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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Forty-second session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)\* OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 13 May 2009, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. BRAS GOMES (Vice-Chairperson)

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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In the absence of Mr. Marchán Romero, Ms. Bras Gomes,  
Vice-Chairperson, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

## CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

### (a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
(continued) (E/C.12/GBR/5 and Add.1 and 2; E/C.12/GBR/Q/5 and Add.1;  
HRI/CORE/1/Add.62/Rev.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of the United Kingdom resumed their places at the Committee table.
2. The CHAIRPERSON invited the delegation of the United Kingdom to continue its exchange of views with the Committee.
3. Ms. MAJID (United Kingdom) said that the Government was committed to reducing the ethnic minority employment gap, which had already narrowed since 2005. She gave percentages for members of ethnic minorities in the total population, the working-age population, and the secondary school and primary school populations. The last two figures indicated that members of ethnic minorities would be a large future labour market resource. As to the programmes for ethnic minority groups, a number of outreach programmes had now been incorporated into mainstream programmes, which meant that more funding was available. The Government was investing in local initiatives in areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities. Many of those were deprived areas so by focusing the provision of services there, the Government was driving investment into those areas. Targets were negotiated with local authorities.
4. The latest labour market statistics, which superseded the information already circulated to Committee members, showed the continuing effect of the economic downturn on the labour market. The Government had been leading the developed countries' response to rising unemployment and the credit crunch. The United Kingdom had one of the highest employment rates in the world and the second lowest unemployment rate of all the G7 countries. The Government did not underestimate the challenge it faced. It was focusing on active intervention in five main areas: rights and responsibilities; personalized support services; partnerships, including local employment partnerships; targeted intervention; and opportunities for advancement, which involved integrated employment and skills services. The budget of Job Centre Plus, which delivered the majority of employment programmes, had been increased. The Future Jobs Fund aimed to create jobs, notably for young people and disadvantaged groups. Other measures planned included additional support for people who had been on jobseeker's allowance for more than six months, funding for employers to recruit people who had been unemployed for over six months, and support for volunteer work and those wishing to become self-employed. A rapid-response team had been set up to support employers and employees before redundancies were issued.

5. Since 1997, the New Deal programme had transformed employment support, but the labour market had changed significantly since its introduction and its strategies needed to evolve. The Flexible New Deal, to be introduced in 2009, would provide personalized help to those in greatest need, with the aim of helping people not just to find work, but to remain in work, and supporting them when newly employed.

6. Ms. MAYER (United Kingdom) said that the independent Low Pay Commission's report, published the previous day, recommended an increase in the national minimum wage, a recommendation that had been accepted by the Government. The Commission had maintained its view that young people should be paid less than the adult rate, reflecting conditions in the employment market, but recommended that 21-year-olds should receive the adult rate. The Government had accepted that recommendation but would implement it only from October 2010 in order not to deter employers from hiring 21-year-olds at a time of recession, when young people already tended to suffer disproportionately.

7. She confirmed that the entitlements under the Working Time Regulations applied to domestic workers.

8. The rate of statutory pay for maternity, paternity or adoption was £123.06 per week. The Government considered the provisions for maternity and paternity pay to be generous. It took the proposals of the Equality and Human Rights Commission seriously, but the cost of enhancing the regime needed to be balanced against the benefits and some of the proposals would be expensive to implement.

9. As to the question of Government relations with trade unions, the Government had responded promptly to a judgement of the European Court of Human Rights to the effect that a law prohibiting trade unions from expelling members on grounds of political party membership breached article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. As a result of consultations with trade unions and other stakeholders, the 2008 Employment Act contained provisions allowing trade unions to exclude or expel members on grounds of political party membership.

10. Mr. OPPENHEIM (United Kingdom) said that the long procedural delays in the assessment of asylum claims had been eliminated. The percentage of cases determined within six months, either by confirming refugee status or removing an asylum-seeker, had been rising since 2008.

11. As to access to the labour market for asylum-seekers, managed migration was a valuable source of skills and labour, but there were recognized routes for those wishing to work in the United Kingdom. Entering the country for economic reasons was not the same as seeking asylum and it was important to maintain the distinction. Asylum applications needed to be assessed as quickly as possible and it had been shown that allowing asylum-seekers to work encouraged people who did not have a well-founded fear of persecution to apply, thus holding up consideration of legitimate cases.

12. With regard to destitution among unsuccessful asylum applicants, he said that, if unsuccessful applicants could not return home through no fault of their own, they were eligible

for continuing support. Families with children under 18 continued to receive support until they left the country. The Government also offered a number of comparatively generous assisted voluntary return schemes.

13. Anyone needing urgent medical treatment would receive health care regardless of whether they had the funds to pay for it. As to persons held in removal centres prior to deportation, all centres had on-site primary health-care teams and provided free access to secondary and tertiary care. Services were regulated by the independent Care Quality Commission. In eight centres detainee health care was contracted to private providers, but discussions were under way about bringing those services back within the National Health Service (NHS).

14. Returning to the issue of seafarers' conditions, he said that the Government was considering proposals on the action that could be taken where employers did not attend to worker health and safety or the requirements of labour law. The fact that members of fishing fleets were subject to transit visas complicated matters in legal terms, but that did not absolve employers of their significant responsibilities.

15. Mr. JEFFREY (United Kingdom), referring to the measures taken to help persons with disabilities acquire the skills required to enter the labour market, said that the Disability Discrimination Act required schools, colleges and universities to make reasonable adjustments to improve access and support for learners with disabilities, and resources were made available for that purpose. The number of students receiving disabled student allowances had increased.

16. Ms. WARRICK (United Kingdom) said that schools and local authorities had a duty to identify, assess and meet students' special educational needs and that planned local authority expenditure in that area had increased since 2001. The Government had launched a new strategy to meet the special educational needs of more children in mainstream education. The role of specialist schools remained important, however, for those with more complex needs. Partnerships had been set up between specialist and mainstream schools to encourage the inclusion of all children. The 2007 Children's Plan had recognized that more needed to be done to improve provision and to increase parental confidence in that provision, through measures such as better initial teacher training and continuing professional development, and special projects addressing dyslexia. The Children's Plan had recently been granted additional funding.

17. Mr. PEDDIE (United Kingdom) said that the Government agreed that there was a need for more affordable housing in Scotland, especially housing suitable for persons with disabilities, and the Scottish Government would be investing a record amount over the next three years to that end. Since 2007, all new social and private housing had had to meet "barrier-free" standards and the Government was helping social landlords, local authorities and voluntary organizations to adapt existing housing. Questions remained, however, as to whether "barrier-free" standards allowed all needs to be met.

18. Mr. TIRADO MEJÍA asked the State party to provide recent statistical data, disaggregated by age, gender, race, and ethnic or national origin, on the number of persons living below the poverty line, as requested in item 22 on the list of issues (E/C.12/GBR/Q/5). It was difficult otherwise for the Committee to assess the State party's progress in combating poverty and social exclusion. Reports that around 3.8 million children in the State party were living below the poverty line and 1.3 million living in extreme poverty, were truly alarming. In 2007, poverty

levels had reportedly risen for the first time in seven years, and in Northern Ireland, 29 per cent of children were said to be living in poverty. He asked whether the Government could confirm those figures, and if so, how it could explain such high levels of poverty in a rich, developed country.

19. He commended the State party for its decision to tackle both supply and demand in its 10-year strategy to combat illegal drugs. He welcomed the Scottish Government's insistence that people could and did recover from problem drug use. The Committee would appreciate further information and statistics, including details of precise policies to reduce demand and the number of drug addicts and rehabilitation centres. The State party should also indicate how it tackled the problem of supply, particularly given the close links with money laundering and extreme violence. It would be especially interesting to learn what measures the Government took to ensure that the chemicals used to transform coca leaf into cocaine were not used for that purpose in the State party.

20. He failed to understand the State party's assertion, in paragraph 252 of the periodic report (E/C.12/GBR/5), that the right to water was not a free-standing right, a right in customary international law, or an element of the right to health, the right to life or other rights under the Covenant or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He asked whether that conclusion took account of the Committee's general comment No. 15 on the right to water and if so, why the Government's position was in such stark contrast to that of the Committee.

21. Lastly, he asked for information on the State party's position on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.

22. Mr. DASGUPTA, referring to paragraph 159 of the Government's written replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/GBR/Q/5/Add.1), asked what percentage of the asylum applications mentioned had been successful, and on what grounds the remainder had been rejected.

23. Mr. ZHAN Daode asked for data on the State party's current carbon dioxide emissions. He would be interested to learn how the Government approached the need to strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection.

24. Mr. SADI said that he would appreciate the delegation's comments on the status of the Committee's general comments in the State party. He asked whether the State party would consider incorporating the Committee's general comment No. 14 on the right to the highest attainable standard of health into the Scottish bill on patients' rights.

25. Mr. KEDZIA asked whether the 2008 amendment to immigration legislation, which had raised the minimum age at which spouses were eligible to join their partners in the State party from 18 to 21, contradicted the Covenant principles of equal rights for men and women and protection for the establishment of families. The new rule apparently affected women and certain communities disproportionately.

26. Mr. SCHRIJVER asked for additional information on the impact of the State party's policies on abortion, sexual and reproductive health, and domestic violence. He would also like to know whether the State party planned to introduce legislation to protect the Irish language.

27. Mr. ATANGANA asked whether domestic violence was explicitly prohibited under the State party's domestic legislation.
28. Mr. KOLOSOV asked whether the State party had experience of so-called "anchor children", who were sent abroad to be educated in order that their parents could then apply to join them under family reunification rules.
29. He also wished to know whether children were employed in the State party's fishing industry. If so, he would appreciate details of how much they were paid and what kind of social protection they enjoyed.
30. Mr. DASGUPTA said that he found it difficult to understand why the State party drew a distinction between residents and non-residents when charging fees for higher education. Such a differentiation directly contradicted the provision for higher education to be equally accessible to all under article 13, paragraph 2 (c), of the Covenant. He asked whether the State party's legislation met the requirement for the progressive introduction of free education, and if not, whether it planned to introduce legislation to that end.
31. Mr. KERDOUN requested details on the current school dropout rate, including data disaggregated by minority group, especially Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children. It would be useful to have statistics on the number of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children who benefited from the educational programmes designed for them. In the light of reports indicating that many of those children did not complete their secondary schooling, he asked how the Government planned to ensure that they were properly integrated in the education system. He would also welcome further general information on the differences between educational provision in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.

32. Mr. O'GORMAN (United Kingdom) said that his Government's target was to end relative child poverty, which was defined as 60 per cent of median income before housing costs were taken into account. That definition of poverty was widely used and allowed the United Kingdom's progress on ending child poverty to be compared with progress in other countries. Although all the United Kingdom Governments had committed to halving child poverty by 2010, it was doubtful whether they would be able to achieve that target; yet 600,000 children had been raised out of relative poverty as of the end of March 2008. Measures introduced since then, including a range of extra payments to families, were expected to raise another 500,000 children out of poverty. Such supplementary payments had been consistently increased ahead of indexation, meaning that they were ahead of increases in earnings.
33. It was unfortunate that, for a time, social security payments to offset the cost of raising a family had been taken into account when assessing rental subsidies, but child benefits and maintenance payments were now disregarded and the situation had improved over the past year.
34. Ms. MAJID (United Kingdom) said that a study done in 2008 had shown a great discrepancy between poverty rates among white children (25 per cent) and among children from ethnic minorities, examples of which ranged from 32 per cent for Indian children to 56 per cent for black Afro-Caribbean children to 72 per cent for Bangladeshi children.

35. Mr. RANGARAJAN (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom accepted that the right to water was an element of the right to an adequate standard of living and was explicitly one of the rights under the Covenant. The United Kingdom had taken full note of the Committee's general comment on the right to water.
36. Mr. JOANNIDES (United Kingdom) said that the introductory booklet "Human Rights in Health Care" had been so called because it was aimed specifically at health-care professionals and did not cover other areas of health such as sanitation and pollution. It had been widely circulated in the health service and through the Department of Health website. The Government was also working on human rights training, notably in partnership with a specialist training organization called Skills for Health.
37. The life expectancy gap between the poorest areas of the United Kingdom and the rest of the country had increased: for men it was 4 per cent and for women 11 per cent. It was important to note, however, that life expectancy itself had increased overall and was the highest it had ever been, including in the poorest areas: the gap could be explained by the greater increase in life expectancy among the rest of the population.
38. Health inequalities, as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth, remained a priority and the aim was to reduce them by at least 10 per cent by 2010. They had therefore received an important share of the total 2010/11 health service budget of £110 billion. The Government had commissioned a review of health inequalities and would welcome the Committee's input.
39. Mr. PEDDIE (United Kingdom) said that the low adult life expectancy in certain disadvantaged parts of Glasgow had received considerable media attention because, although they were not the only area of Scotland to exhibit low life expectancy, there were particularly marked differences there. To tackle the problem, the Scottish Government provided health services that were tailored to men's health needs: for example, "keep well" health checks in the most deprived 15 per cent of communities targeted 45- to 64-year-old men, who would not normally take advantage of existing health services.
40. Alcohol misuse was a significant factor contributing to ill health and low life expectancy in the more disadvantaged areas of Scotland. Up to 50 per cent of Scottish men drank more alcohol than recommended under sensible drinking guidelines, thereby increasing their risk of lasting health problems. Accordingly, in March 2009, a support and treatment framework for alcohol problems had been published, and the Scottish Government was to invest £120 million over the next three years, in preventing and treating alcohol-related problems.
41. The Scottish Government had made suicide prevention a high priority and the issue was addressed in its recently published mental health policy. It was aiming to reduce the suicide rate by 20 per cent by 2013; a 13 per cent reduction had already been achieved in the period from 2004 to 2007.
42. Mr. JOANNIDES (United Kingdom) said that, after consultation with over 10,000 stakeholders, the Department of Health had published a three-year strategy to

improve health, housing, employment and community care for people with learning disabilities. Progress would be reviewed annually, and the strategy would be overseen by national and regional boards.

43. To ensure that prisoners with mental health issues received the same standard of care as the rest of the population, 102 mental health teams from the National Health Service (NHS) worked in prisons throughout the United Kingdom. Treatment and care were delivered within the prison unless NHS treatment was needed, in which case the prisoner was transferred from the prison. Eligible prisoners were transferred as quickly as possible and prisoners with severe mental illness who would meet the criteria for detention under the relevant section of the Mental Health Act could be transferred to secure NHS facilities. Prisoners whose treatment ended before their prison sentences would be returned to the prison. The responsibility for commissioning mental health care and treatment for the prisons fell to primary care trusts and all prison mental health services were part of the NHS. New inmates could now be screened for health problems, including mental health issues.

44. In 2007, the Department of Health had published a national strategy on dementia to increase awareness, improve early diagnosis and intervention and quality of care. Over the first two years of the strategy, £150 million had been invested. Since 2006, the Department's Quality and Outcomes Framework had rewarded general practitioners for providing good care to patients with dementia. Guidelines on care for dementia had also been produced for health and social workers.

45. The Government's work to promote and raise awareness of health-care and nursing care packages, using its website and patient information leaflets, had increased uptake of health-care packages by a third over the previous year.

46. The effectiveness of private health-care organizations was ensured on the basis of contracts established between the commissioning body and the provider and through inspection by the Care Quality Commission. All private-sector service providers carrying out public functions were automatically subject to the 1998 Human Rights Act. Under the Health and Social Care Act, privately-owned care homes providing publicly funded care were also covered by the Human Rights Act.

47. Abortion had been legal in the United Kingdom since 1967 and the Government was investing in ensuring early access to abortion and preventing unwanted pregnancies, thereby reducing the number of teenage conceptions, abortions and repeat abortions.

48. Mr. STRUTT (United Kingdom) said that one in four women in the United Kingdom would experience domestic violence during their lifetime and that women were the victims in 85 per cent of all domestic violence. A series of reforms to encourage reporting of domestic violence and to shift the focus to victims had shown dramatic results: the number of domestic violence incidents between 1995 and 2008 had fallen by 65 per cent and the prosecution rate had increased by 64 per cent. The Government was also consulting with NGOs on how to end violence against women and girls.

49. Ms. WARRICK (United Kingdom) said that Sure Start Children's Centres supported children under the age of 5 and their families, providing easy access to family support, parenting



help and childcare. The centres were crucial in reducing inequalities among children. They could currently be accessed by 2.4 million children and their families, and there would be 3,500 of them by 2010. Unfortunately, there was no national data on waiting times for childcare, as much of it was run privately; however, 95 per cent of parents took up the option available to 3- to 4-year-olds, of 12.5 hours education per week, to be increased to 15 hours in 2010. Extended schools also offered childcare out of school hours, including breakfast clubs, sports and art facilities. Seventy per cent of all maintained schools offered extended school hours, and that figure should increase to 100 per cent by 2010.

50. Mr. ALLEN (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom was committed to creating a hostile environment to people-traffickers and protecting and supporting the victims of trafficking. The United Kingdom was taking a multi-agency approach to the problem and had a comprehensive victim-centred strategy covering prevention, enforcement and prosecution, and support to both child and adult victims. In 2009, the United Kingdom had implemented the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which represented a milestone in the fight against trafficking. As of February 2009, there had been some 100 convictions for human trafficking.

51. Funding for the multi-agency United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre had been doubled, amounting to £1.7 million for 2008/09. Tackling human trafficking was now core police business and every force had the capacity to address it within their area.

52. Over the next two years, a further £4 million of Government money would be invested in specialist victim services to build on the success of the Poppy Project, which had already helped over 400 women. As to child victims of trafficking, local authorities were responsible for their care, protection and accommodation. Separated or vulnerable children from abroad had the same entitlements as those born or resident in the United Kingdom.

53. The Government was involved in a number of national awareness-raising campaigns. In order to prevent and address the root causes of human trafficking, it had been working to alleviate poverty, build capacity and resources and raise awareness in source and transit countries, as well as strengthening border protection.

54. Mr. OPPENHEIM (United Kingdom) said that the figures in paragraph 159 of the Government's written replies (E/C.12/GBR/Q/5/Add.1) concerning family reunification were inaccurate. About 1,300 applications had been received between January and March 2009 and about 500 cases were pending. He would submit the corrected figures in writing.

55. He said that the minimum age at which someone could sponsor their spouse for entry to the United Kingdom had been raised as a way of tackling the problem of forced marriages. It gave couples the opportunity to develop more mature relationships. He emphasized that it did not prevent people getting married. The benefits of the change outweighed the small number of people who were excluded from acting as a sponsor and brought United Kingdom policy into line with that of other countries.

56. He said that he was not aware of child labour in the fishing industry, or of the issue of so-called “anchor children”, but that if further details could be provided, he would look into it. If children were employed in the United Kingdom, they were likely to be protected under the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act.

57. Ms. DAVIES (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom was satisfied with its compliance with the core obligations of the Covenant. The Government did not regard itself as legally bound by the Committee’s general comments or their interpretation of the requirements of the Covenant, but it appreciated receiving them.

58. The United Kingdom covered all nine branches of social security listed in general comment No. 19 and would be happy to report on progress made on them in future reports. Future periodic reports would also make specific reference to the core obligations.

59. Mr. JEFFREY (United Kingdom) said that it was the long-established practice of the United Kingdom Government to provide support to higher education students who could demonstrate a genuine link with the United Kingdom. That underlying principle had been upheld in the courts that applied United Kingdom and European law. Eligibility for support was based primarily on residence, not nationality, an approach that was not only appropriate, as loans were underwritten by United Kingdom taxpayers, but also consistent with that of other States. The system did not limit access to higher education and the admissions process was handled by the universities and colleges themselves, which also determined their own fees for overseas students. Residents of European Union countries qualified for some support and their fees were regulated.

60. He drew the Committee’s attention to paragraph 177 of the State party’s report (E/C.12/GBR/5) and emphasized that higher education in the United Kingdom was free at the point of entry to those United Kingdom and European Union students who met the eligibility criteria. A loan was available for tuition fees, to be paid back through the tax system. The Government believed that it was appropriate for graduates to contribute to the costs of their higher education as statistically they earned significantly more than non-graduates.

61. Ms. WARRICK (United Kingdom) said that the 2006 Education and Inspections Act had placed a duty on local authorities to identify children of school age not receiving a suitable education. From 2013 all young people would be required to continue education or training up to the age of 17, and up to 18 from 2015.

62. Attainment gaps among ethnic minorities continued to narrow and local authorities continued to receive support for pupils from ethnic minorities or with English as a second language who were at risk of underachieving. Government estimates of the proportion of young people not in education or training could not be broken down by ethnic minority but there was data showing that young white people were, on average, less likely to participate in full-time education between the ages of 16 and 19 and were more likely not to be in education, employment or training than ethnic minority groups. However, there were exceptions, most noticeably for young people of mixed white and black Caribbean heritage.

63. Permanent exclusion rates were higher than average for Travellers of Irish heritage, Gypsy, Roma, certain Caribbean groups, and some groups of mixed-race pupils. The Government was

particularly concerned about the overrepresentation of black Caribbean and mixed-race pupils in the exclusion figures. In 2006-2007, they had been around three times more likely to be permanently excluded than their white peers.

64. Only 12.7 per cent of Gypsy and Roma pupils in schools and only 10.1 per cent of Irish Traveller pupils, gained five or more GCSEs at grade C or higher, including in mathematics and English. However, those groups were often not visible in school census data as many pupils and parents were reluctant to identify themselves as such, and the national census did not currently include statistics about those communities. Performance targets had been set to focus local authorities' attention on those groups.

65. Mr. RANGARAJAN (United Kingdom) said that information on language in Northern Ireland would be submitted in writing.

66. Ms. NELTHORP (United Kingdom) said that, in the early 1970s, £650,000 had been paid to the Mauritian Government for the benefit of the Chagos Islanders and in 1982, £4 million had been paid into a trust fund as full and final settlement. The Chagos Islanders had been granted full United Kingdom citizenship in 2002.

67. The United Kingdom had been actively involved in the discussions on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but it had made clear on adoption that it did not accept collective rights. That position was unchanged. It did not believe that ILO Convention No. 169 applied to the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories, nor did it believe that signing it would positively impact the lives of indigenous people around the world.

68. Mr. MARTYNOV asked what the period of compulsory post-natal leave was and wondered what happened to women who did not qualify for statutory maternity pay.

69. He also asked what the United Kingdom's position was on the ILO Social Policy (Basic Aims and Standards) Convention (No. 117), the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention (No. 118) and the Prevention of Industrial Accidents Convention (No. 174).

70. Mr. ABDEL-MONEIM asked what would happen to non-public employment sectors, such as banking in the current financial situation. If the right to work was negatively affected, that would have an impact on many other rights, such as the right to social security.

71. Mr. RANGARAJAN (United Kingdom) said that there was no disagreement with the points that Mr. Abdel-Moneim had made. It was important that macroeconomic stability should provide a sound base for economic growth and maintaining employment levels was a great responsibility. The Government was working hard to ensure that the world economic dip was as brief and shallow as possible and its top political priority was to limit the number of people losing their jobs and the number of industries affected.

72. Mr. O'GORMAN (United Kingdom) said that ILO Convention No. 117 was a revision of ILO Convention No. 82, which the United Kingdom had ratified, and that the amendments to Convention No. 117 were not relevant to a country like the United Kingdom. ILO Convention No. 118 recommended multilateral social security agreements, but the United Kingdom preferred

bilateral agreements because of the wide variations in countries' social security provisions. A European Union directive covered the area that was dealt with by ILO Convention No. 174, and that had the force of law in the United Kingdom.

73. He said that there was no compulsory post-natal leave. If a woman wished to take maternity leave, her employer was required to allow 52 weeks' leave. Women who were not entitled to statutory maternity pay, either because they had not worked for their current employer for at least 26 weeks or because they had been earning below a certain threshold, were entitled to maternity pay from the State.

74. Mr. RANGARAJAN (United Kingdom) said that the delegation looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations. He was grateful to the United Kingdom's civil society for its involvement in the reporting process. His delegation would be delighted if the Committee could contribute their expertise to the consultation on a bill of rights and responsibilities.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 5.40 p.m.