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the Elimination  
of all Forms of  
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Sixty-fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1657th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 11 August 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. YUTZIS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Sixteenth to eighteenth periodic reports of Argentina (continued) (CERD/C/476/Add.2; CERD/C/304/Add.112; HRI/CORE/1/Add.74)

1. Mr. ABOUL-NASR asked what measures the Government would take to make amends for Argentina's past treatment of indigenous peoples. He wondered whether any compensation programmes had been established for families affected by the atrocities, and whether any attempts were being made to redistribute land that had been seized in indigenous areas. Argentina's periodic report was very long, and it had not been possible to read it thoroughly since it had been submitted late. The next report should be submitted in good time, so that it could be given the attention it deserved.
2. Mr. SHAHI said that Argentina's periodic report demonstrated the Government's earnest approach to implementing the provisions of the Convention (ICERD). He requested information on the number of indigenous representatives in the police, judicial system and Government. He asked whether there had been any improvement in the economic and social situation for indigenous peoples since the economic crisis in 2001. To what extent were indigenous people involved in decision-making processes that affected them? In its previous concluding observations (CERD/C/304/Add.112) the Committee had recommended the establishment of a social security system for indigenous peoples. He wondered what specific problems had impeded the setting-up and functioning of such a system. He asked whether measures had been taken to improve the treatment of illegal immigrants, particularly those of African origin and Muslims, who often faced discrimination because of media propaganda on terrorism. Did law enforcement officials respect the non-refoulement principle at all borders? And how did the new Immigration Act protect the rights of workers?
3. The Committee had received reports of the torture of detainees by police officers and personnel within the justice system, particularly against indigenous people and people of African origin. He wished to know whether any measures had been taken to improve that situation. The Committee had been informed that the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI) had been on the brink of collapse, and he wondered whether the Government had taken measures to ensure its continuation.
4. He noted with satisfaction that impunity had been terminated and that those persons who had committed offences during the military dictatorship were being brought to justice. He asked what was the status of Argentina's declaration under article 14 of the Convention. The Argentine Constitution recognized the existence of indigenous peoples and encouraged affirmative action. He wished to know whether affirmative action included granting land rights to indigenous peoples, and whether new legislation would be drafted to that end since Argentina had ratified ILO Convention No. 169. What further action was being taken to officially recognize the ancestral land rights of indigenous peoples?

5. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegation of Argentina to respond to the Committee's questions.

6. Mr. J. RODRÍGUEZ (Argentina) said that the Department of Indigenous Affairs had recently been granted the status of Ministry within the Government. The debt owed to the indigenous peoples dated back to the beginning of Argentine history. Almost all the areas where the basic needs of the population were not being met were indigenous. Welfare assistance had been provided for people living in poverty in those areas and special attention had been paid to the cultural needs of each group.

7. The economic and social crisis of 2001-2002 had had very little impact on the indigenous peoples, since they had already been living in a state of crisis. Before 2001, they had had very little opportunity to participate in the economic life of the country, since their arts and crafts production was of low economic value. However, after the economic crisis social programmes that had previously not been readily accessible to indigenous peoples, such as the food and head-of-household programmes, had been expanded. Social assistance had thus become available to indigenous people throughout Argentina.

8. A bilingual intercultural education scheme had been established in 2001 by the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INAI), under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Development, and in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, with a budget of approximately US\$ 500,000 and a US\$ 800,000 scholarship plan. The scheme aimed to establish educational equality by incorporating indigenous languages and cultures into the national curricula. It had resulted in pupils, teachers and school administrative staff working together, and had been reported to be a success. INAI had been active in providing support programmes for incorporating indigenous culture into the education system since 1996. Since 2000, 6,000 scholarships a year had been awarded to enable indigenous children to attend secondary schools. In 2004, a new initiative had been developed for the allocation of such scholarships, which had previously been distributed by INAI, in consultation with indigenous leaders. The new allocation system entailed regional meetings with the leaders of indigenous communities to discuss the distribution of scholarships. The approach had been considered successful, although it was apparent that there were insufficient scholarship funds to meet the needs of each community. It had been very difficult to judge the amount of funding required, since there had been no official statistics on the number of indigenous children. The new allocation system had enabled the Government to collect the necessary data, and efforts would be made to ensure that the correct amount of funding was provided in future.

9. Steps were being taken to raise public awareness of the rights of indigenous peoples: a series of regional forums had been held, in which representatives of each indigenous community had participated, to discuss issues affecting indigenous peoples, such as biodiversity, education, culture, and the establishment of an ombudsman's office or supervisory body for indigenous communities. The Ministry of Education was organizing a series of workshops across the country to generate new teaching materials and thereby broaden the content of the curriculum and cater for cultural diversity. Curricular reforms were also taking place at the provincial level, and supplementary teacher training was being provided for bilingual intercultural education.

10. A teaching assistant scheme had been implemented in some provinces, although concern had been expressed that some assistants were being exploited as cheap substitutes for teachers. Efforts were being made to ensure the correct observance of the professional hierarchy in schools that employed teaching assistants. One particular province had a higher education institution at which all indigenous students received grants. New classrooms and auditoriums were currently being built in an effort to expand educational facilities.

11. Media coverage of indigenous peoples predominantly focused on the subject of complaints about land distribution. However, the President of the Republic was instituting measures to bring about the integration of indigenous people into national public life, including a human development programme to consolidate the identity of indigenous groups in the community, and infrastructure development programmes for indigenous communities, known as “indigenous development programmes”.

12. Mr. R. RODRÍGUEZ (Argentina) said that immigration problems were difficult to overcome owing to the country’s technical shortcomings. His country had previously had a policy of expulsion based on the Videla law on national security, and immigrants had been considered as a threat. The current Government was making efforts to correct the mistakes of the past, and attached great importance to fulfilling its obligations under the international human rights instruments to which it was a party. Measures were being taken to base new policies on the Roman law principle of equity.

13. Statistics received from NGOs had revealed that there were between 700,000 and 1.5 million undocumented individuals in Argentina. Displaced disadvantaged persons had their dignity undermined by being classed as “illegal” immigrants, and lived under constant threat of being exploited for labour and being reported to the immigration authorities. His Government was committed to taking measures to rectify the situation and reverting to Argentina’s original tradition of welcoming immigrants. However, although the desire for change was strong, financial restrictions meant that the task was particularly difficult.

14. In the ongoing debate on national identity, Argentines had long considered themselves the “Europeans” of Latin America and disregarded the multiplicity of nationalities present on their territory. In connection with the current policy of welcoming immigrants, it was important to remember legislation’s limited capacity to instigate social change. In fact, it was social change that led to legislative reforms.

15. The MERCOSUR trade bloc had played an important role in stimulating interregional migration flows. The agreement on the free movement of persons between MERCOSUR member States enhanced regional integration and recognized the traditional links between those States. Argentina’s recently adopted Act No. 25,871 on migration stipulated citizenship of a signatory State and the absence of a criminal record as the sole prerequisites for migration to Argentina from neighbouring countries.

16. While the situation of the estimated 700,000 to 1 million undocumented migrants needed to be addressed, pursuant to the new law foreigners had access to health care and education irrespective of their migration status.

17. Within the context of the new legislation, measures were being taken to combat trafficking networks and criminalize those activities. In addition, it provided for the elimination of bureaucratic obstacles to the regularization of undocumented migrants and for an increase in personnel to facilitate processing of all pending and new cases within periods not exceeding 180 days and 30 days respectively.

18. Mr. CHIARADIA (Argentina), replying to a question on the ratification and implementation of international treaties, said that on 10 August 2004 his country had signed the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

19. In the past, there had been concern that a declaration under article 14 of ICERD and the concurrent filing of petitions denouncing discriminatory acts with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights might give rise to a duplication of authority. That issue had been resolved and a bill on the declaration provided for under article 14 was currently before Congress.

20. Argentina had also ratified the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provided for an individual complaints mechanism.

21. Since 1994 international treaties had had constitutional status. Consequently, citizens at both the federal and provincial levels had the possibility of lodging complaints of unconstitutionality in relation to any law, decree, regulation or court decision that violated the provisions of those treaties.

22. Argentina recognized the competence of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in human rights-related disputes, and two cases involving indigenous peoples were currently before the Commission. Such proceedings illustrated his Government's resolve to acknowledge disputes of that nature and find amicable solutions.

23. The "National plan against discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance" involved unprecedented cooperation between governmental bodies, independent experts and NGOs, and consultation of victims of discrimination. It was designed to address problems throughout what had traditionally been a highly centralized country. It also addressed questions relating to sexual orientation and social exclusion. Argentina's economic crisis had had particularly serious repercussions on the vulnerable segments of the population and the plan took account of the need for integration to generate prosperity for all. In consultation with a variety of concerned parties, a wide range of short-, medium- and long-term projects had been formulated. The national plan functioned as an early warning system: visits to different provinces were followed up by written reports, further dialogue and appropriate proposals.

24. Funding by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was vital to the preparation and implementation of the plan, and he appealed to the Committee to recommend that the Office continue its support. When drafting future reports, Argentina would certainly heed the Committee's recommendations.

25. In spite of the economic crisis, Argentina was ranked 34th in the 2004 Human Development Report. The country had also been commended for its policies in relation to cultural diversity.

26. Ms. GONZÁLEZ (Argentina) said that the question in the 2001 census on whether any household members identified themselves as indigenous had been formulated in consultation with indigenous representatives. A number of regional workshops had been held to inform indigenous communities about the census, although it had been alleged that the information given had been insufficient. The census had revealed that members of 281,959 households identified themselves as indigenous. Owing to the nature of the question, however, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses had cast doubt on the reliability of that information.

27. In March 2003, the above-mentioned Institute, in collaboration with the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INAI), officials from the various provinces and members of the Executive Committee of Argentine Indigenous Peoples, had initiated the first “National survey of indigenous populations”. The survey would be distributed to one fifth of the households that had given an affirmative answer to the relevant question in the 2001 census. The areas covered in the survey included, inter alia, descent and genealogy; the use of indigenous languages; access to public and indigenous health care and education; and the situation regarding pensions and social security, employment, birth and child mortality rates, and ancestral land claims. The survey was being carried out in cooperation with indigenous facilitators and results were expected by the end of 2004. The discrepancy between indigenous groups mentioned in the previous and the current report resulted from a process of reconstructing indigenous identities, referred to as “re-ethnization”.

28. The integration of ILO Convention No. 169 into the domestic legal system was a sensitive issue, since it required transition to legal pluralism, which involved the recognition of the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of a society that had traditionally considered itself homogeneous. Such changes were particularly difficult to introduce in a context of economic crisis and political instability. However, the Government planned to establish a high-level commission, which would include representatives of indigenous communities, to adapt domestic legislation to the provisions of ILO Convention No. 169.

29. A number of measures had been adopted to address issues such as the specific vulnerability of indigenous women, sexual exploitation of female immigrants and trafficking in women.

30. Mr. OTEIZA (Argentina) said that, when considering the question of police brutality, it was important to remember Argentina’s transition to democracy had not yet been fully completed. The new Government had taken important steps to end impunity for crimes against humanity committed under earlier authoritarian regimes, but the reform of the federal police was hampered by that legacy and often met with considerable opposition. However, certain provinces had successfully established training programmes for law enforcement officials in conformity with democratic principles. In the past, indigenous people, immigrants and members of other vulnerable groups had often been victimized and the reforms were expected to improve the situation.

31. The media's role in relation to migrants and other marginalized groups was ambivalent. While some radio stations and the press had cooperated with the National Institute to Combat Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI) in a number of awareness campaigns, certain television channels openly propagated racist or discriminatory views. INADI, in conjunction with the media, had recently launched a campaign to sensitize the public to discrimination against socially excluded young people.

32. The fate of people of African descent was a bleak chapter in Argentina's history, but a number of Afro-Argentine organizations were currently cooperating with INADI in order to assert their rights.

33. Mr. AMIR said that it would be useful to have a full account of how activities such as training and legal proceedings were funded at the provincial level. He would welcome additional data on any compensation available at the provincial or federal level to descendants of victims of discrimination, under either the Civil Code or the Criminal Code.

34. The United Nations Development Programme had ranked the reporting State fairly high in its human development report. While that was commendable, it would be interesting to learn whether the indicators used in the report had taken into account the cultural and economic situation of the indigenous populations.

35. It was unclear whether both the rural and urban populations enjoyed to an equal extent the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in article 5 of the Convention. The apparent imbalance in opportunities for training and tertiary education between those two sectors of society should be addressed.

36. Mr. AVTONOMOV said that the lack of information on indigenous populations in the periodic report had made it impossible to draw any conclusions on that issue. He urged the delegation to ensure that the next report included a full account of all indigenous populations living in the State party.

37. The functioning of the Office of the National Ombudsman should be clarified, with details of how work was carried out, and which provinces and cities had an ombudsman.

38. Mr. de GOUTTES, recalling the Committee's statement of 8 March 2002 on anti-terrorist measures and human rights, said that additional information should be provided on legislative measures taken since 11 September 2001, including any difficulties the State party had encountered in implementing those measures.

39. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression had reported that xenophobic attitudes had been evident in some sectors of the public and the media, particularly targeting indigenous people, immigrants from neighbouring countries, Arabs, Muslims and Jews. While the delegation had explained the role of INADI, it should be more specific about measures the Government had taken to prevent the dissemination of racist and xenophobic stereotypes via the media and the Internet. Both the media and the Internet had an important role to play in promoting interracial and inter-ethnic understanding and tolerance.

40. He reiterated the Committee's request for detailed information on the representation of indigenous people in the civil service at the federal and provincial levels, the police, the judicial system and Congress. That information would be useful, given that diversity in recruitment to public service posts could help to foster interracial tolerance.

41. Mr. SICILIANOS said that the document on immigration legislation that had been distributed by the delegation appeared to suggest that there was some reluctance to promulgate the new legislation in its entirety. While concern over immigrants competing with Argentine nationals in the job market was understandable given the current crisis, clarification of the current state of immigration legislation was needed.

42. Mr. CALI TZAY said that, as had happened elsewhere in the past, the integration and assimilation policy pursued in Argentina could lead to indigenous people being treated as foreigners in their own country. The policy should be properly adapted to the specific situation in Argentina, and care should be taken to ensure that intercultural education resulted in widespread knowledge of all the different cultures that existed. He commended the State party for the fact that all students in tertiary education in Chaco province had been granted scholarships, and asked how many students had benefited from that assistance. It would be useful to learn what measures the Government intended to take in order to combat the alleged discrimination suffered by some bilingual teaching assistants. He would also appreciate additional information on the establishment of the Coordinating Council of Argentine Indigenous Peoples.

43. Mr. VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ, while commending the reporting State for its "national plan against discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance", said that clarification was required concerning the relationship between that plan and the internal monitoring bodies working to combat discrimination. In particular, further details should be provided on potential joint projects and cooperation between the plan, as executed by the Inter-ministerial Committee (report, para. 117), INADI and the Human Rights Secretariat within the Ministry of Justice.

44. He would appreciate information on any measures the Government had planned to help the Ona people, a small indigenous minority living in Tierra del Fuego.

45. Mr. BOYD recalled the Committee's concern at the violence, threats of violence, discrimination and excessive force used by the police and security forces against certain groups of immigrants, asylum-seekers and people of African descent. The periodic report had provided relatively little information on that issue, and few details had been given of court cases involving racial discrimination in its various manifestations, in employment and involving public accommodation. He urged the delegation to ensure that a more specific, comprehensive and focused approach was taken on those points in the next report. The delegation had shown exemplary candour in explaining the difficulties in that area, given the relative impunity of the police and security forces in the past; the Committee encouraged the State party in its efforts to bring about change.

46. Mr. KJAERUM commended the broad-based nature of the national plan against discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. Only by involving many sectors of society could such plans be successfully implemented.



47. The Committee would appreciate more details on the sensitive subject of double discrimination in Argentina. It would also be useful to have further information on the protection of refugees. In particular, details should be provided of the current status of legislation relating to refugees and asylum-seekers, and the procedure involved in decisions on asylum applications.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

48. Mr. OTEIZA (Argentina) said that his country's 23 provinces raised their own taxes. In addition, under the joint participation system, the provinces shared the revenue from certain taxes collected by the Federal Government, which was apportioned in such a way that provinces with the lowest gross per capita income received the highest per capita share. While only 10 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, their living conditions were characterized by large disparities. In areas where farming was mechanized and agricultural production for export had increased, the population enjoyed access to educational institutions and social services comparable with those in urban areas. Conditions were less advanced in areas where subsistence farming still predominated.

49. INADI cooperated actively with local ombudsmen. Such cooperation increased the effectiveness of the Institute by ensuring that it had countrywide coverage. Local ombudsmen served as a channel of communication by conveying the outcome of complaints received by the Institute to the communities concerned.

50. Following the attacks on the Israeli embassy and the Argentine-Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA), his Government had pledged to enhance its counter-terrorism mechanisms. The Special Unit established to investigate the AMIA attack had been strengthened through the appointment of additional prosecutors and the allocation of increased resources. In order to facilitate the conduct of the criminal trial in that case, the archives of the State Secretariat for Intelligence (SIDE) had been used and restrictions on testimony by SIDE officers had been lifted. The Israeli ambassador was being kept informed of the progress of both investigations.

51. He drew attention to a report on manifestations of anti-Semitism in Argentina, which had been distributed informally. The report was prepared annually by the Delegation of Jewish-Argentine Associations (DAIA), although INADI also contributed to it. In recent years, the scope of the report had been expanded to cover acts of discrimination against other vulnerable groups.

52. Ms. ALFONSO (Argentina) said that, while Argentina was a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, it did not have a specific law on refugees. However, a bill had been drafted in collaboration with interested NGOs and was expected to be enacted by the end of the year. Despite the absence of specific legislation, there was a standard procedure for determining refugee status, which was described in paragraphs 191-195 of the periodic report. The procedure was in line with the requirements of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. Decisions on refugee status were subject to administrative appeal to the Ministry of the Interior. Data broken down by

nationality on the number of applications granted and denied had been distributed informally. She noted that the secretariat of the Refugee Eligibility Committee was able to provide interpretation services for applicants in English, French and Italian. For other languages, it used outside contractors.

53. Mr. R. RODRÍGUEZ said that the new legislation on immigration was the product of cooperation among various political parties, trade unions and NGOs; that would ensure that its provisions would not remain a dead letter. An important feature of the new legislation was that it removed immigration officials' discretionary powers to exclude non-nationals from Argentina. Such decisions were now a matter for the courts. He agreed that the provisions on undocumented immigrants were flawed. However, in practice, those persons enjoyed the same benefits as legal immigrants. The impact of undocumented workers on the economy was insignificant. His Government was preparing training courses, in collaboration with UNHCR, to familiarize officials in border areas with the new standards.

54. Ms. GONZÁLEZ (Argentina) said that women migrant workers and indigenous women might be said to face triple discrimination owing to their sex, their nationality or ethnicity, and their low incomes. In addition, globalization had led to an upsurge in sexual exploitation. Her Government was implementing various measures to address the situation, including programmes to combat discrimination against women migrant workers in Buenos Aires and to promote the employment of indigenous women in the agricultural sector. It provided support to indigenous women's organizations, notably through the Human Rights Secretariat within the Ministry of Justice. The Secretariat was cooperating with the National Women's Council and the Foreign Office's Women's Directorate to tackle the problem of trafficking in women. Two cases had recently come to light, involving Dominican and Paraguayan migrants. Programmes had been initiated at airports to combat child sexual exploitation and the abduction of children for prostitution.

55. Mr. J. RODRÍGUEZ (Argentina) said that legislation had been enacted to provide for the participation of a council of indigenous peoples in INAI activities. The council would be an elected body with one representative from each community. Previous attempts to increase indigenous participation in decision-making had been too ad hoc. The establishment of the council was an attempt to make the process more transparent and to enhance the quality of indigenous representation. In provinces with large indigenous populations, members of indigenous communities had been elected to national and regional legislative bodies and were serving as mayors, governors and deputy governors. There were no quotas, however. His Government was currently establishing statistics on the number of indigenous persons working as police officers and teachers.

56. The concept of dialogue between cultures was the guiding principle of his Government's policy on bilingual intercultural education. PROEIB Andes (Bilingual Intercultural Education for the Andean Countries) had developed guidelines in that regard. While he was not aware of any discrimination against indigenous teaching assistants, he agreed that there was a need to improve their training so that they could apply for teaching posts. Some 80 indigenous students were receiving grants to attend university.

57. The Ona people were recognized by the Tierra del Fuego authorities and had been allocated a large area of land in the province. However, before they could take up residence, a special infrastructure plan would have to be developed.

58. By year-end, INAI would have disbursed approximately US\$ 3 million for development programmes. He was pleased to report that the execution rate had improved significantly over the past three years. Consolidation of community identity was a priority objective of the programmes, which were intended to promote human as well as economic development. Community participation was crucial, and programme resources were paid directly into community bank accounts. Land tenure was an important element of community identity. In the past, efforts to address the issue had resulted in only partial solutions. However, his Government now recognized the need for a comprehensive policy on the matter. A programme already existed to regularize the situation of indigenous communities settled on public land. The situation with respect to private land was more problematic. A survey was under way to establish ownership of the land in question, and the Federal Congress was currently considering a bill to suspend the eviction of indigenous peoples from private land. Lastly, indigenous peoples were recognized in the Argentine Constitution.

59. Mr. THORNBERRY (Country rapporteur) said that the dialogue with the delegation had greatly added to the information available to the Committee on the implementation of the Convention in Argentina. While the periodic report was excellent in many respects, it lacked detailed statistical data. The Committee emphasized the inclusion of such data because they enabled States to fine-tune their social and community policies and target them more effectively. In that connection, he noted that the delegation had explained the complications that had arisen with indigenous communities in the conduct of the most recent census.

60. The Committee would follow with interest the development of the national plan against discrimination in conjunction with other anti-discrimination mechanisms. Further efforts were needed to safeguard the right to freedom of expression in the media. Another area of concern was security of the person, especially in relation to vulnerable groups. He urged the State party to expedite the reform of the police and security forces and enhance training.

61. With regard to the new legislation on immigration, the Committee welcomed the shift from an ethos of expulsion to a human rights perspective. Noting that the Government was anxious to ensure that its more open policies on immigration did not result in a situation of reverse discrimination, he cautioned that it would require a very nuanced approach to achieve the balance the Government was seeking. While the Government must be sensitive to the context in which its policies were being implemented, the policies themselves must be driven by principle, in particular, the principle of non-discrimination. He noted with satisfaction that Argentina had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. He also welcomed the clarification provided concerning the procedure for determining refugee status. The Committee would follow the progress of the draft legislation on refugees with great interest.

62. A great many issues had been touched on with respect to indigenous peoples, including land tenure, economic and social issues, education and representation. In that connection, he emphasized his understanding of intercultural education as a reciprocal process. He noted the

importance attached to the proposed council of indigenous peoples. He had been encouraged to hear that a more holistic approach to indigenous issues was being contemplated. The Government's awareness of the multiple discrimination suffered by indigenous women and women migrant workers was also welcome. However, the Committee would like to have had more information on Afro-Argentine organizations.

63. With regard to the upsurge of Islamophobia, he stressed that any measures taken to combat terrorism must be implemented in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination, which the Committee regarded as a peremptory norm of international law.

64. Underlying the serious commitment made by the Government to address racial discrimination was the new environment of legal pluralism in Argentina. The State party faced many obstacles, however, not least the enduring effects of the recent economic crisis and the difficulties of operating in a post-authoritarian context. As Argentina strove to redefine its national identity, the degree of implementation of the Convention would serve as an important yardstick for the progress made.

65. The CHAIRMAN said he trusted that the State party would take close note of the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.