



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 135th session

### Summary record of the 3882nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 30 June 2022, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Pazartzis

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*Sixth periodic report of Uruguay*

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

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant**  
(continued)

*Sixth periodic report of Uruguay (CCPR/C/URY/6; CCPR/C/URY/QPR/6)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Uruguay joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Ache** (Uruguay), introducing her country's sixth periodic report, said that the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had forced the country to boost public spending and redirect funds to protect the health of the population and mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. By applying the principle of responsible freedom and placing science at the forefront of the country's COVID-19 response, Uruguay had managed to control the spread of the disease without halting commercial or economic activity or restricting the freedoms of the population.
3. Uruguay continued to demonstrate its commitment to the multilateral system for the protection of human rights. It had ratified all fundamental human rights treaties and their optional protocols, including those concerning individual communication mechanisms. More recently, Uruguay had been the first country to ratify the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean and, in 2019, it had become party to the Additional Protocol to the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth. The Government was preparing its declaration to accept the competence of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families to receive and consider communications pursuant to article 76 of the Convention, and it maintained an open invitation to visits from international and regional rapporteurs, experts and mandate holders under other special procedures of the Human Rights Council.
4. The National Plan for Racial Equity and People of African Descent (2019–2022) had been adopted to ensure the full exercise of the rights of Afrodescendants by providing for affirmative action and other policies in areas such as health care, education, culture and employment.
5. Transgender persons born before 31 December 1975 who were able to demonstrate that they had been the victim of rights violations by State agents as a result of their gender identity were entitled to receive reparations under Act No. 19.684. From May 2019 to date, 234 applications for compensation had been processed and 178 had been approved. A law prohibiting men who had engaged in sexual relations with other men from donating blood had been repealed in 2020, and a provision prohibiting persons living with HIV from joining the armed forces had been lifted in 2021.
6. Even during the border closures prompted by the pandemic, persons with an established need for international protection had not been barred from entering the country. Shelters had been set up and hotels reserved for refugees and asylum-seekers, depending on their specific needs, with priority being given to vulnerable persons, including mothers with children, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied minors.
7. Asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants were issued with identity cards that granted them access to the same rights to employment, education and health care as Uruguayan citizens. All migrants, regardless of status, were provided with vaccinations against COVID-19 on an equal footing with the rest of the population.
8. Special gender equality units had been created in various ministries and State institutions, and funding for their work had been allocated in the 2020 State budget. That same year, the National Civil Service Office had conducted a study on the gender gap in leadership positions within the Administration. Based on its findings, steps had been taken to improve women's access to leadership positions and to professional and technical roles within the Government. The National Gender Equality Strategy 2030 set out specific policy guidelines and measures and provided for the participation of a range of stakeholders and civil society organizations.

9. The country's first two courts that specialized in dealing with gender-based, domestic and sexual violence had recently been established, and another four were to be created in the near future. A solid civil and criminal legal framework was in place to combat human trafficking, and progress was being made in developing policies to that end.

10. An advisory committee on health care, which comprised national trade union representatives, academics, civil society representatives and private health-care providers, had been set up to monitor the implementation of the national health-care system, ensure respect for human rights within the system, guarantee equality among all users and contribute to the development of national care plans. Day-care centres for persons over 65 years of age in situations of mild or moderate dependency had been established to help ensure their independence and allow them to remain in their own homes. A national plan for 2020–2027 focused on supporting mental health by addressing influential factors such as educational and cultural inclusion and access to housing and employment.

11. Teenage pregnancy had dropped by almost a third between 2010 and 2020, and the downward trend was expected to continue. That success had been the result of an intensive, sustained campaign to raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues in general and of the measures deployed as part of the Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Unwanted Pregnancy in Adolescents. As part of the Strategy, pregnant adolescents were provided with information regarding the support available to help them make informed decisions and to promote the reintegration of adolescents who decided to continue with their pregnancy into the education system or labour market after they had given birth.

12. There had been just over 10,000 voluntary terminations of pregnancy in 2021, and the figures for previous years were fairly similar. Medical professionals who objected to performing abortions were required by law to refer pregnant women to another medical practitioner in a timely manner. Objectors were barred from hindering, delaying or preventing the procedure or seeking to dissuade women from seeking that procedure.

13. Uruguay had one of the highest suicide rates in the Americas and had launched the National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2021–2025 to tackle the problem. The Strategy provided for measures specifically targeted at the groups most at risk, particularly young people. The outcome of that effort would be evaluated in due course.

14. The Government had continued its efforts to implement prison reforms. Steps were being taken to ease prison overcrowding by building new prisons, improve detention conditions and reintegrate prisoners into society upon release. The State was aware that conditions for rehabilitation in many prisons fell short of international standards, and the authorities were working hard to remedy the prison system's shortcomings. In line with the recommendations made by the Committee, the Code of Criminal Procedure had been amended to update the criminal justice system, enhance procedural safeguards, improve protection for victims and guarantee the right to due process.

15. The Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Humanity had reopened cases involving serious human rights violations that had occurred in the recent past, and the Government had taken a number of steps to keep alive the memory of the victims of enforced disappearances and establish their whereabouts. It had been 49 years since the coup d'état, and the painful memories of the dictatorship that had ensued had reinforced national sentiment in favour of democracy and human rights.

16. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that it would be useful to have an assessment of the follow-up given to the recommendations of the Committee under the Recommendations Monitoring System. Concrete examples to illustrate how the System's platform for dialogue and consultation with civil society was used would be appreciated.

17. She wondered whether legislation was in place that regulated or specifically defined the meaning and scope of the constitutional concept of states of emergency. She would welcome clarification of reports that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Uruguay had prevented its nationals and foreigners with residency visas from entering the country. Had the Government notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations, pursuant to article 4 of the Covenant, of the emergency measures taken by the State party to halt the spread of COVID-19?

18. It would be helpful to learn what the impact had been of the laws adopted by the State party on incitement to hatred or violence, instigation and conspiracy to commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. How many people had been convicted under those laws since 2018? Disaggregated statistics would be appreciated. The Committee would be interested to hear whether the State had been able to reach its goal of ensuring that at least 8 per cent of the labour force and persons in the education system were people of African descent and, if so, how that target had been achieved. She wondered what the yearly school dropout rate had been among the population of African descent since 2018 and what specific steps had been taken to reduce it. She wished to know what the current implementation status was of the National Plan against Racism and Discrimination, what action Uruguay was taking to reduce the high rates of poverty among the population of African descent and whether the effectiveness of its efforts had been evaluated. Lastly, she would be interested to know what progress had been made towards the adoption of International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

19. **Mr. El Haiba** said that he wondered whether staff on secondment to the National Human Rights Institution were full members or merely served as representatives of their departments. He wished to know how many complaints of human rights violations had been received by the Institution since the submission of the State party's report, whether they had been investigated and, if so, what the outcome had been. He would be interested to hear how many visits to places of detention and other closed facilities had been conducted by the national mechanism for the prevention of torture, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether its reports were publicly accessible. He would be curious to learn how the resource management policy put forward by the Parliament influenced the work and budget of the National Human Rights Institution. He would also like to invite the delegation to comment on reports of discrimination in places of deprivation of liberty of children in conflict with the law.

20. He would appreciate information on awareness-raising campaigns and training on the right to access to justice, especially for the most vulnerable persons and victims of discrimination. It was a matter of concern that officials at childcare institutions often did not receive any specialized training and that such institutions were often staffed by police officers.

21. It would be useful to know whether migrant, disadvantaged and rural women had ready access to safe abortions. The question was of particular importance in view of the high rate of rape in the State party and reports that some medical practitioners refused to perform abortions on grounds of their personal convictions or religious beliefs. It was his understanding that even rape victims under the age of 15 were not automatically entitled to medical treatment. The State party's programmes on sexual education and reproductive health also required improvement.

22. **Mr. Soh** said that he was concerned by the fact that transgender persons in the State party had a low life expectancy and high school dropout rates, along with high rates of unemployment, depression and attempted suicide. Moreover, it appeared that policies on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons were not being fully implemented. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on the persistence of discrimination against those persons in the State party despite the legislative advances that had been made. What were the main challenges in connection with the establishment of effective mechanisms for receiving and addressing complaints regarding discrimination against such persons, particularly in the areas of education, health, the workplace and public spaces?

23. **Mr. Santos Pais** said that he would appreciate information on the implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2030 and on the number and percentage of women in elective political offices and in posts in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. He wondered whether there were any draft laws on the establishment of gender parity quotas and would like to know whether the State party planned to take steps to combat abuse directed at female politicians, which appeared to be a particular problem on social networks. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on the fact that men held the majority of posts from the sectional level upward in the National Civil Service Office. It would also be helpful to learn whether the State party was planning to take action to increase

the number of women in decision-making positions, to guarantee women's safety in the workplace and to close the gender pay gap.

24. He would welcome information on the implementation and outcomes of the Plan of Action for a Life Free from Gender-based Violence with a Generational Perspective 2016–2019 and on the status of the next plan on that subject. Detailed statistics on the number of complaints of gender-based violence filed and on the related investigations, prosecutions and sentences handed down in that connection would be useful, as would statistics on reparations granted to women victims of violence. As only one specialized court for gender-based violence had been established to date, he wondered when other such courts would be created throughout the country.

25. He wished to invite the delegation to comments on reports that the budget needed to implement Act No. 19.580, on gender-based violence against women, had not been allocated. There was reportedly also a lack of public policies aimed at combating and preventing all forms of gender-based violence and insufficient training for public and judicial officials on issues relating to gender and discrimination. He would welcome the delegation's views on reports that most services for female victims of violence were located in departmental capitals and that those offices were understaffed, had limited working hours and handled only those cases involving partners or former partners.

26. Lastly, he would like to know what the State party was doing to ensure immediate access to justice, protection and support for female victims of all forms of violence and whether there were plans to create additional protected housing for single women and women with dependent children who had been victims of gender-based violence. What steps were being taken to ensure that victims, including victims of sexual violence during the de facto regime in place between 1973 and 1985, had effective access to justice and received comprehensive redress?

27. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera**, speaking via video link, said that he would like to know whether the State party was considering including the crime of torture, as defined in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in its Criminal Code. It would be useful to learn more about the scope of the definition of torture contained in Act No. 18.026 on cooperation with the International Criminal Court in combating genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Did it cover situations that did not qualify as crimes against humanity? He would be interested to learn whether the State party had adopted concrete measures to prevent torture and ill-treatment in prisons and other places of deprivation of liberty, especially ones where minors were held.

28. He would like to know whether there had been any investigation into the five complaints of ill-treatment submitted by the Parliamentary Commissioner to the judiciary in 2018 and whether there had been any complaints or investigations of excessive use of force by police officers. He would also appreciate information on whether police protocols relating to detention prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

29. It would be useful to have additional data on recent cases of trafficking, if possible disaggregated by the sex, age, ethnicity and country of origin of the victims. Lastly, he would appreciate information on recent judicial investigations into suspected cases of trafficking and on measures for providing redress to trafficking victims.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.*

30. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the operation of the online Recommendations Monitoring System had been temporarily suspended so that the software could be revamped. The Government continued to work on preparing and following up on its reports to international bodies; most recently, meetings with civil society organizations had been held to provide inputs for the country's periodic reports to the present Committee and the Committee against Torture.

31. **A representative of Uruguay** said that there was no standard regulating the scope of constitutional provisions on states of emergency. Under article 31 of the Constitution, personal security safeguards could be suspended only under exceptional circumstances to prevent crimes; article 168 (17) further stated that, if the Government adopted emergency

security measures during serious and unforeseen external attacks or times of internal unrest, the General Assembly must be notified within 24 hours. It must also be informed if, during emergency situations of that nature, individuals were arrested or transferred within the national territory. The country had ratified and observed all of the main international human rights instruments, which could be invoked by the courts. People could initiate legal proceedings to seek redress if their human rights had been violated.

32. **Ms. Ache** (Uruguay) said that, following the declaration of a national state of emergency in March 2020, the Government had closed its borders, but exceptions to the border closure had been made for persons in need of international protection. Under the Constitution, the temporary closure of borders was permitted when it was considered to be in the public interest; that measure was consistent with the provisions of the Covenant.

33. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, as the level of child poverty was higher among Afrodescendants than the rest of the population, the Government ensured that early childhood services were tailored to people of African descent. There was a particular emphasis on disadvantaged families, families with children under the age of 3 years and pregnant women.

34. To combat racism and discrimination in the education system, the Government provided training for teachers and officials and had updated both a training manual for teachers and the Ceibal Plan (Basic Educational Computing Connectivity for Online Learning), which was tailored for use by young people. Efforts were also being made to raise awareness of the contributions of people of African descent to the country.

35. In the field of employment, the Government emphasized training and integration into the labour market. One programme, established with the financial support and cooperation of the Government of Spain, focused on young people in the city of Rivera. Under the National Plan for Racial Equity and People of African Descent, there was a focus on participation in the labour market by women and particularly single mothers of African descent; on average, Afrodescendent women had more children and became mothers at a younger age than the rest of the population, which was a contributing factor in high school dropout and unemployment rates.

36. The enforcement of the National Plan had been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the Government had focused on urgent issues such as access to food and the situation of persons employed in the informal sector, many of whom were of African descent and had been reliant on State subsidies in the absence of other employment opportunities. Work was being done to evaluate public policies affecting people of African descent and to determine how the Government could better meet the needs of the Afrodescendent population. Relevant training was provided to public officials, and inputs received during meetings with civil society organizations informed the development of policies to combat racism.

37. Unfortunately, the quota system adopted to narrow the gender gap in political participation in Uruguay had been less effective than anticipated for a variety of reasons. The Government was currently examining a bill on gender-based quotas for electoral lists. In 2021, the National Women's Institute had launched a capacity-building programme for female politicians, and 62 women from around the country had signed up for the programme thus far. The main challenge faced by aspiring female political leaders was political violence, including via social media. While the number of women in politics remained lower than desired, women were increasingly holding important, high-level political positions traditionally occupied by men.

38. The judiciary processed over 21,000 complaints, investigations and prosecutions concerning gender-based violence each year. Victims of gender-based violence had a legal right to reparations. In 2020, the Government had adopted a law doubling the amount of compensation to which the children of victims of femicide were entitled. Child victims were also entitled to psychological support.

39. The Observatory on Gender-Based Violence against Women monitored and collected data on cases of gender-based violence and the Government's response. As recent

government efforts had been focused primarily on combating COVID-19, however, an assessment of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2030 had yet to be carried out.

40. **A representative of Uruguay** said that two specialized courts had been established to handle cases of gender-based, domestic and sexual violence. The judiciary recognized the structural nature of discrimination against women, and judges had an obligation to take that fact – and other gender-related considerations – into account when trying cases involving gender-based violence. The right to equality and non-discrimination was protected by the Constitution and under international law. Judges and public defenders received training on gender issues and gender-based violence against women. The Supreme Court had adopted a protocol on good practices to be followed when instituting legal protections in cases of violence against women which included guidelines on combating gender stereotypes and upholding international standards on women's rights. A specialist gender unit had been established within the judiciary. The number of victims who received reparations was growing year by year. In total, 945 victims had received reparations within the past five years.

41. **A representative of Uruguay** said that gender-based violence was a matter of great concern to the State. The Government was investing heavily in combating the problem, including through the increased use of ankle bracelets for monitoring perpetrators and the establishment of the Gender Policies Division within the Ministry of the Interior. Over 39,000 reports of domestic violence were received per year, on average. The number of homicides related to gender-based violence was also similar year on year. The Government remained committed to preventing and combating such crimes.

42. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the State had yet to meet its quota for the employment of persons of African descent in government posts; the current proportion of persons of African descent in such positions remained around 1.8 per cent. The COVID-19 pandemic was partly to blame, but another problem was that individuals of African descent tended to lack the necessary training, in part owing to their higher school dropout rate as a group. Individuals of African descent experienced a larger pay gap in informal employment and a higher rate of underemployment – driven in part by the pandemic – but the overall rates in both cases appeared to be decreasing, albeit slowly. According to a survey conducted in the first half of 2021, the gender wage gap stood at 19 per cent, although that figure had also declined by a small amount. The Government was continuing to make efforts to improve employment equality for those groups.

43. While disaggregated data on educational attainment by individuals of African descent and persons with disabilities were not available, the Government did provide employment training programmes, which had a participation rate of some 12 per cent for both groups. A pilot project had been launched with the aim of increasing the employability of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including by encouraging such persons to stay in school, increasing access to training and developing strategies for promoting their entry into the workforce.

44. In the most recent funding cycle for the scholarship programme for young people, 11 per cent of the grants had been allocated to persons of African descent, 5 per cent to persons with disabilities and 2 per cent to transgender persons. A new law had been adopted to significantly increase the subsidies available to companies that hired persons with disabilities, and the Government was working with civil society to promote the scheme. An agreement had also been reached with local governments to pay wage subsidies to companies that hired persons of African descent, especially women, who were living in poverty.

45. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the budget for the gender-based violence response programme run by the National Women's Institute had been increased by almost 50 per cent. The advice hotline for victims of domestic violence had been operating 24 hours a day since 2021. Numerous services had been established to provide financial, psychological and social support to victims throughout the country, as well as shelters. There were also services for male offenders.

46. The Institute was working with the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and Environment to provide housing support for female victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. Some 500 housing subsidies, each lasting two to three years, would be allocated under that project.

47. **Ms. Ache** (Uruguay) said that the Government was studying the possible applicability of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). The definition contained in article 1 and a number of other provisions would need to be adapted to the reality in Uruguay, however.

48. The Government respected the independence of the National Human Rights Institution and worked with it to protect human rights. The necessary legal procedures had been initiated to replace the current governing board of the Institute.

49. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the staff of the National Human Rights Institution had increased steadily since its establishment. It currently had more than 90 staff members, and promotions had been granted for the first time on the basis of competitive examinations in 2021. While some staff members had been seconded from other ministries, they did not represent or liaise with those ministries. Data on the number of complaints of human rights violations were published in the Institute's annual report. In 2021, the Institute had received 627 communications, some three quarters of which were requests for advisory consultations in relation to the protection and defence of human rights; only one quarter had involved complaints of violations.

50. The implementation of the national preventive mechanism had been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, with most assessments being conducted remotely. More than 80 in-person visits to detention centres had been conducted in 2021, however, including 17 visits to 24-hour centres for children and adolescents and 16 visits to detention centres for children and adolescents.

51. The budget requests of the National Human Rights Institution were invariably approved in full. Additional funding was also provided to support one-off endeavours, such as renovation works or searches for detained or disappeared persons.

52. **A representative of Uruguay** said that his country had adopted various laws and acceded to treaties which upheld the right to access to justice and had taken steps to raise public awareness of that right. Access to justice was one of the main themes of the strategic plan adopted by the judicial branch for the period 2015–2024. The judiciary was working to remove barriers to access to justice and to ensure that all persons could fully exercise their rights. All legal officials were required to comply with the Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People by order of the Supreme Court. Public defenders provided assistance in a wide range of areas, including criminal law, family law and labour law, to persons who could not afford to hire legal counsel. The Centre for Judicial Studies of Uruguay provided training for judges and public defenders on access to justice and human rights, as well as initial courses for trainee judges on the application of international human rights treaties. Between 2018 and 2021, the Centre had provided human rights training to 865 people on a variety of topics, including social and cultural rights and the rights of migrants and refugees.

53. **A representative of Uruguay** said that more than 90 per cent of persons deprived of liberty in Uruguay were assisted by public defenders. Unfortunately, public defenders lacked the material, technical and logistical resources that they needed to carry out their work effectively and to ensure that the persons they were defending had access to all the relevant information about their case. He hoped that the budget allocated to public defence services would be increased in the future as a matter of priority.

54. **A representative of Uruguay** said that juvenile detention centres were managed by the National Institute for the Social Inclusion of Adolescents, which had been established as a specialized department of the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents in 2016. Police officers ensured the security of juvenile detention centres but did not work directly with adolescent detainees. While staff training had always been a priority for the National Institute for the Social Inclusion of Adolescents, particular progress had been made in 2020 thanks to the development of a specific training programme for staff who worked directly with adolescent detainees. Available training opportunities also included an induction course for new staff and a course on physical restraint techniques. Various other measures, including the establishment of a continuing education academy, had been taken in collaboration with international partners to improve the social and educational support provided to adolescent detainees.



55. **Ms. Ache** (Uruguay) said that approximately 48 per cent of the 10,000 abortions carried out in 2021 had been performed by public health workers and 52 per cent by private health workers. Following the adoption of Act No. 18.987 on Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy, the number of abortions carried out each year had increased before stabilizing at around 10,000 per year. Around 6 per cent of women who consulted a doctor about abortion decided to continue with their pregnancy. Around 88 per cent of women who sought an abortion were at least 20 years old, 11 per cent were between 15 and 19 years old and fewer than 1 per cent were under 15 years old. Between 2013 and 2021, only one woman had died as a result of an abortion. Abortion services had continued to operate normally throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Any user of the health system who had been living in Uruguay for at least one year had access to abortion services. There was no requirement to show proof of residence or citizenship. Likewise, in cases where an abortion was sought because the mother's health was at risk or there were fetal abnormalities, the mother was not required to prove her residence status.

56. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the National Council on Sexual Diversity was composed of representatives of all State bodies, universities, the National Human Rights Institution, the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training, and civil society. Under the Comprehensive Act for Transgender Persons, a special commission had been set up to process name change applications. A total of 507 such applications had been approved in 2019, 223 in 2020 and 294 in 2021. Between January and June 2022, 173 applications had been received, of which 16 had been approved thus far. A bill that would amend article 27 of the Code on Children and Adolescents to enable same-sex couples to register their children under the surname of their choice was being prepared. Around half of the country's mental health professionals were receiving training on the provision of care to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. A special commission within the National Council on Sexual Diversity was working with the National Civil Service Office to ensure compliance with the quota for the recruitment of transgender persons in the public sector. The Office also organized training and awareness-raising activities on transgender issues and held workshops for transgender persons to inform them of their rights and the regulations in place.

57. **A representative of Uruguay** said that, although the Government did not have a specific sex education plan, the issue of sexual and reproductive health was covered by the 2020–2024 Educational Development Plan. Teaching materials on the subject were being developed, teachers were being provided with training and a project on the prevention of teenage pregnancy was under way. Other initiatives to promote the development of comprehensive sex education included the participation of two schools in a research project on the prevention of teenage pregnancy; the commemoration of various international awareness days, such as World Contraception Day and the World Day against Trafficking in Persons; the development of a sexual health toolkit for schools; the preparation of a road map on the prevention of pregnancy among girls under 15 years old; and the development of audiovisual materials on the prevention of gender-based violence.

58. **A representative of Uruguay** said that 76 per cent of judicial personnel and 65 per cent of judges were women. Three of the five Supreme Court judges were also women. Two courts specializing in cases of domestic and gender-based violence had been established in 2022 and there were plans to establish four more. However, such cases could also be handled by other courts, such as family courts. It was hoped that the funding available for the creation of specialized courts would soon be increased.

59. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the members of the legislature had not been able to reach a consensus on a definition of torture that would incorporate all elements of the definition set out in the Convention against Torture. Moreover, the Constitution did not explicitly state that international treaties, such as the Convention, took precedence over national laws. It was therefore up to individual judges to interpret and apply the law as they saw fit when dealing with cases of torture. Only one person had ever been convicted of torture and, in that case, the conviction had been overturned on appeal. In cases involving torture, the alleged perpetrators tended to be prosecuted on other charges, such as abuse of authority. Between 2018 and 2021, 124 complaints of abuse of authority against detainees had been filed.

60. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the issue of torture and ill-treatment in prisons and other settings was taken very seriously. Many officials had received training on the subject. Complaints of torture or ill-treatment could be filed with the police or the prosecutor's office or via a toll-free hotline run by the Ministry of the Interior. Since police officers were closely monitored at all times, any unlawful conduct was quickly detected and dealt with through judicial proceedings.

61. **A representative of Uruguay** said that the National Human Rights Institution and Office of the Ombudsperson was an independent body that was fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*