



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2779th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 28 November 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Amir

Contents

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Colombia (continued)

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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 *(continued)*

Combined seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Colombia (continued)
([CERD/C/COL/17-19](#); [CERD/C/COL/Q/17-19](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Colombia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Chaux Donado** (Colombia) said that the Political Constitution of 1991 provided for a multidimensional approach to equality: formal equality went hand in hand with affirmative action measures in health, education and other areas of life, to achieve material equality as well. The Constitution gave a generous mandate to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Under article 93, international human rights treaties and agreements ratified by Colombia had priority over domestic law; article 94 protected the rights inherent to the human person that were not explicitly mentioned elsewhere. The Ombudsman's Office was responsible for the protection of human rights and provided free legal assistance and advice to victims of human rights violations. The Ombudsman was appointed by Parliament and served a four-year term.

3. The Government of Colombia attached great importance to the right of freedom of expression and, by extension, to the rights to freedom of opinion and belief. They were considered the very basis of democracy and there was no censorship whatsoever. In the event that the exercise of freedom of speech resulted in harm to others, legal remedy was available to the damaged party. The Constitution prohibited all advocacy of hate speech, crime, war, discrimination or xenophobia and the Constitutional Court had developed a rich body of case law on the matter.

4. In its efforts to improve the overall situation of the Colombian population, the Government had placed particular emphasis on the Department of Cauca, whose ethnic diversity was considerably greater than the national average. The President himself had visited the area several times to gain first-hand insight into the situation on the ground. Government policy pursued a two-pronged approach: maintaining public order and security, on the one hand, and investing in socioeconomic development in the framework of the Cauca social plan, on the other.

5. **Mr. Oviedo Arango** (Colombia) said that the 2018 national population and housing census had placed emphasis on enhancing the visibility of Colombia's ethnic communities. In the run-up to the census, extensive prior consultations had been held with indigenous, Afro-Colombian and Roma representatives, to discuss ways to improve the census questionnaire and incorporate an ethnically differentiated approach. During the consultations, agreement had been reached on the operational framework and the recruitment and training of census staff. Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians had accounted for approximately 10 and 12 per cent of census staff, respectively. Some US\$ 12 million had been invested in the recruitment, training and transport of census staff operating in indigenous communities, in particular. The collection of ethnic data had been based on self-identification, using the same questions as in the 2005 census to ensure comparability of data.

6. In the 2018 census, 1.9 million persons had identified themselves as indigenous, against 1.4 million in 2005, which represented an increase from 3.4 to 4.3 per cent of the total population. The increase was attributable not only to natural population increase but also, more importantly, to better coverage of rural and remote areas as a result of the improved security situation and growing awareness of indigenous identity, owing to strong indigenous peoples' organizations. In addition, most indigenous peoples lived in rural areas and on collective lands and shared cultural and linguistic characteristics, which made self-identification easier.

7. Conversely, the number of persons identifying themselves as of African descent had decreased from 4.3 million in 2005 to just under 3 million in 2018. That statistical drop was nevertheless a somewhat inaccurate reflection of actual demographic developments. Afro-

Colombian self-identification processes were subject to evolving inter-ethnic relations and thus less stable than indigenous self-identification. Also, most persons of African descent lived in urban areas, rather than on collective lands of their own ethnic community, which turned the issue of ethnic affiliation into a much more complex matter.

8. One of the greatest shortcomings of the 2018 census had been its staff. During the prior consultations, well-trained census staff had been identified as a crucial prerequisite for proper census implementation in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. In practice, many had been ill prepared to take account of the ethnic dimensions of the exercise. While National Department of Statistics personnel were well trained, capacities to train external census staff properly had been insufficient. Moreover, the emphasis on improving the collection of data on indigenous peoples had detracted attention from other ethnic communities, such as Afro-Colombians and Roma.

9. In order to close that data gap, and in line with the Government's commitment to incorporate an ethnically differentiated approach into all its activities, the monthly household surveys and the annual quality of life survey had been expanded to include a question on ethnic affiliation. The National Development Plan 2018–2022 also provided for the collection of ethnically disaggregated data, to ensure that health, social security and education policies took account of the socioeconomic profile of the country's ethnic communities.

10. **Ms. Girón Vargas** (Colombia) said that the Government recognized health as a fundamental right, and all persons living in Colombia had access to health care. Particular emphasis was placed on improving access for ethnic communities, victims of armed conflict and other vulnerable groups. Measures taken in the areas of child malnutrition, sexual and reproductive health, migrant health and birth registration in remote rural areas were particularly noteworthy.

11. Child malnutrition was a public health priority. Acute, moderate and severe malnutrition had been included in public health surveillance in order to enable proper monitoring and follow-up. Outreach teams operating in high-prevalence areas actively identified children at risk and facilitated access to hospital- or home-based care, in cooperation with families. Work was also under way on the classification of malnutrition in children, adolescents, adults and pregnant women, in order to obtain a scientific basis for the integrated management of malnutrition. A free 24-hour acute malnutrition helpline had been set up, where persons at risk could seek information and advice. The helpline services were also available in the Wayuunaiki language. As a result of those measures, the mortality rate associated with malnutrition had dropped by 15 per cent. In order to tackle the social determinants of malnutrition, more comprehensive, long-term measures were nevertheless needed.

12. Combating sexual violence was another public health priority. Prevention and integrated care for victims of sexual violence were part of Colombia's sexual and reproductive health agenda. In addressing sexual violence, intercultural aspects and intersecting vulnerabilities were taken into account. A central mechanism had been set up to facilitate intersectoral cooperation in assisting victims of sexual violence. It was intended as a single clear port of call for victims, which could help prevent secondary victimization. Medical care and legal assistance were delivered free of charge. Practical measures to assist victims of sexual violence included the provision of free health care, the distribution of post-exposure kits to victims of sexual assault, and psychological care. To date, just over 25,000 victims of sexual violence had received assistance; 85 per cent of them were girls and women. A survey of sexual violence against children and adolescents had been conducted in 2016, focusing on areas affected by armed conflict. Alongside the measures taken to assist victims, efforts were also made to strengthen prevention and information mechanisms. The information collected was used to inform policies and strategies to help the victims. Effectively addressing sexual and other forms of violence required a whole-of-government, whole-of-society effort.

13. Colombia had welcomed 6.1 million migrants from Venezuela in 2019, up from 2.5 million a year earlier. It had provided emergency and non-emergency treatment, as well as drugs and medical devices, to 477,000 of those migrants, including persons diagnosed with

HIV/AIDS, 1 per cent of whom had declared that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.

14. The Government had detected 632 previously unidentified births and increased coverage by more than 9 per cent by simplifying the procedures for community leaders to register births, introducing mobile units in rural areas and allowing people to report unregistered births through free apps and text message services. It had also added ethnicity as a category in birth and death registrations.

15. **Mr. Chaux Donado** (Colombia) said that his country was a world leader in safeguarding fundamental rights like education and health care, thanks to a protection mechanism (remedy of *amparo* or *tutela*) set out in article 86 of the Constitution. The mechanism allowed a judge to issue a court order to protect anyone who felt that his or her fundamental rights had been violated or threatened. Any person, including non-nationals, could use the mechanism without a lawyer and would obtain an initial ruling within 10 days.

16. **Mr. Lara Anaya** (Colombia) said that the “Guajira Azul” programme for 2018–2022 in the Department of Guajira, where the Wayúu people were the main ethnic group, sought to improve the quality of water, make it more widely available and make the service more reliable. The programme was the result of a participatory process built by and for the Wayúu community. It would be implemented through inter-institutional cooperation, with support from multilateral banks and more than 20 public institutions, including ministries and municipal councils; would invest resources efficiently, with the Ministry continuously monitoring the effectiveness and timeliness of the work carried out; and would adopt a differential approach while respecting Wayúu culture. By achieving its targets on access to drinking water, the programme would transform the lives of hundreds and thousands of people. The right to drinking water was enshrined as a fundamental right in the Constitution. Licences to use water for industrial purposes had to be obtained from an independent technical body. Colombia had a suitable regulatory framework and appropriate institutions to protect access to drinking water and was designing programmes to close the gaps that remained in that regard.

17. **Ms. Escobar** (Colombia) said that, under Act No. 115 of 1994 (the Education Act), the Ministry of National Education, through the departmental education secretariats, had educated more than 500,000 children and adolescents living in urban and rural areas who identified as Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palanquero or indigenous. The National Development Plan 2018–2022 would include a line for investing in education infrastructure for indigenous communities, which would be co-funded by those communities. Almost 30,000 Afro-Colombian teachers and some 14,000 indigenous teachers were revitalizing cultures and helping children of those ethnicities to remain in school. The Government was conducting consultations on education specifically for indigenous children and on the professionalization of teaching staff, with the latter benefiting more than 20,000 teachers from Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities.

18. Thanks to cooperation with Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations, more than 100 community education projects had boosted the ability of students to speak and write in both Spanish and their native languages. The Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Culture had been part of the National Advisory Council for Native Languages since 2013 and were preparing a 10-year plan for native languages. Data collected during the National Year of Native Languages, in 2019, had shown that the percentage of speakers of indigenous languages had grown since the 2005 census.

19. The Government had recognized the country’s first indigenous university in 2018 and offered funding for students who had to relocate. The “Ser Pilo Paga” programme included a special chapter for black communities, which had benefited 1,327 students in the Pacific Region. There was also a co-funded programme for black master’s students and a fund for indigenous students, the latter having provided US\$ 7.1 million in 2019. The National Development Plan 2018–2022 included measures to boost higher education in rural areas. Lastly, 82 black and 84 indigenous students had benefited from prizes awarded to the best-performing high-school graduates, allowing them to study at a public or private higher-education institution of their choice.

20. **Mr. Aguirre Tejada** (Colombia) said that the Government took a differentiated, non-discriminatory approach to labour-market integration. Its strategic plans included an employment road map, introduced in 2017, with adjustments made for ethnic groups. A joint initiative between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Interior in 2019 was identifying barriers. Through the National Development Plan 2018–2022, the Government was seeking to strengthen the network of public service providers that promoted social inclusion and equal opportunities. It also intended to improve equal access to labour, increase the quality of jobs and ensure that potential employers and employees could be matched.

21. Through the National Training Service, the Government was promoting and implementing differentiated strategies and affirmative action for the inclusion of communities from ethnic groups. In 2018, it had approved a national policy to eliminate child labour and protect adolescent workers, which included special chapters for indigenous Colombians and Afro-Colombians.

22. Since 2016, the Ministry of Labour had been implementing the Equipares labour equity standard, giving organizations and businesses a tool with which to identify and address gender gaps. In 2019, with support from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Economic Forum, the Government had launched the gender-parity initiative to support public and private organizations in efforts to reduce the gender gap and remove labour-access and leadership barriers for women.

23. **Ms. González Mina** (Colombia) said that, through the Observatory on Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Ministry of Interior informed the Attorney General's Office of alleged cases of racism or discrimination. The Office was working with the Ministry and had developed strategies to strengthen investigations. Racial discrimination had been found to have taken place in 15 of the cases reported to the Office. In five of those cases, the perpetrator had already been sentenced; in the others, the Office was still gathering evidence in order to prosecute. A directive on how to deal with discrimination offences had reiterated the fact that, under article 134 (B) of the Criminal Code, hate crime and hate speech were criminal offences.

24. The Attorney General's Office had also made sexual violence a priority in its plan for 2016–2020, including in the context of organized crime or armed conflict. Its strategies included protocols to bring sex offenders to court and measures to strengthen sexual violence units across the country. Thanks to its efforts, the number of prosecutions had soared since 2016. It had also introduced mechanisms to protect victims, including special centres for reporting sexual violence, victim support centres, justice houses (legal aid centres) and measures to address threats to human rights defenders.

25. Coordination between the ordinary and indigenous justice systems took place through the National Commission for the Coordination of the Judicial System and the Special Indigenous Courts and through inter-court coordination committees at the departmental level. Coordination had been particularly successful in the Department of Cauca. Special indigenous jurisdiction applied when allegations were made against a member of an indigenous community for an offence that had occurred within that community's territory against a person or legally protected interest belonging to or under the responsibility of that community, provided that the community had a suitable institutional structure in place to investigate the defendants' actions and safeguard the rights of defendants and victims.

26. The State, especially the Attorney General's Office, was committed to finding those responsible for crimes against human rights defenders and putting them on trial. Directive No. 0002 of 2017, which had been issued following discussions with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, defined human rights defenders, set out the due diligence required when investigating crimes against such persons and laid down guidelines for investigating homicides against them. The Directive included the United Nations guidelines on defending human rights. Lastly, the State, especially the Attorney General's Office, was committed to further strengthening its differentiated approach to criminal investigations and prosecutions.

27. **Mr. Chaux Donado** (Colombia) said that, in line with international standards, the Attorney General's Office was completely independent from the Government and that, in accordance with a constitutional amendment of 2015, the Constitutional Court was responsible for settling any disputes regarding jurisdictional competence.

28. **Ms. González Mina** (Colombia) said that free prior consultation was a constitutional right. Consultations could concern either proposed administrative or legislative measures or proposed projects or activities. For a proposal to be deemed to directly affect an ethnic community, it must have an impact either on the community's settlement or on its customs or its movement within the area concerned.

29. Where prior consultation was ordered by a court, the Directorate for Prior Consultation of the Ministry of the Interior was responsible for initiating the exercise; where suspension of a project was ordered, compliance was the responsibility of the executor of the project – the Directorate was not involved.

30. The need for prior consultation was determined in accordance with criteria such as the applicability, in the case of the group concerned, of the International Labour Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), whether the proposed measures would have a verifiable impact on the identity of the ethnic community concerned, or whether they would amount to an intolerable intrusion in the economic, social or cultural life of the community.

31. The ethnic communities had taken part in the negotiations on the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, in Havana. The Directorate for Prior Consultation had scrutinized each of the legislative and administrative measures under the Agreement in order to determine which of them would be subject to prior consultation.

32. **Mr. Chaux Donado** (Colombia) said that any community that considered its right to prior consultation had been violated could seek protection of its rights through *amparo* proceedings in the courts. There was no requirement for legal representation.

33. With regard to the Afro-Colombian population, in fulfilment of a pledge made by the President to correct a historical injustice, a proposal was shortly to be submitted to Congress to change the status of the *corregimiento* of San Basilio de Palenque to that of special municipality, thereby restoring autonomy to what had always been regarded as the first free African people of the Americas.

34. **Ms. Córdoba Monroy** (Colombia) said that, in order to respond to the needs of the black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal communities, the Observatory on Discrimination and Racism had been mandated, among other tasks, to analyse the daily experience of those communities; to monitor, document and follow up on racial discrimination and racism against those groups; to coordinate with the Ministry of the Interior; to formulate recommendations to improve the relevant statistical indicators; to provide input to public policies on racism and evaluate such policies; to design tools to improve the protection of vulnerable persons; and to provide technical assistance to State institutions working in that field. The Observatory was staffed by professionals: one director, two lawyers and five psychologists. Their status in respect of the Ministry of the Interior was that of service providers and was governed by the relevant contract law. Of the 104 cases received by the Observatory between 2014 and 2018, 100 had been referred to the Attorney General's Office, which was following them up.

35. As part of its work in 2019, the Observatory had forged strategic alliances in order to defend and protect the rights of the black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquero and Raizal populations, partnering with television channels, human rights defence organizations and consumer associations, among others. Support services for victims of racism and racial discrimination had been restructured; improvements included a new link placed on the Ministry's web platform to facilitate registration of complaints. Other action included the launch of an "inclusiveness label" to encourage the creation of discrimination-free spaces; nationwide awareness-raising among social actors, territorial institutions and community organizations; and the production of an "index of violations", as a tool for monitoring racial discrimination against the Afro-Colombian and other populations.

36. Act No. 70 of 1993 recognized collective ownership in rural areas and therefore applied to around 30 per cent of the Afro-Colombian population; the 70 per cent who lived in urban areas had individual title to land. The State had recognized Afro-Colombian title to more than 6 million hectares in rural areas.

37. The Act had also made for progress in the area of higher education, by paving the way for the Special Fund for Education Loans for Afrodescendants, as well as in the broadening of representation for black communities in autonomous regions, departments and municipalities. The Afro-Colombian population also had the right to seek prior consultation in respect of projects to exploit non-renewable resources in their communities.

38. **Ms. Sánchez García** (Colombia) said that protection mechanisms for indigenous communities included the Standing Committee on Consultation with Indigenous Peoples, which discussed administrative and legislative proposals that might affect indigenous peoples in the context of State policy. It brought together all the government bodies that worked with indigenous affairs, the indigenous communities themselves and representatives of various organizations. The indigenous representatives were selected by an internal election procedure carried out using their own procedures, in accordance with the constitutional autonomy of indigenous peoples.

39. Pursuant to judgments of the Constitutional Court, 7 of the 39 ethnic protection plans ordered were being prepared and 10 were being implemented. Consultations on the drafting of the protection plan for the Awa people were under way; the Ministry of the Interior had concluded an agreement with that community on budget allocations to strengthen the political organization of that people and on the establishment of advisory offices for women, children and young people. Plans had already been prepared for the Witoto and Hitnú peoples, and consultations on priorities in the respective plans of action were under way with the bodies responsible for implementation.

40. In 2018, the Ministry of the Interior had issued a decree establishing a special system of preventive measures and protection for indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation or initial contact. Related action focused on dissemination of the decree, coordination of implementation and reporting on progress to the Amazon Regional Committee. Various measures had been taken in respect of the Nukak people since 2011; most notably, a committee had been set up in 2019 to facilitate action determined by the Nukak themselves.

41. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that he would appreciate information on measures to implement the State party's strategy on trafficking and to ensure that victims had effective access to protection under the law. He would also appreciate information on any court cases related to trafficking, the sentences handed down and the difficulties experienced by the authorities in prosecuting such cases.

42. The vast majority of domestic workers were women, and the majority of those were indigenous Colombian women or migrants. Their earnings were mostly below the minimum monthly wage. He would appreciate hearing how the State party guaranteed the application in practice of the relevant provisions of the Substantive Labour Code in order to eliminate wage differentials based on sex and race.

43. **Ms. Verdugo Moreno** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would appreciate receiving statistics on any prosecutions brought for hate speech and the sentences and convictions handed down.

44. With regard to the peace agreement, she would be interested to know how the Early Warning System and the associated risk report mechanism worked. She wondered whether it was true that there had been a significant reduction in the resources provided to enable those mechanisms to address victims' concerns.

45. She asked how the National Land Agency and the Special Administrative Unit for Managing the Restitution of Expropriated Lands worked, whether they had the same status and how they coordinated their work. Similarly, she would like to know more about the implementation of the various pieces of legislation related to land title, such as the Victims and Land Restitution Act (Act No. 1448 of 2011) and Decree No. 4635 of 9 December 2011 establishing measures providing assistance, support, comprehensive redress and restitution of land for victims belonging to the Afro-Colombian, black, Palenquero and

Raizal communities, and their impact on the effective enjoyment of land rights. It seemed that, in Cauca, of 31 applications for collective title, only 6 had been dealt with. She would like to know how the State party might improve and streamline its procedures in that regard.

46. She would be grateful if the delegation could explain the State party's approach to the Raizal people. Although associated with the Afro-Colombian population, they appeared to be considered an indigenous people. She would also like to know how prior consultation procedures worked in respect of projects that might affect Raizal culture, notably in tourism and industrial fishing.

47. With regard to prior consultation in general, she would appreciate clarification of the procedure for ordering suspension of a project where the court found in favour of a claimant: judging from the delegation's explanation, there was no guarantee that the executor of the project would in fact cease operations.

48. Was there any coordination of the documentation of indigenous peoples living in border areas? Were there any plans to legislate to recognize dual nationality to such peoples?

49. She would appreciate the delegation's comments on information before the Committee to the effect that 80 per cent of the metal mined in Colombia was illegally extracted and that basic environmental precautions were not taken. She wondered how the richness and vulnerability of the country's biodiversity were taken into account in environmental impact assessments conducted in respect of project proposals.

50. In the light of information received concerning the killings of human rights defenders and indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders, she would welcome information on how the National Protection Unit worked, whether it had sufficient resources and how its protection measures were evaluated. Similarly, she would like to know how the special investigation unit established under Decree No. 898 of 2017 worked.

51. She would appreciate more details concerning the programme to create justice houses and civic harmony centres. The fact that so few had been opened implied that the population nationwide did not have access to justice.

52. The statistics on cases of sexual assault given in paragraphs 96 and 97 of the State party's report did not seem to add up; she would appreciate clarification of those figures.

53. **Ms. McDougall** said that she wished to know whether the State party had ratified the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and, if not, whether it had plans to do so. With reference to the extraction of natural resources, she noted that the Constitutional Court had ordered the suspension of mining activities in certain areas of the country pending consultations with the affected populations. She wondered whether the delegation could provide an update on the status of those consultations with the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, such as those living in Cauca; what procedures were in place to regulate the awarding of mining contracts; and whether any new contracts had been awarded since the Court's decision. In the light of concerns about the mining industry's uncontrolled use of water and pollution of rivers, she would also like to know whether processes were being fully implemented to ensure that access to drinking water took precedence over other uses.

54. She would welcome more information about the 28 per cent of cases in which the perpetrators of killings of human rights defenders had been identified. In particular, she wondered how many of those cases had involved indigenous or Afro-Colombian human rights defenders and how many of the resulting investigations had led to the perpetrators being prosecuted, convicted and sentenced.

55. If she had understood correctly, Act No. 70 of 1993, which recognized Afro-Colombians' right to the collective ownership of their lands, was applicable to Afro-Colombians in rural areas, where, according to the information provided by the delegation, just 30 per cent of Afro-Colombian persons lived. She would therefore like to learn more about the situation of the indigenous and Afro-Colombian persons who, owing to the armed conflict or attacks against them, had been forced from their lands into urban areas or camps

for internally displaced persons. It would be helpful to know whether those persons were considered as claimants under that Act and how the Government ensured that the Act was applied consistently throughout the country.

56. **Mr. Calí Tzay**, welcoming the establishment in Cauca of the first indigenous university in Latin America, said that he would be interested to know how much State funding it received. He wished to know what measures had been taken by the Government to safeguard the land rights of indigenous communities living in areas that had been accorded protected status, such as Parque Tayrona, including by allowing them to stay on their ancestral lands, taking their concerns into account and entrusting them with the management of those biodiverse areas.

57. He wondered what action was being taken to ensure that indigenous and Afro-Colombian persons, particularly women and lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons, had unhindered access to health care and what training had been provided to health-care professionals in that regard. Lastly, it would be useful to have official statistics on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators of killings of leaders of ethnic groups, since there seemed to be some discrepancies in the data so far received.

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 and resumed at 12.40.

58. **Ms. Girón Vargas** (Colombia) said that the right to health was guaranteed to all persons, irrespective of gender or ethnicity. Moreover, the National Development Plan incorporated a cross-cutting approach to prevent and combat the multiple forms of discrimination that might arise, including in the health sector. A public policy and an action plan for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community was also being implemented.

59. **Ms. Vanegas Pérez** (Colombia) said that, pursuant to Decree No. 1066 of 2015, individuals or communities who deemed that their rights had been violated or that their safety was at risk could apply for protection measures from the National Protection Unit, which would, in coordination with other relevant bodies, evaluate their request and coordinate the necessary protection measures. With regard to the situation of human rights defenders, an intersectoral commission had been created to implement the Timely Action Plan for Individual and Collective Prevention and Protection concerning the Rights to Life, Freedom, Integrity and Security of Human Rights Defenders, Social and Community Leaders and Journalists. The Government had a presence in the areas most affected by security issues, and the Ministry of the Interior had created email and telephone channels exclusively for receiving complaints of threats against human rights defenders. Standards had been established and training had been provided on the measures to be taken by public officials with responsibility for dealing with such complaints. In addition, 10 persons wanted in connection with killings of, or making threats against, human rights defenders had been captured; the national police had set up an elite unit to deal with offences against human rights defenders; and the Armed Forces High Command had created a booklet with instructions for military personnel on protecting human rights defenders, which had been issued in March 2018.

60. **Mr. Oviedo Arango** (Colombia) said that the National Department of Statistics was due to carry out a survey with regard to the situation of the Raizal communities of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina, which were among a number of legally recognized ethnic groups in Colombia. The purpose of the survey was to gather data on their living conditions and socioeconomic development, as well as to obtain their views on the sustainable development of the archipelago, taking into account its specific environmental characteristics.

61. **Ms. González Mina** (Colombia) said that investigations into the 180 complaints of harassment of human rights defenders or hate speech had determined that the offences corresponded to acts of discrimination rather than of hate speech. Pursuant to Decree No. 898 of 2017, a special investigation unit on the disbanding of criminal organizations responsible for the murder and massacre of human rights defenders and members of social or political movements had been set up and worked alongside the network of 3,500 prosecutors countrywide. Action was being taken by the Government to facilitate victims' access to justice by setting up centres for dealing with complaints. In rural or remote areas, victims could file their complaints with the judicial police. Lastly, of the 323 killings of

human rights defenders, 53 had involved human rights defenders and leaders of indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples. Almost 50 per cent of those cases had been resolved.

62. **Mr. Chaux Donado** (Colombia) said that, in Colombia, there was room for everyone to live in conditions of dignity and equality. The Government had shown that it had the political will to resolve the many challenges that the country faced, remove barriers to equality and lift people out of poverty. Colombia was committed to democracy, valued all human rights and aspired to diversity. It was generous to migrants, fair in its treatment of ethnic communities and committed to eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and intolerance, including through the full implementation of its obligations under the Convention.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.