



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Summary record of the 274th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 August 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Cisternas Reyes

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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

(continued)

Initial report of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (continued) (CRPD/C/BOL/1; CRPD/C/BOL/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Velasco Condori** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her delegation wished to provide some additional information in response to the questions that the Committee had asked at the previous meeting with regard to articles 1 to 20 of the Convention.
3. **Mr. Salguero Aramayo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), referring to the questions on articles 1 to 10 of the Convention, said that the Bolivian Constitution, adopted in 2009, embodied a social model and a human rights perspective with regard to persons with disabilities. The General Persons with Disabilities Act provided for the full exercise of rights by persons with disabilities on a basis of equality and equal opportunity.
4. With regard to certification of disability, in 2007 the Government had launched a pilot certification process in two departments. In 2009 an interdisciplinary team of professionals had conducted a mission covering the entire country for the purpose of diagnosing and subsequently treating persons with disabilities. A total of 61,447 persons had been registered in the Central National Register of Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry of Health and Sports had strengthened the disability classification system each year by hiring physicians, psychologists and social workers to form classification teams, which worked out of the departmental health services and covered all the nine departments of the country. There were also itinerant teams, which covered all 339 municipalities in the country, and reference teams, which ensured quality control of the classification process in each department.
5. The Constitution prohibited discrimination, maltreatment, violence or exploitation on the basis of disability and the Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Act, adopted in 2010, criminalized and penalized such acts. With a view to combating multiple and intersectional discrimination, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism had carried out prevention and awareness-raising activities throughout the country, coupled with mass dissemination of the relevant legislation. No statistics were available on prosecution of cases of disability-based discrimination.
6. Supreme Decree No. 1302 of 1 August 2012 established mechanisms designed to eliminate violence against and maltreatment and abuse of children and adolescents, including those with disabilities, in educational settings. The Children's Code provided comprehensive protection for all children and adolescents; its articles 29 and 32 specifically protected the rights of those with disabilities.
7. With regard to infant mortality, the proportion of undernourished children had fallen from 23 per cent to 13 per cent since 2007, thanks to the implementation of initiatives such as the Zero Malnutrition Programme. The National Health System provided comprehensive coverage free of charge to all pregnant women and to all children under the age of 5 years. An early child development programme had been launched in 2013 with the aim of enhancing the cognitive, socioemotional and physical development of children.
8. With regard to practical measures to ensure the accessibility of health services, a 2013 ministerial decision of the Ministry of Health and Sports required ramps and appropriate signage in all public health-care facilities. The Ministry sought to uphold the

health-related rights of persons with disabilities and their families through the application of a new model of care, the Intercultural Community Family Health Programme (SAFCI), which emphasized community participation, intersectoral cooperation and an intercultural and comprehensive approach. The new model had expanded social participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of health programmes and projects. As part of SAFCI, the “My Health” programme provided primary health care in indigenous communities, including to persons with disabilities.

9. A community-based rehabilitation strategy had been in place since 2014. It sought to involve families, communities and local authorities in improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families, meeting their basic needs and supporting their independence and their inclusion and participation in society. The Government had sponsored training in genetic counselling for nine health professionals with a view to preventing disability.

10. To ensure that all births were registered and all persons had birth certificates, the Civil Registry Service had carried out registration campaigns and stationed civil registry officers at health centres to issue birth certificates free of charge, including to persons with disabilities. Everyone was entitled to a name and an identity under Bolivian law.

11. Organizations of persons with disabilities were always consulted when disability-related legal provisions were being drafted, and the General Persons with Disabilities Act established the participatory role of persons with disabilities in decision-making about public policies. In accordance with the Act, the Government promoted self-organization by persons with disabilities for the defence of their civil, social and economic rights. A total of 68 accredited organizations currently existed, including the Bolivian Confederation of Persons with Disabilities, organizations of indigenous peoples and Afro-Bolivians, and organizations of women with disabilities.

12. Awareness-raising activities, including a campaign by the Ministry of Justice, had been undertaken in the framework of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Act to discourage the use of pejorative and discriminatory language in reference to persons with disabilities and to promote the use of appropriate terminology. Other activities to support persons with disabilities included efforts to enforce the requirement that 4 per cent of the staff of public institutions should consist of persons with disabilities; the allocation of 4 per cent of new social housing to persons with disabilities who met the socioeconomic requirements; discounts on air and ground transport and telecommunication services; and accessibility improvements to buildings, including airports, and public roadways.

13. Turning to the Committee’s questions on articles 11 to 20, he said that further inquiries by his delegation had revealed that there were no cases of persons being deprived of their liberty for discrimination against a person with disabilities. The law prohibiting such discrimination had helped to prevent cases and raise the awareness of the population about issues relating to racism and discrimination. Any complaints of discrimination were referred to the National Committee against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination for appropriate action.

14. With regard to article 11, the State party had made significant progress since the publication of its initial report (CRPD/C/BOL/1) in 2013. For example, the Risk Management Act No. 602 and its implementing regulations had been adopted on 14 November 2014 and 29 April 2015, respectively, and an integrated information and early warning system for disaster risk management had been put in place. Persons with disabilities were expressly included among the populations identified as being in a situation of vulnerability with respect to natural disasters and risks. Persons with disabilities were also explicitly included on an equal basis with others in the national risk management policy. A protocol for emergency response had been established, which assigned priority to

persons with disabilities and included a formal mechanism for their evacuation. Additional research by his delegation had indicated that there were no refugees, migrants or displaced persons with disabilities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and therefore it did not have any specific emergency response services for them.

15. Persons with disabilities had never been prohibited from marrying. Article 8 of the General Persons with Disabilities Act recognized their right to form their own families and to assume their responsibilities as fathers, mothers and spouses. Forced sterilization was prohibited under Act No. 348 guaranteeing women a life free from violence, which provided that anyone who deprived another person of his or her reproductive capacity, whether temporarily or permanently, without the express and voluntary informed consent of that person, or of his or her legal representative in the case of a person with a severe intellectual disability, was subject to imprisonment for a period of 5 to 12 years. To date, there were no known cases of forced sterilization of a person with disabilities.

16. The requirements and standards for ensuring access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for persons with disabilities were set out in manuals, protocols and guides developed by the Ministry of Health and Sports in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities. Those documents established that contraceptive procedures could be performed only with the informed consent and at the request of persons with disabilities or, in the case of persons who lacked decision-making capacity, a close relative, normally a mother, father or sibling, or a legally appointed guardian.

17. Violence against women, including women with disabilities, was a high-priority issue for his Government. A specialized unit on gender-based violence, created pursuant to Act No. 348 guaranteeing women a life free from violence, had set up an information system that included disability as one of the variables for reporting cases of violence against women and, where applicable, for the identification of the perpetrator. The data produced by the system thus took account of disability in the characterization of both victims and perpetrators of violence. The system was being extended to include the departmental and municipal levels.

18. Personal assistance services for persons with disabilities were currently provided by volunteers from various institutions, which were publicly recognized by the State. However, the country had little experience with the provision of such services and would welcome the opportunity to learn from the experience of other countries.

19. With regard to access to justice, all courts and related entities throughout the country were gradually carrying out the adaptations needed to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, in line with international norms and standards. Many existing buildings were quite old, and modifying them to ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation was a complex and expensive task, but the Government was committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities could take part fully in any legal proceedings in which they were involved.

20. Most of the country's prisons did not currently meet accessibility requirements, as most had been built well before any such requirements existed. However, accessibility requirements would be met in the construction of any new prison facilities. Approximately 33 persons with disabilities were currently deprived of their liberty.

21. It could not be said that the right of persons with disabilities to exercise their legal capacity was guaranteed at present, because many of the relevant laws and regulations currently on the books had been enacted before the State had adopted the new Constitution or ratified the Convention. However, the Ministry of Justice was spearheading a process aimed at revising or replacing any laws that limited the legal capacity of persons with disabilities in any way and establishing a system of supports and safeguards to ensure respect for the will and preferences of such persons.

22. As for access to justice for deaf persons, Bolivian Sign Language had been officially recognized in Supreme Decree No. 328 as an official language of the Bolivian deaf community. That decree had also created the National Sign Language Council — comprising representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Bolivian Federation of the Deaf — which had recently approved a process for the accreditation of sign language interpreters for legal proceedings. The interpreters would provide interpretation for any deaf persons involved in such a proceeding, whether as witnesses, plaintiffs or defendants, regardless of whether it took place in a court, a police station or a prosecutor's office.

23. The Ministry of Education had developed official teaching modules on Bolivian Sign Language, which had been disseminated throughout the country to educational establishments with hard-of-hearing students in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process for those students. Between 2010 and 2012, material on all the articles of the Convention had been developed in Bolivian Sign Language and in Braille and distributed nationwide. Efforts to raise the awareness of the general public about the Convention were ongoing, with new materials being prepared on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Convention.

24. Since 2014, there had been interministerial coordination on the implementation of a community-based rehabilitation strategy and inclusive, community-based development aimed at involving families, society and local, departmental and regional authorities in improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and their family members. Those efforts included members of indigenous and aboriginal campesino peoples who had disabilities. It was important to focus on them, given that little attention had been paid in the past to communities living in remote areas of the country, particularly the members of those communities with disabilities. The aim was to ensure their participation in society and to maximize their autonomy.

25. The young drink-driver responsible for the tragic traffic accident in which two persons with disabilities had been killed and five wounded in June 2016 would be duly brought to trial. Alternative measures were also in hand.

26. Institutional care for persons with disabilities was provided by public and private institutions and others that were run by public-private partnerships. While there was currently no database containing information on those institutions, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Justice were making concerted, coordinated efforts to gather information on all such institutions; the new database would be functional by 2017. At the end of 2013, the Government had promulgated Act No. 474, establishing the Service for the Prevention of Torture, which was responsible for inspecting and monitoring the human rights conditions in all places of detention and institutions for persons with disabilities. The Service would be instrumental in identifying all persons with disabilities who were resident in such institutions and investigating any violations of their human rights.

27. The Government attached great importance to all issues that led to social movements. From the outset, it had indicated its willingness to enter into dialogue with the disability rights campaigners who had marched from Cochabamba to La Paz. Government representatives had met with campaigners when the movement began in Cochabamba and had continued to do so throughout the protest, in the departments of Cochabamba, La Paz and Oruro. The Ministers of Justice, Health and Sports and Labour, Employment and Social Welfare had been open to finding a solution, not only to the protestors' demand to increase the solidarity allowance to 500 bolivianos a month, but also to the question of implementing legislation, ensuring civil society participation and carrying out in-depth analysis of the problems facing persons with disabilities in the country. The Government had also striven to ensure that the police, fire services and medical services were available to support the protestors. Lengthy round-table discussions had been held in all nine

departments, focusing on issues affecting persons with disabilities, including health, education, employment, housing and productive development. The discussions had resulted in several agreements, one of the most important of which contained 42 points and had been signed on 29 April, when the Ministers of Health and Sports, of the Office of the President, of Productive Development, of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare and of Economic Affairs and Public Finance, together with representatives of other ministries, had met representatives of the nine departmental federations of persons with disabilities and of the national federation. The dialogue remained open and the Government was committed to finding a comprehensive, broad-based solution. The 42-point agreement would be implemented before long.

Articles 21-33

28. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** asked, in follow-up to the information that the delegation had provided on article 12, how the State party could justify substitute decision-making concerning the sexual and reproductive rights of persons with disabilities. Regardless of whether the relevant decisions were taken by close relatives or legal representatives, such substitution was a clear violation of articles 2, 17 and 23 of the Convention.

29. She wished to know whether the State party planned to make Bolivian Sign Language an official access mechanism for deaf persons in areas such as education and the media. She also wished to know whether there were any plans to establish sign languages for the State party's main indigenous languages. She asked when the State party planned to establish Braille as an official reading and writing system for blind and deaf-blind persons and when it would set up a national commission that would regulate transcriptions into and from Braille. It would be useful to have information on the measures that the State party took to ensure that deaf-blind persons' human rights, such as the right to education, work and social participation, were respected.

30. The Committee would welcome information on any measures that the State took to support single mothers with disabilities in the performance of their parental responsibilities and what steps were taken to ensure that women with disabilities were fairly represented in the quota system for the employment of persons with disabilities. It would be interesting to learn why the salary of the director of the Directorate-General for Persons with Disabilities was much lower than that of the other directors in the Ministry of Justice.

31. **Mr. Pyaneandee** asked whether the victims and relatives of the traffic accident caused by a drink-driver would receive compensation. He also wished to know how the State party made use of international cooperation in supporting organizations of persons with disabilities and what the State party's priorities were in that regard.

32. **Mr. Tatić** asked why the illiteracy rate among persons with disabilities had been so high at the time that the initial report had been prepared. The Committee would be interested to learn what measures had been taken since then to bring the rate of inclusion of persons with disabilities in education up to 96 per cent, which constituted remarkable progress.

33. He wished to know whether there were any parliamentarians with disabilities in the State party. He also wished to know whether, in the wake of the significant protests organized by persons with disabilities in 2016, the Government planned to hold regular consultations with representatives of all organizations of persons with disabilities in order to monitor the implementation of the 42-point and other agreements.

34. The Committee would be interested to know what steps were taken in the State party to make cultural and tourist sites accessible to both national and foreign visitors. How did the State party ensure that persons with disabilities belonging to various ethnic groups enjoyed the same access to culture as the other members of their communities?

35. **Mr. Basharu** asked whether the State party would consider placing the Bolivian Institute for the Blind under the supervision of a more appropriate ministry than the Ministry of Health and Sports, as the current arrangement presupposed that blindness was a health issue that required prevention, rather than a human rights issue. He wished to know whether Braille was the primary code in the State party for education and communication for the blind and whether the State party was developing any Braille codes for the country's indigenous languages.

36. He enquired whether any concrete measures were in place to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoyed their right to health-care services. In particular, he wished to know whether information was provided in appropriate formats, such as Braille, and whether sign language interpretation services were available at all health-care centres to ensure that persons with disabilities could interact effectively with medical personnel.

37. He would be interested to hear what specific steps had been taken to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to the election process. For instance, was the voting environment accessible, could blind and deaf persons vote using Braille and audio formats, and were sign language interpreters present at all polling stations?

38. **Ms. Degener** said that, while it was encouraging that the Government entered into dialogue with civil society, she was concerned that the dialogue was not sufficiently comprehensive.

39. Given the exceptional progress that had apparently been made in recent years in including persons with disabilities in mainstream education, she requested more details on the State party's understanding of the term "inclusion". She wished to know whether there was a legal right to inclusive education for all disabled learners, so that children with disabilities and their parents could take their case to court if they were refused admission to a mainstream school on the ground of their disability, whether segregation in education was regarded as a form of discrimination and whether all disabled learners, especially those who were deaf-blind and those with cognitive disabilities, received reasonable accommodation and individualized support, including sign language and Braille, outside of special schools.

40. She asked how accessible the general health services were in the State party and whether persons with disabilities could use them on an equal basis with others. She would appreciate information on the steps taken to ensure that general health-service practitioners respected the dignity and will of patients with disabilities and did not apply any forced treatment. It would be useful to know whether health and medical personnel were trained in the human rights model of disability.

41. Given that the National Committee for Persons with Disabilities, considered to be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Convention in the State party, was a governmental body, she asked which institution would assume the role of the independent monitoring mechanism required under article 33 (2) of the Convention.

42. **Mr. Ruskus** said that he would welcome additional information on the State party's capacity to tackle poverty, particularly among persons with disabilities, and its commitment to doing so. It would be useful to know what practical, effective and sustainable poverty reduction measures had been taken to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. He also wondered whether the State party planned to start collecting disaggregated and reliable data for statistical analysis at the national level in accordance with the principles of the Convention.

43. **Mr. Lovász** asked how the Government was promoting sign language training for deaf persons, particularly children and their hearing family members, to help them communicate and form social networks. The delegation should indicate whether there was an established protocol for identifying disability and educating parents.

44. **Ms. Kingston** said that she would welcome information on policies to address the multiple aspects of poverty, including gender and age, and on how the State party was linking poverty eradication measures to Sustainable Development Goal 10, Target 10.2. She was concerned at the inadequate collection and analysis of data on persons with disabilities. The delegation should explain how Sustainable Development Goal 17, Target 17.18, was being implemented. She wished to know how the State party was mainstreaming the disability rights set out in the Convention, how it was monitoring the implementation of the Convention and how persons with disabilities were included in that monitoring process.

45. **Mr. Langvad** said that differences between the information presented in the report, information from other sources and the delegation's comments created a confusing picture of the situation of persons with disabilities in the State party. With reference to article 24, he asked how the State party ensured that all teachers received training in inclusive education. Information should be provided on the allocation of resources within the mainstream education system to ensure that all students with disabilities could realize their potential.

46. **Mr. You Liang** noted that no reference had been made to freedom of expression and opinion, mentioned in article 1 of the Convention. He asked whether persons with disabilities were free to express their opinions, including opinions that challenged the Government. With reference to article 27 of the Convention, he requested information on the impact of the quota for persons with disabilities on the staff of public bodies. Regarding article 30, he asked how many Bolivian athletes would be participating in the upcoming Paralympic Games. More information should be provided on the official results of the 2012 census mentioned in paragraph 432 of the State party report.

47. **Mr. Babu** asked how measures to tackle HIV/AIDS addressed persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and blind and deaf persons. The delegation should explain which groups were most at risk of HIV/AIDS in the State party and whether persons with disabilities were included in those high-risk groups. Statistics on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the State party, disaggregated by disability, age and gender, should be provided.

48. **Ms. Quan-Chang** (Country Rapporteur) said that she was concerned by high levels of poverty and extreme poverty in the State party among persons with disabilities, particularly those in rural and remote communities, indigenous peoples and women. The protest convoy had expressed legitimate concerns. She asked what measures the State party was taking to provide persons with disabilities with more dignified living conditions and greater access to basic services, including water and housing. She also asked what progress had been made towards the implementation of the recommendations by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning rural women's access to land, basic services and income-generating opportunities (CEDAW/C/BOL/CO/5-6, para. 33 (a), (b) and (c)). Adequate resources were crucial to allowing the Ombudsman's Office to monitor the Convention's implementation and she wondered whether more human and financial resources would be allocated to help the Office perform its work.

49. **The Chair**, referring to article 24 and its link to Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education, said that she would like to know what steps were being taken in that regard. Information should be provided on what access there was to prescription medication, particularly for psychosocial disabilities, how it was distributed and whether there were waiting lists to obtain it; whether there were prosthetics for those who needed them and what percentage of people were rehabilitated; what plans there were to implement the decree on employment for persons with disabilities and the expected time frame for implementation; who was covered by the prohibition in the Family Code on marriage for persons declared legally incapable and what measures had been taken to amend that provision; and what steps had been taken to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access

to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

The meeting was suspended at 11.45 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

50. **Mr. Salguero Aramayo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and opinion through any medium, as long as it did not affect the rights of others. That freedom was extended to persons with disabilities and included the freedom to express criticism of the Government. With regard to compensation for the relatives of victims of the drink-driver, the appropriate punishment for the driver would be determined by the legal proceedings.

51. The National Sign Language Council was a priority issue and progress had been made, in coordination with the Bolivian Deaf Federation, on the training and accreditation of interpreters to work in public and private institutions. The large number of indigenous languages in his country made it difficult to implement Bolivian Sign Language as an umbrella language. The Government was considering granting official status to Bolivian Sign Language. Although the Bolivian Institute for the Blind had been placed under the Ministry of Health and Sports, not all its initiatives were health-based; it worked with the labour and education departments and took a human rights-based approach. The Act of 22 January 1957, which established the Institute, would be reviewed in collaboration with persons with disabilities.

52. The Family Code made no reference to persons who were legally incapable. The only impediment to marriage under that Code was an interdiction ruling, which was handed down by a competent authority in cases where an adult had an intellectual or mental disability that would hamper his or her judgment. The Civil Code covered the concept of incapacity, with a view to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. A process had been launched to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty. With reference to other forms of disability, efforts were being made to identify and cater for deaf-blind persons in his country, particularly in Santa Cruz. The Senate had approved the establishment of a national day to celebrate persons with restricted growth.

53. There were 18,000 students with disabilities of school age registered in the education system. Efforts to integrate children with disabilities into the mainstream education system included mechanisms to reduce overall dropout rates, such as financial incentives to stay in school. Funds were granted to children with disabilities studying at primary and secondary level in mainstream and special education schools. In addition, the grant system for further education allowed students with disabilities to pursue professional training. Teacher training colleges prepared teachers to work with children with disabilities, regardless of the education system in which they worked. Inclusion in the classroom and appropriate training on disabilities for teachers was monitored by the Ombudsman's Office. Head teachers could not refuse children with disabilities a mainstream education.

54. **Mr. Vilca Nina** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that important changes had taken place in his country's health service over the past 10 years. Since 2006, health-care and medical services had been provided free of charge for persons with disabilities, rehabilitation centres had been established and the Central National Register of Persons with Disabilities had been set up. There were approximately 60,000 persons with disabilities on the Register, around 34,000 of whom were men. Disaggregated data on the persons registered were also available by age, with the majority — 37,000 persons — being adults aged between 21 and 59 years old. The data were also disaggregated by degree of disability, with 28,000 people being considered to have a severe disability. The most common reason for disability was acquired diseases, with 17,000 people in that category, followed by genetic conditions, with 14,000. The Government was able to use those data to design appropriate policies and strategies.

55. Act No. 475 on Health Service Provision, which had entered into force in 2014, provided that all persons with disabilities could obtain access to all types of medical facilities, from community health centres to hospitals, and receive any type of treatment free of charge. Nonetheless, the multinational and multicultural nature of the State meant that there was sometimes a lack of access to information and awareness of the health-care services to which persons with disabilities were entitled. A comprehensive manual had been drafted in conjunction with the entry into force of Act No. 475, listing all diseases and thus ensuring that people could be treated free of charge.

56. Nine rehabilitation centres had been set up across the country in 2010, one for each department. Under the National Solidarity and Equity Fund, the centres provided a wide range of rehabilitation therapies, with the objective of helping persons with disabilities to be more independent in their daily lives. The Government planned to open more centres in the future.

57. The project on the promotion of the use of Bolivian Sign Language in health-care centres was at the pilot stage and was currently being developed. In all health-care facilities, persons with disabilities were given priority treatment. Turning to the subject of children under 5 years of age, he said that 40 early stimulation facilities had been set up across the country, with the objective of identifying children with developmental issues and preventing disabilities. There were plans to expand the network to 86 such facilities in the future.

58. Efforts had also been directed to raising awareness of the sexuality of persons with disabilities, in order to eliminate the taboo around that subject. A guide had been drafted to assist parents in understanding the sexual development of their child. The Education in the Home plan ensured that those children who were not able to leave their homes owing to their disability could receive education and health-care services at home.

59. The Juana Azurduy allowance was given to pregnant women to encourage them to attend all pre- and post-natal medical check-ups and check-ups for the first two years of their child's life. A food allowance was also provided to pregnant women. HIV/AIDS prevention was a priority area for the Government, in particular the prevention of vertical transmission. Health-care information on HIV/AIDS had been disseminated in Braille and Bolivian Sign Language and male and female contraceptives had been distributed.

60. Health-care professionals were being trained to deal with persons living with HIV and an agreement had been signed between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the National Health Fund to develop funding for lower-extremity prostheses.

61. **Mr. Pajarito** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that numerous laws in Bolivia contained provisions to promote integration in the labour market for persons with disabilities. In particular, article 70 (4) of the Constitution recognized the right of persons with disabilities to work in appropriate conditions, with fair remuneration that assured a dignified life. Supreme Decree No. 27477 of 2004 stipulated that at least 4 per cent of the employees of all public bodies must be persons with disabilities and the General Persons with Disabilities Act contained numerous provisions promoting mobility and accessibility in the labour market. An example of the implementation of such provisions could be seen in the Ministry of Justice, which was equipped with ramps and specially adapted lifts that made its premises accessible. The Government had thus been able to integrate 1,000 persons with disabilities into the workforce and to train 720 persons with disabilities to carry out various professions, in 2009 and 2010. A draft law on an employment quota for the private sector was also under development, in coordination with organizations of persons with disabilities.

62. In the Plurinational Legislative Assembly and in the departmental and municipal governments, there were numerous examples of political representatives with disabilities.

Voting facilities were accessible and ballot papers were made available in Braille. Many such centres also had sign language interpreters available.

63. **Mr. Salguero Aramayo** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that Act No. 2770 on Sport governed the right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life and sport. In particular, the law provided that persons with disabilities were entitled to comprehensive training to enable them to practise sports and to compete in sporting events organized in conjunction with the Bolivian Integrated Sport Federation. The country also had a Special Olympics Association, approved by the International Olympic Committee, which enabled persons with disabilities to participate in competitive sporting events across 32 different sports. Five athletes from the Plurinational State of Bolivia were participating in the Olympic Games in 2016.

64. The promotion of accessibility to tourist sites in the country was the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and of the Bolivian State Tourism Company, which organized visits to various cultural sites across the State, where sign language interpreting and accessible transport and accommodation were provided.

65. Turning to the issue of data collection, he acknowledged that there was a problem with statistics in the State. In particular, there was no system in place to collect statistical data specifically on persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, the studies quoted in the State party report, including three censuses and two surveys, had provided the Committee with some relevant data. In the most recent census, in 2012, in line with the recommendations of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, a question had been included that specifically referred to disability. The results of that census had shown that around 340,000 people in the country had some degree of disability affecting their ability to hear or speak or their mobility. The data available were disaggregated and would enable the Government to develop policies and programmes to support persons with disabilities. More detailed studies were also being carried out in areas such as education and health care, with some indicators applying specifically to persons with disabilities.

66. The Ministry of Justice had taken part in numerous events internationally and worked closely with a number of United Nations agencies. The Government had been working, for example, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on access to justice. The Government had sought to harmonize norms, bringing them into line with international standards, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Patriotic Agenda 2025, which, in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, made specific reference to persons with disabilities. An agreement with organizations of persons with disabilities had been entered into, under which comprehensive programmes were being developed to conduct studies and assess problems encountered by persons with disabilities on a case-by-case basis.

67. **Ms. Velasco Condori** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the Government was grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to provide information on the developments that had taken place. Significant progress had been made. However, on the subject of the convoy protest, it was important to appreciate that the action had taken place in a politicized context. The dialogue with the Committee was a voluntary process and it was important to keep in mind that the Government had not been pressurized into taking part by publicity surrounding the convoy protest. The Government was anxious to receive more information from the Country Rapporteur on the issue of infanticide that she had mentioned, because it required immediate action.

68. It was important to emphasize that the services available to the Bolivian people, in particular indigenous peoples in rural areas, had improved significantly over the past decade. Electricity and water were now available to citizens across most of the country and

women's right to own land had been greatly enhanced thanks to the work of President Evo Morales.

69. **Ms. Quan-Chang** said that she would like to thank the delegation for the frank dialogue. The Committee hoped that its concluding observations could contribute to overcoming the challenges faced by the State party. The Committee appreciated the contributions of the civil society organizations that had been involved in the consideration of the State party report and hoped that they would be able to continue with their work without facing intimidation on their return to the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.