusive education report book was being rolled out for students with special educational needs in order to ensure proper monitoring of their progress and facilitate communication between families and professionals.

10. **Mr. Jopeck** (France) said that new legislation had been passed granting greater powers to the Broadcasting Authority, which was responsible for overseeing and improving the accessibility of television and audiovisual media services. By law, all public and private television channels were required to ensure that their programming was accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. In 2020, the three private news channels had broadcast a total of 830 hours of subtitled newscasts and the public news channel, FranceInfo, 1,512 hours. Although there was no legal obligation in that regard, FranceInfo had committed to offering two newscasts in French Sign Language per day under agreements with the Broadcasting Authority, while the three private news channels had provided 216 hours of interpreted newscasts in 2020. During the 2022 presidential election campaign, candidates' campaign advertisements would be subtitled and interpreted into French Sign Language.

11. The current obligations incumbent on television channels under the legislation and agreements just described also applied to coverage of sport, including the Olympic and Paralympic Games. All sports programmes were subtitled, and InfoSport, a channel dedicated to sports-related news, offered one newscast in French Sign Language per day. The Broadcasting Authority had established guidelines for the broadcasting of Paralympic events, under which broadcasters were encouraged to explain the rules governing each sporting event and the athlete classification system. There were also plans to increase the number of transmissions and retransmissions of broadcasts relating to Paralympic events. Television channels that had signed the Broadcasting Authority's Charter on the Representation of Disability and Persons with Disabilities in Audiovisual Media had undertaken to invite persons with disabilities onto their programmes to discuss sporting events.

12. **Mr. Bellivier** (France), replying to the question concerning the HOPSYWEB database for the management of non-consensual psychiatric treatment, said the Government wished to make it clear that mentally-ill persons were not considered as potential criminals; in fact, such persons were often victims. The destigmatization of mental illness and persons with mental disabilities was one of the cornerstones of national mental health policy. In some cases, however, special protection measures had to be taken in respect of persons with mental disabilities in view of the risk they posed to themselves and others. According to an analysis of the profile of the perpetrators of recent terrorist attacks, certain psychiatric disorders could increase an individual's vulnerability to radicalization. In 2019, a process had been established whereby a senior administrative officer was notified whenever a person included in the HOPSYWEB database was placed on the register of potentially radicalized persons maintained by the security services. In no event did such administrative officers have access to the data contained in HOPSYWEB itself or to information concerning persons included in HOPSYWEB who were not also on the register of potentially radicalized persons. The National Commission on Information Technology and the Conseil d'Etat had both reviewed the verification mechanism and had judged it proportionate and justified.

13. **Mr. Bouhours** (France) said that there were currently some 40,000 students with disabilities engaged in higher studies in the French education system, which represented an increase of 30 per cent compared to 2017. All university-level students with special needs, whether they were French citizens or foreign nationals, could contact the disability centre of

their educational institution in order to benefit from accommodations and adaptations, including peer note-taking and tutoring, dedicated study spaces, adapted teaching materials, and study and examination extensions and adaptations. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students could receive assistance from a French Sign Language interpreter or support from an assistant in cued speech upon request. Students with disabilities could also receive support with regard to housing, food, health care and cultural or sporting activities and could benefit from financial aid on the basis of certain social criteria or from access to inclusive housing at their university. In order to better address the needs of students with disabilities, the Government had launched a consultative process with students and their families with the support of the National Consultative Council of Persons with Disabilities. Working groups had been established to look into the issues of continuity between secondary and tertiary education and accessibility.

14. **Ms. Cornu-Pauchet** (France) said that steps had been taken to tackle the many obstacles to access to health care faced by persons with disabilities. For example, to address hesitance on the part of patients, in July 2021 agreement had been reached between doctors and the national health insurance provider to allow persons with disabilities to arrange preliminary visits to places of care, prior to consultations or treatment, in order to familiarize themselves with the medical environment. Guidelines on treating patients with disabilities in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had been disseminated to health professionals.

15. For persons with disabilities who could not receive physical care in mainstream hospitals, individualized accessible consultations in adapted spaces could be arranged. There were currently around 75 such spaces in France. Moreover, to address the difficulties faced by persons with psychosocial disabilities in accessing physical care, cooperation between health professionals working in physical, psychosocial and psychiatric care had been enhanced. The Government had allocated additional funding to innovative projects in that area. Additional training on mental health was being introduced into the curriculum for trainee general practitioners.

16. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a special procedure had been introduced allowing persons with disabilities to be admitted directly to hospitals for treatment, without first having to visit the emergency ward. Persons with disabilities had the right to be accompanied by their own carer when an appropriate assistant could not be provided by the health facility concerned.

17. On the basis of an expert report, the Government had launched, in January 2021, a structural reform of the system governing the provision of assistive devices. A budget of €10 million had been earmarked for the establishment of local teams dedicated to providing support in that regard. The Government was negotiating with producers and distributors to set limits on the cost of assistive devices and a consultation had been launched in May 2021 to improve the system for the reimbursement of such devices through health insurance.

18. **Ms. Cluzel** (France) said that supported employment schemes had been rolled out to provide employees with disabilities and their employers with continuous support. The Government had launched a consultation with a view to reforming the country's 1,500 employment rehabilitation establishments and services, through which almost 120,000 persons with disabilities had access to professional development. The reform was intended to reinforce the career advancement prospects and job security of employees with disabilities. As part of the reform, the rules governing leaves, access to vocational training and health insurance would be brought into line with those obtaining in mainstream employment, and administrative obstacles would be removed to facilitate mobility between the establishments and the ordinary labour market, where, it should be pointed out, the vast majority of persons with disabilities were already employed. To promote integration, it would henceforth be possible to combine work in an employment rehabilitation establishment and in an ordinary place of work.

19. Moreover, the Government was taking steps to transform the way in which disabilities were viewed in the workplace to ensure that persons with disabilities felt free to talk openly about their condition, including in job interviews, and to include such information on their curricula vitae, if they so wished. To that end, the DuoDay initiative had been launched: every

year, workers with disabilities were partnered with workers without disabilities to allow for the exchange of experience and to foster employment. In 2020, duos established throughout France had resulted in job opportunities for 10 per cent of participants. In late 2021, a new initiative would be launched to encourage public and private employers to publish yearly information on their commitments and achievements in relation to the recruitment of persons with disabilities.

20. **Ms. Rouberol** (France) said that Cap Emploi offices did not collect confidential medical information, only information on applicants' aptitude for work. In most cases, Cap Emploi offices carried out their own evaluations. However, they could call on external experts, such as occupational therapists, if they did not employ such experts in-house. Employers could be contacted only with the consent of the person concerned, and then only to facilitate integration or ensure continuity of employment by encouraging the employer to make reasonable adjustments and arrange for the employee's reclassification in cases where dismissal was a possibility. Efforts were under way to merge Cap Emploi and Pôle Emploi, the mainstream employment office, in order to offer a single point of contact and a uniform range of services.

21. According to the results of a recent report from the Statistical and Research Department of the Ministry of Labour, women represented 53 per cent of persons declaring that they had a disability but only 50 per cent of persons declaring that they were officially registered as disabled. However, it should be understood that, in the context of the study, the statistical group "persons declaring a disability" also included persons who claimed to be affected by chronic illness but who had not yet taken administrative steps in that regard. Those affected by chronic illness were mostly women. Men, however, tended to be more frequently affected by workplace accidents; the obligation to declare such accidents could explain why more men had requested official disability registration. Moreover, according to a new report from the Statistical and Research Department due to be published in late 2021, gender currently had a second-order effect on access to employment compared to disability. The unemployment rate among persons with disabilities was six percentage points above the European average as a result of a lower qualification level among that subgroup of the population; accordingly, efforts were being made to increase the availability of appropriate training. The activity rate of men and women with disabilities was currently equal and the unemployment rate of women with disabilities was below that of men with disabilities.

22. **Mr. Jumel** (France), responding to a question about the proportion of persons with severe intellectual disabilities who lived below the poverty line, said that the figures cited by the Committee had been taken from a study conducted in 2010. Since that year, however, the levels of the minimum income benefits to which persons with disabilities were entitled had undergone a comprehensive review. In particular, the adult disability allowance had been increased from €810 per month in 2017 to €900 per month in 2019, with the result that recipients' incomes now approached the poverty line or even exceeded it if they also had income from other sources, such as work. Furthermore, those recipients of the adult disability allowance whose incomes were below the poverty line experienced less severe poverty than did persons with mild or no disabilities who also received minimum income benefits.

23. When considering the income of the poorest citizens in France, it was necessary to consider all the social benefits to which they were potentially entitled. For example, a recipient of the adult disability allowance might also be entitled to receive the housing allowance or the supplement for independent living, which would place his or her income above the poverty line. Persons with disabilities on low incomes were also entitled to subscribe to the new solidarity health insurance scheme, which gave them access to a wide range of medical services. Other benefits that improved the living standards of persons with disabilities included the mobility and inclusion card, which entitled the holders to tax reductions, and the compensatory disability benefit, which could be used to obtain access to personal assistance and assistive devices.

24. **Ms. Pilhes** (France) said that, in order for France to withdraw its interpretative declaration concerning article 29 of the Convention, it would be necessary to undertake a legal analysis to determine whether, following the amendment of the legislation on the right to vote of protected adults, national law was now in full compliance with the Convention.

25. Following the adoption of the 2019 Justice System Planning Act, around 300,000 protected adults were now entitled to vote provided that they had registered to do so. It had been possible to identify the 3,000 protected persons who had registered to vote in the European Parliament elections of May 2019 because, thanks to a special dispensation, they had been permitted to register after the deadline established in law. Since those elections, however, regulations on data protection had prevented the Government from determining the number of protected adults who had registered to vote. The Defender of Rights had received reports indicating that some protected adults had encountered obstacles when trying to register while others had been unaware of their newly acquired right. As a result, the Interministerial Committee on Disability had established an interministerial task force that would determine the proportion of protected adults who were registered to vote and propose measures for increasing that figure, among other actions.

26. **Mr. Annereau** (France) said that the proportion of persons with disabilities who had voted in the regional elections of 2015 was three percentage points lower than the proportion of persons without disabilities who had voted. In order to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life, the Interministerial Committee on Disability had established a working group that would be responsible for increasing the accessibility of elections and campaign materials. The group would include representatives of political parties, human rights defenders and members of the National Consultative Council of Persons with Disabilities.

27. The Interministerial Committee on Disability had made arrangements for an explanatory document on easy-to-read language to be sent to candidates standing in the departmental and regional elections, and measures had been taken to encourage candidates standing in the presidential elections in 2022 to make their campaign materials fully accessible to persons with disabilities. The Government intended to work with the political parties to persuade more persons with disabilities to run for elected office. Currently, only 1 of the 577 deputies elected to the National Assembly had a disability. Steps would be taken to enhance the visibility of persons with disabilities in the audiovisual media following the signing of the charter on that topic.

28. **Ms. Poulet** (France) said that persons with disabilities were able to participate in efforts to monitor the implementation of the Convention through the National Consultative Council of Persons with Disabilities. Citizens could report possible violations of the Convention to the Council's dedicated committee on international relations and the implementation of the Convention, whose members were also responsible for scrutinizing bills to assess their compatibility with the Convention. The Council had launched its first public consultation in 2021 to promote the participation of members of the public in its work. The Council's summer universities, which were broadcast online and open to all members of the public, served to promote exchanges between persons with disabilities and all relevant stakeholders.

29. The Council collaborated with the departmental citizenship and autonomy councils, which enabled persons with disabilities to participate in the development of departmental policies on disability-related issues. Persons with disabilities could also express their views through the French Council of Disabled Persons on European and International Affairs, which served as the French focal point for the European Disability Forum.

30. **Mr. Bellivier** (France) said that, in recent years, the Government had taken steps to reduce the use in institutions of non-consensual psychiatric treatment, including isolation and restraint. The Constitutional Council had requested a review of the law to determine whether the existing legal restrictions in that regard could be strengthened further. Persons in institutional settings were physically restrained or placed in isolation only as a last resort when alternative measures had failed and the persons concerned posed an immediate danger to themselves or others. The use of isolation and restraint was permitted only on instructions from a psychiatrist, for a limited period, and was subject to monitoring by medical professionals designated for that purpose.

31. The authorities could extend the use of isolation or restraint for a certain period subject to compliance with a strict medical protocol. If they wished to extend the use of those measures beyond that period, they must inform the liberties and detention judge, who was

empowered to order the lifting of the measures if he or she found that the relevant conditions for their use had not been met. In addition, persons subjected to isolation or restraint, or their representatives, could submit a request for the lifting of the measures to the liberties and detention judge. Each establishment that practised isolation and restraint was legally required to record the use of those techniques and to send an annual report thereon to the relevant authorities. Steps were being taken to digitize such records in order to facilitate the monitoring of the establishments concerned and support them in their efforts to reduce the use of non-consensual measures.

32. Electroconvulsive therapy was not considered to constitute inhuman, degrading or unethical treatment in France and its use was strictly regulated by the National Health Authority. Any establishment that wished to employ that form of therapy must be accredited by the National Health Authority and must obtain the consent of the person receiving the therapy.

33. **Mr. Salvini** (France) said that, according to studies conducted since 2012, between 40 and 80 per cent of prisoners had at least one psychiatric disorder before they were incarcerated. Since 2017, plans for combating violence in prison had been developed and special units had been set up to monitor outbreaks of violence and punish the perpetrators. No person was deprived of his or her liberty because he or she had an actual or perceived disability. Prisoners with and without disabilities were treated by the health system in accordance with the road map on health and justice. Prisoners were screened for various kinds of disability when entering prison and were given access to medical assistance if they required it. In the training undertaken by prison officers, significant emphasis was placed on the mental health of prisoners.

34. The goal of the prison system was to support the reintegration of prisoners into society and the workplace. Accordingly, life in detention should improve prisoners' mental and physical health. Efforts had been made to enhance the accessibility of prisons and to promote access to sporting and educational activities. Disability-friendly companies would be established in 10 prisons on a trial basis to provide work for 150 prisoners.

35. **The Chair** invited members of the Committee to put any remaining follow-up questions.

36. **Mr. Kabue** said that he wished to know why the Generation Equality Forum, which had been partly organized by the Government of France and broadcast online earlier in 2021, had not been made more accessible for persons with disabilities. In particular, he wondered why the online content had not been adapted for screen readers, why International Sign interpretation had not been provided, why greater use had not been made of plain language and what measures would be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities were not excluded from similar events in the future. He would be interested to learn why entitlement to certain disability-related allowances was dependent on the income of the recipient's spouse and whether any steps would be taken to remedy that situation in order to promote the independence of persons with disabilities.

37. **Mr. Basharu** said that he wished to know what was being done to promote the teaching and learning of Braille, how far Braille was recognized by the general public and what measures were being taken to provide blind persons, deafblind persons and persons with intellectual disabilities with information in accessible formats that would facilitate their participation in political and public life. He wondered how the Government saw to it that persons with disabilities could participate in competitive sports and what steps were being taken to implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

38. **Ms. Thongkuay** said that she wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure the accessibility of public services and the provision of community-based support in order to facilitate the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities. The delegation might also describe the steps being taken to ensure access to health services for deafblind persons, persons with hearing impairments and persons with intellectual disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. She wondered what the Government would be doing to ensure access to information, electronic services and emergency services during the Summer Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, which were due to take place in Paris in 2024. Lastly, she

would appreciate information on any steps being taken to promote gender equality in sport and ensure that sport was free from sexual harassment and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, disability and race.

39. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she wished to know whether the Government would consider repealing those legal provisions that provided for the restriction of the legal capacity of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities. It was still not clear why the Government disagreed with the Committee's view that the draft Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine (Convention of Oviedo) was incompatible with the Convention. She would be interested to hear about any measures being taken to provide redress to persons with disabilities who had been forcibly institutionalized.

40. **The Chair** said that she wished to know whether the Government would consider putting an end to the practice of educating children with disabilities in special units within mainstream schools, as that approach set such children apart and exposed them to the risk of being stigmatized or bullied. She would welcome information on any measures being taken to facilitate access to employment for women with disabilities, including migrant, refugee and Roma women. She also wished to know whether measures would be taken to ensure the availability of sociodemographic data disaggregated by disability. In that connection, she wondered what steps the Government had taken to employ a human rights concept of disability in the country's data-collection system and to promote the use of inclusive research methodologies and collaborative research with persons with disabilities.

41. **Mr. Ruskus** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be interested to hear about the measures being taken to grant professional status to sign language interpreters, including the setting of professional standards for them and the provision of extended training. The Committee was concerned about the lack of access for persons with disabilities to professional training programmes and the absence of support for researchers with disabilities, including under legislation on research programming; it would welcome information on the steps being taken to address those issues. He would be grateful for details of any plans to improve the disability allowance system, which was based on a medical model of disability and pushed persons with disabilities into poverty. Information would be appreciated on any measures intended to ensure access to mainstream sporting, recreational and tourism venues for persons with disabilities, especially persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities or sensory impairments and persons with autism, and to play, recreation, leisure and sporting activities for children with disabilities. The delegation should explain how the State party planned to accord higher priority to the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities in its use of European structural and investment funds and to include organizations of persons with disabilities in its international cooperation programmes and strategies. Lastly, he wished to learn how the State party would ensure that the Convention was the main reference source in the work of the Interministerial Committee on Disability and the disability focal points in each ministry.

The meeting was suspended at 1.55 p.m. and resumed at 2 p.m.

42. **Ms. Boudeau** (France) said that the authorities had been unaware of reports of accessibility issues at the Generation Equality Forum and would investigate them. The Forum had been organized by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). Events described as "accessible" on government websites were required to meet at least 75 per cent of accessibility requirements.

43. **Mr. Jumel** (France) said that, from 1 January 2022, a new formula would be used to calculate the adult disability allowance, leading to changes in the manner in which spousal income was taken into account. The new approach would bring numerous benefits, including an additional €110 per month, on average, for 120,000 people. The Government was aware of reported complexities and inconsistencies in the disability allowance system. It was committed to implementing its ambitious plans to improve the daily lives of persons with disabilities.

44. **Ms. Cornu-Pauchet** (France) said that, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of remote medical consultations had increased from 135,000 to more than 19.4 million. Given that such consultations were a vital tool for persons with disabilities, in

January 2021 a working group had been set up by the Ministry of Solidarity and Health to draw up recommendations for professionals and providers. A podcast with recommended guidelines had been released.

45. **Mr. Salvini** (France) said that the 2007 Act on the reform of legal protection for adults promoted autonomy. Subsequent changes to the system, prior to 2019, had been aimed at making guardianship a subsidiary measure. Under the 2019 reform, guardianship was being replaced with a new system intended to increase the autonomy of protected adults. The number of people under guardianship had dropped from 383,000 in 2015 to 365,000 in 2021, while the number of people under other forms of legal protection, such as representation by a family member, was rising. The system was moving towards a model that respected the wishes and autonomy of the persons concerned, in keeping with the spirit of the Convention.

46. **Mr. Bellivier** (France) said that the draft Additional Protocol to the Convention of Oviedo was not incompatible with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities because the latter did not seek to regulate the involuntary placement or treatment of persons with mental health disorders. It was expressly stated in the draft Additional Protocol that non-consensual placement could never be justified by a mental health disorder. The draft was thus fully compatible with the provisions of article 14 of the Convention. The interpretation of the Convention itself must be consistent with other relevant instruments. In that regard, article 5 (1) (e) of the European Convention on Human Rights permitted the detention of persons with mental health disorders under certain conditions that had been sanctioned by the European Court of Human Rights. The draft Additional Protocol was intended to protect the fundamental interests of very vulnerable people. The Government actively supported efforts to draw up good practices in the reduction of non-consensual treatment.

47. **Ms. Byron** (France) said that the vast majority of children with disabilities attended mainstream schools. Some students benefited from additional support in special units alongside the time they spent in mainstream classes. The units were not closed and students with disabilities were not segregated. The authorities aimed to ensure that all children with autism spent at least 80 per cent of their time in mainstream classes, in addition to receiving extra support.

48. **Ms. Rouberol** (France) said that the Government was committed to maximizing employment opportunities for women with disabilities, including migrants and asylum seekers, and opening up all professions to female refugees. To that end, the Ministry of Labour, the French Immigration and Integration Office and the three public-sector job agencies had signed a charter on 5 April 2019. A five-year programme involving investment of €1 billion had been launched in 2018 to develop the skills of job seekers, including migrants, and foster innovation in the employment market.

49. **Mr. Aubert** (France) said that data-collection efforts drew on a range of sources. Chief among them were national surveys, including a wide-ranging survey on disability and autonomy that was conducted every 10 years. The latest such survey, which was currently under way and would conclude in 2023, had been designed following broad consultations that had resulted in the addition of a section on harassment. All surveys, irrespective of their subject matter, contained questions intended to elicit disaggregated data on persons with disabilities.

50. **Ms. Poulet** (France) said that one of the tasks of the Interministerial Committee on Disability was to monitor the implementation of the Convention. Every ministry had a designated senior official for inclusion; the officials were trained in the provisions of the Convention and many of them had participated in the interactive dialogue with the Committee. The Prime Minister had recently stated that the Convention was one of the pillars of the Government's policies in the area of disability.

51. **Ms. Cluzel** (France) said that France was committed to achieving the aims of the Convention, namely ending disability-based discrimination and removing the barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in society.

52. In recent years, France had made progress in its implementation of the Convention. The Government was determined to ensure that the lives of persons with disabilities were as simple as possible at every stage. For children, it had introduced better support for students

with disabilities and improved accessibility in schools. For adults, it had launched a range of initiatives in the fields of employment support and training, as well as in a number of areas of private life, including independent living and parental rights. At every life stage, the provision of support was being improved, and universal accessibility was being strengthened. In addition, the National Consultative Council of Persons with Disabilities had been restructured to ensure that persons with disabilities were included in policy planning for the future.

53. There was still work to be done, particularly in the area of accessibility, where all sectors needed to play their part. In the area of deinstitutionalization, the Committee's perspective would be considered by the Government.

54. At the start of his term of office, the President of the Republic had made disability one of his top priorities. Four years later, disability policies had been fundamentally transformed. The Government's ambitions were founded on a common vision of society, from which persons with disabilities should not be set apart.

55. **Ms. Hédon** (Defender of Rights, France) said that more remained to be done to ensure that the Convention was properly embedded in State policies. The transition to a human rights-based approach was not yet complete. While some progress had been made in inclusive education in recent years, challenges remained, and more efforts were needed in the area of accessibility.

56. The Government must adapt its legal framework to reflect the requirements of the Convention while at the same time taking practical steps to give effect to the rights recognized in that instrument. Firstly, it must ensure that all children with disabilities received high-quality education that would prepare them for employment. Secondly, it must make all public facilities, digital services and transportation accessible for all persons with disabilities through universal design. Thirdly, it should ensure that persons with disabilities had sufficient money and resources to allow them to live autonomously and independently. Lastly, a range of high-quality support services should be made available to persons with disabilities and their assistants.

57. **Ms. Lafourcade** (National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, France) said that there was a sizeable gap between the Government's stated ambitions in the area of disability and the reality of daily life for persons with disabilities and their families. The National Consultative Commission wished to encourage the Government to adopt a strategic plan encompassing a number of elements.

58. Firstly, the Government should review its legislation to ensure that it was compatible with the Convention, beginning with the definition of the term "disability" and the rules governing legal capacity. It should also ensure that the Convention was implemented in all parts of the territory, through its network of senior officials with responsibility for disability and inclusion. In addition, the Government should develop a genuine anti-discrimination policy and ensure the effective participation of persons with disabilities, including children, and their representative organizations in all areas of government, in line with the Committee's general comment No. 7. Furthermore, it should provide individualized support for the most vulnerable persons with disabilities. The Commission wished to encourage the Government to include in its strategic plan a series of indicators to allow progress to be monitored. It stood ready to provide advice on the design of the plan.

59. Disability policies should be guided by a human rights-based approach. The Commission had identified a number of prerequisites for achieving that aim. Firstly, the principle of equal legal capacity must be recognized. Secondly, all digital services and facilities open to the public must be made accessible for everyone through universal design. Thirdly, persons with disabilities must have sufficient resources available to them, without needing to rely on a spouse. Lastly, high-quality support services must be provided.

60. **Mr. Ruskus** said that he wished to congratulate the delegation on a constructive dialogue with the Committee. Nevertheless, he was disappointed at the level of structural discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in the State party. He was greatly concerned by the systematic institutionalization of persons with disabilities, including children, with no end in sight to the practice. The extensive use of involuntary hospitalization and treatment,

and of guardianship and curatorship arrangements, was viewed by the State party as a means of protecting persons with disabilities. However, persons with disabilities should be protected by promoting their human rights, which they must enjoy on an equal footing with others. In order to advance the implementation of the Convention, organizations of persons with disabilities should be involved in consultations and decision-making processes. He was hopeful that, following the dialogue, the Government would review its disability legislation and move towards the adoption of a human rights-based approach. To that end, he encouraged the authorities to consult the Committee's general comments.

The meeting rose at 2.35 p.m.