



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Summary record of the 3092nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 14 August 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

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

Combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of the United Kingdom (continued) (CERD/C/GBR/24-26; CERD/C/GBR/Q/24-26)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the United Kingdom joined the meeting.*

2. **Mr. Kut** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would welcome up-to-date information on the measures, including special or affirmative action measures, that had been taken to combat structural and multiple forms of discrimination and inequalities in various aspects of the public and private domains that affected persons belonging to ethnic minority groups, including Gypsies, Roma, Travellers and persons of African or Asian descent. He would like to know how the various relevant action plans and strategies, such as the Inclusive Britain Action Plan and those of the devolved Governments, were contributing to the elimination of racial discrimination; how the implementation of those initiatives was being monitored; and whether the necessary impact assessments had been conducted.

3. He would be interested to receive updated information on the specific measures that had been taken to increase the participation and representation of persons from ethnic minority groups, in particular women, in political and public affairs at all levels of government, in institutions involved in policymaking and in decision-making posts in the public and private sectors. It would be useful to know the results of such measures and the extent to which their impact had been assessed.

4. He would like the delegation to comment on reports that a number of legislative measures giving the police greater powers to impose restrictions on protests had been introduced in response to the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020; on accusations of double standards in the policing of recent Palestinian solidarity protests, especially with regard to the treatment of Muslim students participating in demonstrations on university campuses; and on allegations that certain parts of the media and some politicians and government officials had portrayed those protests as dangerous and extreme, even going so far as to liken them to hate marches or terrorism. He wondered what measures the State party might take to ensure that there were no double standards in the policing of protests and to guarantee the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association to all persons on an equal basis in the United Kingdom.

5. **Ms. Stavrinaki** (Country Task Force) said that, according to reports, stop-and-search practices had a disproportionate impact on persons of African descent and ethnic minority communities and strip searches of children predominantly of African descent were on the rise, as were police-involved deaths. She wished to know what steps the State party had taken to incorporate the guidelines contained in the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, including with regard to algorithmic profiling; whether the delegation could clarify how "suspicionless" stop-and-search powers were used and the measures that were in place to prevent and eliminate the racially discriminatory use of such practices; whether the State party might give consideration to the establishment of an independent mechanism to investigate police misconduct; whether, in future, data collected in relation to complaints of police misconduct might include demographic characteristics, such as ethnic background; and whether the State party intended to implement the recommendations of the Children's Commissioner for England concerning the use of strip searches on children. She wondered what specific action had been taken by the State party to address the hostile environment in police forces that officers from ethnic minority backgrounds reportedly faced; improve diversity and inclusion training for police officers; and rebuild trust between the police and ethnic minority communities that were at once underprotected and overpoliced.

6. She would like to know what action had been taken to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of counter-terrorism programmes and strategies, including the "Prevent" strategy; whether the State party might consider removing the obligation of teachers and public health-care providers to report young individuals under that

strategy; and what effective guarantees were in place to prevent the misuse and abuse of counter-terrorism powers, in particular against children and adults from ethnic minority backgrounds, especially those from Muslim communities. Disaggregated data on the referrals and interventions that had been made under the strategy and on the measures that had been taken to provide redress in cases of false or unfair referrals would also be appreciated.

7. According to the Lammy Review, an independent review of the treatment of black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system, persons of African descent or those from ethnic minority backgrounds were targeted disproportionately at every stage of the criminal justice process. Furthermore, compared with white offenders, they were more likely to receive custodial sentences, especially for drug offences. She would be curious to know what specific action had been taken to implement the Lammy Review recommendations and what outcomes had been achieved. It would be helpful to know the results of the drug diversion schemes, mentioned in paragraph 183 of the State party's report (CERD/C/GBR/24-26), by which persons committing minor drug-related offences were diverted to measures outside the criminal justice system.

8. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, under the Equality Act 2010, employers and service providers could take positive action to address disadvantages faced by, and increase the participation of, persons who shared a relevant protected characteristic, such as race. The Inclusive Britain Action Plan contained measures to increase diversity in the judiciary and magistracy. One such measures included the implementation, in conjunction with the Judicial Diversity Forum, of a pre-application judicial education programme to support lawyers from underrepresented groups, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, who were considering applying to the judiciary. Between 2014 and July 2023, the proportion of judges from ethnic minority backgrounds had risen by 4 percentage points, while, in 2022/23, almost 20 per cent of new members of the judiciary were from ethnic minorities.

9. It had been the view of the previous Government that political parties should lead the way on increasing diversity in political representation. The new Government was giving consideration to the enactment of section 106 of the Equality Act, which concerned the publishing of data on the protected characteristics of political candidates. The current Parliament was the most diverse in its history, with record numbers of women and ethnic minority Members of Parliament. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 90 Members of Parliament from ethnic minority backgrounds, accounting for 14 per cent of parliamentarians, had been elected in 2024, up from 66 Members in 2019. Representation of ethnic minorities in the civil service stood at just over 16 per cent, another record high.

10. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that ethnic disparities in the use by the police of stop-and-search powers had decreased significantly in England and Wales in recent years. The likelihood of a person from an ethnic minority background being stopped by the police was three times lower than in 2020/21. While more needed to be done, things were going in the right direction; in 2022/23, for example, persons identifying as black or black British were 2.2 times more likely to be arrested, down from 2.6 in 2020/21 and 2.4 in 2021/22, than those identifying as white. Police forces in England and Wales had access to training and awareness-raising on the subject and were working with community groups to try to address the problem.

11. The use of strip searches on children was worrying. Efforts were being made, in cooperation with the Department for Education, local authorities and community groups, to prevent the use of that practice, except in extreme circumstances and where it was absolutely necessary. There were clear guidelines governing the use of police powers, and complaints mechanisms and avenues for recourse were in place, such as the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

12. When it came to counter-terrorism strategies, the biggest threat faced in the United Kingdom was Islamist extremism, followed by right-wing extremism. The data revealed that the numbers of referrals of individuals through the "Prevent" strategy to the multi-agency "Channel" panel, which determined the extent of an individual's susceptibility to radicalization and whether tailored support was needed, on the basis of right-wing extremist or Islamist ideology varied depending on the area of the country. The approach of the United

Kingdom Government, under the “CONTEST” counter-terrorism strategy, was based purely on threat and risk; it was ideologically agnostic and was not based on race or any other form of protected characteristic. For that reason, the numbers concerning right-wing extremism had risen in recent years.

13. There was a big difference between how protests were policed and how the media reported on the issue. The pro-Palestinian protests had been overwhelmingly peaceful with very few arrests having been made, whereas media coverage and political rhetoric had not necessarily reflected that reality.

14. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Government had committed to actions on 33 of the Lammy recommendations, almost all of which had been completed. Actions that remained outstanding were longer term in nature, such as the need for more representative senior leadership in the prison service. Work was continuing under the “Inclusive Britain” strategy, which contained a number of measures to tackle disparities in the criminal justice system.

15. Regarding ethnic disparities in sentencing, the sentencing framework, including maximum penalties, applied equally to all offenders. An independent body, the Sentencing Council for England and Wales, issued guidelines on sentencing. However, certain aggravating and mitigating factors, such as whether an offender had previous convictions or had entered an early guilty plea, could lead to disproportionate outcomes. Persons wishing to enter a guilty plea, for example, were incentivized to do so as early as possible in the proceedings to obtain a greater reduction in sentence; however, there seemed to be ethnic disparities in that regard. To address the issue, while maintaining judicial independence, the Sentencing Council had begun to publish data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity. The judiciary was also guided by the Equal Treatment Bench Book, which was intended to raise awareness among judges of inherent biases and disparities when making sentencing decisions.

16. **Mr. Kut** said that he would be interested to know whether a legal definition of Islamophobia had been established in the State party.

17. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that while she well appreciated the importance of judicial independence, she feared that relying on data alone to sensitize judges to sentencing disparities might take some time. She wondered whether the State party might consider taking positive action by drafting, in cooperation with the judiciary, specific guidelines to tackle the issue.

18. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Sentencing Council was responsible for producing relevant guidelines; positive action by the Government might not be appropriate, since every case had to be considered on its merits. Two similar cases could not be treated differently on the sole basis of the ethnicity of the defendant. The solution, which was to create a more diverse judiciary that was representative of the population, was a priority of the new Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, who, incidentally, was the first person from an ethnic minority background to hold that role.

19. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that while there was no legal definition of Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hatred was addressed under the legislative framework on hate crimes based on religion or any intersecting grounds of religion and race. The previous Government had been considering a working definition drawn up by a cross-party group, but had not adopted it; the current Government had yet to take a position on such a definition.

20. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, following a review of the policing of the Black Lives Matter protests, the Police Service of Northern Ireland had set up a strategic community engagement team and held regular events, known as “reference, engagement and listening” events, with communities. A recent event with representatives of ethnic minority groups had included discussions on a race action plan, which was currently being drafted by the Service.

21. The use of police stop-and-search powers in Northern Ireland was reviewed on a regular basis by the Service Accountability Panel, thus providing for independent community scrutiny. Studies were carried out on the use of such powers with regard to certain

communities; a recent study, for example, had concerned the use of stop-and-search checks on members of the Irish Traveller community. Such checks had to be recorded on body-worn cameras, where worn; police supervisors were responsible for reviewing a sample of such footage. All significant police activity – such as policing of events or stop-and-search checks – was routinely accompanied by community impact assessments, thereby enabling potential impacts to be better managed and mitigated. Police accountability mechanisms included the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Police Ombudsman’s Office and, at the local level, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

22. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, as part of the Race Equality Framework for Scotland, the Scottish Government was currently engaging with a range of stakeholders to devise a shared strategic vision on building a fairer Scotland. Efforts were under way to establish an anti-racism observatory, in accordance with the recommendations of the Anti-Racism Interim Governance Group to Develop National Anti-Racism Infrastructure. The observatory’s functions were expected to include advocacy, data collection and research, accountability, strategic partnerships and cultural engagement.

23. According to an initial evaluation of the Gypsy/Travellers Action Plan, good progress had been made in most of the areas covered, which had included accommodation, health and education. Ahead of a new action plan, which was currently being drafted, a listening exercise had been held with Gypsies and Travellers to gain an understanding of their priorities.

24. According to the latest data, the number of persons from ethnic minority backgrounds in the criminal justice system was broadly representative of the wider population; data specifically concerning Gypsy, Traveller and Roma persons was not currently published. As part of efforts to transform Police Scotland and instil human rights-based values and culture, an independent review group had been established to provide critical oversight on issues of equality and diversity. It was expected to deliver its final report in short course. Lastly, Police Scotland and the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner were launching a public consultation on the use of live facial recognition technology to ensure that, if introduced, it would be used in a proportionate and ethical manner.

25. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Welsh Government had published the first annual report on the impact of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan in December 2023 and was currently considering recommendations on the Plan’s implementation. New goals and actions would be published in autumn 2024. Four regional forums were being set up to directly engage with persons from ethnic minorities and find out whether the Plan had delivered improvements in their lives.

26. The Welsh Government had funded the “Equal Power, Equal Voice” mentoring programme to increase the diversity of representation in public and political life. Black, Asian and minority ethnic adults living in Wales were eligible to participate in the programme.

27. **Mr. Kut** said that many British subjects from the Caribbean who had arrived in the United Kingdom between 1948 and 1973 and who were known as the Windrush generation had fallen foul of “hostile environment” legislation, which tasked landlords, banks and employers with enforcing immigration control. In 2017, it had emerged that hundreds of people, mostly of black Caribbean heritage, had been wrongly detained, denied legal rights and in many cases deported. The recommendations of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, published in 2020, had only been partially implemented, and victims continued to face difficulties in claiming compensation. He would be grateful if the delegation could describe the current situation and the Government’s plans to redress the wrongs that had been committed.

28. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that, according to the report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, young black men were disproportionately represented in cases of joint enterprise prosecutions for violent crimes. Such prosecutions were problematic in that they brought young men into contact with criminal justice system, which could lead to a pattern of offending.

29. **Mr. Amir** said that the United Kingdom bore some responsibility for the current plight of the Palestinian people as, in 1947, it had failed to recognize their independence and

instead had turned the question of Palestine over to the United Nations. He wondered whether the State party would right a historical wrong by recognizing the State of Palestine.

30. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, in February 2019, the International Court of Justice had ruled that the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 had been unlawful and that the Chagossians, who had been removed from the islands to make way for a military base, had a right to return. However, neither the United Kingdom nor the United States of America, which operated the military base, had moved to comply with their international obligations. In 2022, the United Kingdom had passed a law allowing Chagossians to become British citizens. Some Chagossians had since travelled from Mauritius to the United Kingdom in the hope of a better life, but not all of them had been provided with accommodation, and some had ended up living in tents. He asked whether the State party would comply with the Committee's recommendations regarding the right of the Chagossians to return home.

31. **Ms. Shepherd** said that, according to the State party's combined periodic reports, the Williams Review into the circumstances surrounding the Windrush scandal had been useful in implementing evidence-based measures to improve outcomes for ethnic minorities. However, the Home Office had decided to abandon two of the recommendations of the Williams Review, including a recommendation to establish a migrants' commissioner – a decision the High Court had recently ruled was unlawful. In the light of that judgment, she would be interested to know whether the Government would establish a migrants' commissioner and what steps it was taking to remedy the shortcomings of the compensation scheme for victims of the scandal.

32. Regarding the State party's activities under the International Decade for People of African Descent, she wondered whether the Decade had been officially launched in the United Kingdom and whether the Government considered that any aspects of the programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade had not been realized. Would the State party support the declaration of a second international decade for people of African descent?

33. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that, in its previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23](#)), the Committee had urged the State party to evaluate the impact of counter-terrorism measures in order to ensure that such measures were not implemented in a manner that constituted profiling and discrimination. The Committee would be interested to receive up-to-date information in that regard.

34. She would be interested to know how the "Inclusive Britain" strategy, the Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland and the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan specifically dealt with discrimination against people of African descent. It would also be useful to know whether the Northern Ireland authorities had carried out a mid-term evaluation of the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2021–2026 and, if so, what the findings had been. The Committee would appreciate information on discrimination against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in access to employment and health care.

35. **Mr. Gwalawala Sibande** said that he would like to know more about the Government's support for other countries in promoting and protecting human rights. In particular, he would be grateful for information on initiatives to address discrimination against ethnic groups in Commonwealth countries and to ensure the implementation of the Convention in British Overseas Territories.

36. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would be interested to know whether any measures of reparatory justice had been taken or were envisaged in the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent. He wondered what measures had been taken to address the consequences of the forced assimilation of Gypsies and Travellers into Scottish society.

37. **Mr. Guissé** said that the Committee had observed the normalization of xenophobia, accompanied by the spread of racist hate speech and hate crimes, in many of the world's democracies. In recent years, the United Kingdom, once a standard-bearer of inclusive integration, had introduced increasingly restrictive laws on immigration, culminating in the imprisonment and deportation of migrants. He would be interested to know what measures

had been taken to hold politicians and the media accountable and prevent them from engaging in extremist discourse.

38. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the immense contribution of the Windrush generation was celebrated through initiatives such as Windrush Day and the National Windrush Monument. The Government was committed to ensuring that victims of the scandal received the compensation they deserved. The Windrush status and compensation scheme would remain open for as long as necessary to ensure that affected persons could receive documents confirming their immigration status and could claim compensation. The Home Office had already paid out over £92 million in compensation, and the time taken for the preliminary assessment of cases had been reduced to four months, ensuring that compensation was provided at the earliest opportunity. No end date had been set for the compensation scheme, and there was no cap on the amount of compensation that could be awarded overall. To ensure non-repetition, safeguards that had been put in place to make it easier for people to give evidence of their status, and extra training had been provided for caseworkers. The Government was considering next steps in the light of the High Court judgment on the decision not to establish a migrants' commissioner.

39. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Government's counter-terrorism strategy had been relaunched in July 2023 and was continually reviewed in the light of the situation. The "Prevent" strategy had also been reviewed in 2023, and the recommendations that had been made were being implemented. The Government planned to bolster training on the "prevent duty" so that teachers and other public-sector workers could make more robust referrals, leading to appropriate support and intervention for vulnerable individuals.

40. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the "Inclusive Britain" strategy included specific measures targeting people of African descent, such as reducing maternal health disparities affecting black women, increasing the number of adoptions of black children and tackling hair discrimination in schools.

41. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that successive Governments had expressed deep regret over the manner in which Chagossians had been removed from the Chagos Archipelago in the 1960s and early 1970s. The United Kingdom had agreed a full and final compensation settlement with Chagossians in the 1980s, having already made a payment to Mauritius to support the Chagossians who had settled there. The English courts and the European Court of Human Rights had rejected further Chagossian claims for compensation. Since the International Court of Justice had issued its advisory opinion, the United Kingdom had begun negotiations with Mauritius on sovereignty over British Indian Ocean Territory. Following the recent election in the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary had met the Mauritian Prime Minister and had committed to continuing those negotiations. The Government recognized the importance of resettlement for many Chagossians and considered it a priority to resolve the issue, while ensuring the long-term secure and effective operation of the military base on Diego Garcia. However, it was too early to speculate on the timeline or outcome of the negotiations.

42. All British citizens, including those of Chagossian origin who had moved to the United Kingdom, were entitled to the same support. The Government was working closely with local authorities to assist the new arrivals. In the 2023/24 financial year, the Government had spent £440,000 on projects to benefit Chagossians in the United Kingdom and Mauritius.

43. The relationship of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was based on partnership. Powers were devolved to the authorities of overseas territories to the maximum extent possible. All inhabited British Overseas Territories had constitutional protections against discrimination, including on the ground of race.

44. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Government would closely examine the proposals for a second international decade for people of African descent. The new Government had committed to putting the protection of human rights at the heart of its foreign policy. It would work with allies to encourage all States to uphold their international human rights obligations and to hold to account those who violated or abused human rights. The United Kingdom supported several initiatives and programmes in Commonwealth

countries, including the Rule of Law Expertise Programme to promote and strengthen the rule of law in developing countries, and a judicial training programme in Nigeria.

45. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, in Northern Ireland, the Racial Equality Strategy covered all ethnic minorities, including people of African descent. Under the strategy, a racial equality subgroup had been established as a voice of persons from ethnic minorities at the heart of the Northern Ireland Government. The Northern Ireland Executive had taken several steps to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent, including the erection of a statue of Frederick Douglass in Belfast to honour the victims of the transatlantic slave trade.

46. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Scottish Government acknowledged that historical policies had had an impact on Gypsy/Traveller communities in Scotland. It had commissioned independent research on that subject and expected to receive the findings in September 2024. It remained focused on working across political, organizational and geographical boundaries to address the ongoing inequality and injustice that Gypsy/Traveller communities faced.

47. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Welsh Government had worked closely with black, Asian and minority ethnic people to directly inform the goals and actions of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The Wales Race Forum engaged with a number of organizations and with people of African descent. Many actions within the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan aimed to address the inequalities faced by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. In 2023/24, the Welsh Government had provided £11 million to local authorities to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people.

48. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that although joint enterprise was a legitimate and necessary legal doctrine, concerns surrounding its use had given rise to a study of 190 joint enterprise homicide prosecutions that had revealed disparities relating to ethnicity and prompted plans for further monitoring at the national level. Consultation with stakeholders on the study's findings had led to the updating of prosecution guidance, for example, to address the perception that young persons from ethnic minorities were more likely than others to be involved in gangs. Drug diversion schemes formed part of a pilot project that coordinated law enforcement activities and diversionary programmes in order to discourage drug offences.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

49. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would welcome updated information on the steps taken, and their outcomes, to combat structural inequalities in health care, including to ensure timely, culturally acceptable, gender-responsive and quality health-care services for ethnic minorities. It would be useful to know whether the State party collected data on health-care services disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and age, and what measures were in place to address health determinants in relation to persons protected by the Convention.

50. She wished to find out whether the State party planned to waive intellectual property rights under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or adopt other measures to provide equitable and non-discriminatory access to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination and other drugs and preventative health products. The Committee would be interested to know the outcome of measures to address the overrepresentation of persons of Afro-Caribbean descent in psychiatric institutions and the disproportionate use of restraint, seclusion and medication in their treatment, and it also wished to learn whether the State party collected data on the use of restraint, disaggregated by ethnicity. An update on reforms to the Mental Health Act and details of measures to prevent racial discrimination in that area would be welcome, as would data demonstrating that the immigration health surcharge did not hinder universal access to health care.

51. She would like to hear what steps had been taken to identify the causes of the disproportionately high rates of infant and maternal mortality among black persons and how maternal mortality among women of African descent and ethnic minorities was being addressed, including in places of deprivation of liberty. She wished to know what measures had been adopted to prevent human rights violations in the overseas operations of corporations registered in the State party, particularly with regard to Indigenous Peoples and

ethnic groups; details of cases in which corporations had been held accountable for such violations would be welcome.

52. It would be interesting to hear how the State party promoted the use of early protection plans to reduce the number of children of African descent and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in the care system, and to afford them adequate, culturally appropriate support and protect them from marginalization. Information would be welcome on measures to address the economic disadvantages affecting the education of children belonging to ethnic minorities; to combat bullying and stereotypes against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and children of African descent; and to increase the number of teachers from ethnic minorities.

53. **Mr. Kut** said that the Committee would welcome assurances as to the State party's commitment to continuing, evaluating and revising its efforts to address poverty, homelessness, access to health care, infant mortality and unemployment among ethnic minorities and other historically marginalized groups. In particular, the delegation was invited to provide up-to-date information on action to provide affordable, adequate housing for persons from ethnic minorities and to tackle persistent inequalities affecting them.

54. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the National Health Service had developed an initiative to address the unique needs of marginalized groups, including the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, by means of improvements to health care and partnerships with, inter alia, the housing and voluntary sectors. Data on those communities, including in relation to health care, had been published. The Government was of the view that the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights adequately balanced reward for innovation against wider societal benefit, incentivized research and development and facilitated the production of medical products.

55. In England, all mental health trusts would be required to develop patient and carer race equality frameworks by March 2025 in order to improve access and outcomes for persons belonging to ethnic minorities. Culturally appropriate advocacy models were being piloted to improve those patients' understanding of their rights when detained under the Mental Health Act, and the planned amendments to the Act would enhance choice, autonomy, rights and support for individuals undergoing treatment. Around £300 million had been invested in Family Hubs and the "Start for Life" programme to improve outcomes for children and families in 75 areas of England, including areas with high levels of deprivation. A three-year plan launched in 2023 aimed to render maternity and neonatal care safer, more personalized and more equitable.

56. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that it she would be grateful for specific details of the planned changes to the Mental Health Act that would improve the integrity and autonomy of patients, particularly those from the Afro-Caribbean community.

57. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that an extensive review of the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities had informed the Government's response to the pandemic and culminated in a number of recommendations, including building on the successful COVID-19 vaccine roll-out to ethnic minority groups to improve other vaccination programmes, increasing the participation of ethnic minorities in clinical trials and research and avoiding the stigmatization of those groups when communicating their higher risk of infection.

58. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act would afford patients greater agency and enhance their right to challenge decisions regarding their treatment. For example, community treatment orders, to which black patients were far more likely to be subjected than white patients, would be used only where there was strong justification and genuine therapeutic benefit.

59. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the previous Government's successful approach to poverty reduction had been based on evidence that the risk of poverty was reduced significantly by employment. Low employment rates among the Gypsy and Traveller communities were addressed through targeted activities, such as support for job centre staff in assisting them.

60. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that draft legislation on renters' rights would afford them greater security and improve safety in rented accommodation, for instance, by expanding existing legal requirements for landlords to resolve hazards within strict time frames. The significant social housing reforms currently under way would strengthen regulations on the quality and safety of homes, services for tenants and mechanisms for residents to voice their opinions. To ease pressure in the housing sector, the Government planned to build 1.5 million new homes, including around 120,000 affordable homes and social housing units.

61. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that a twice-yearly count of Traveller caravans had revealed a steady increase in caravans on authorized sites in England and in caravan numbers in general. Almost all unauthorized sites were on land owned by Travellers, and there had been a decrease in unauthorized sites on other land, along with an increase in private sites. The Government's planning policies were intended to provide sufficient sites for Travellers while respecting the interests of settled communities, and responsibility for their implementation lay with local authorities, which were encouraged to engage in long-term planning. Traveller sites were funded through, inter alia, a dedicated fund that had provided £10 million for the refurbishment and creation of sites in 2022 and 2023 and an affordable homes programme.

62. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that a voluntary approach was taken to due diligence in business and human rights based on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. The National Contact Point raised awareness of the Guidelines and provided mediation in claims against multinational enterprises registered in the United Kingdom as part of a non-judicial complaints mechanism. Advice for businesses on mitigating the risk of human rights violations in international trade and supply chains had been published.

63. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Department for Education was committed to addressing the inequalities within the children's social care system and offering suitable and timely support for every child. Two statutory guidance documents entitled "Children's Social Care National Framework" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023" had been issued in December 2023 and set clear expectations regarding the delivery of inclusive and engaging support for children and families.

64. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds should face no barriers to educational attainment, and all pupils should have access to a comprehensive education that enabled them to obtain qualifications that would open doors for them. The pupil premium grant had been introduced in 2011 and was allocated to State-funded schools in England to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Schools used the grant to ensure the delivery of high-quality teaching, provide targeted academic support and tackle non-academic barriers to success. Pupil premium funding had increased from £600 million in the 2011/12 financial year to more than £2.9 billion in 2024/25.

65. Schools were legally required to adopt a behaviour policy setting out measures to prevent all forms of bullying and were responsible for developing their own anti-bullying strategies. The guidance on school suspensions and permanent exclusions for England clearly stated that all decisions to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair and that head teachers should consider the underlying causes of the misbehaviour or the factors contributing to it, including any special educational needs or disabilities, before making a decision.

66. The percentage of teachers who identified as belonging to an ethnic minority had risen from 11.2 per cent in the 2010/11 academic year to 16.2 per cent in 2023. In 2023, the proportion of white teachers and ethnic minority teachers who held leadership positions had stood at 15.9 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. The Equality and Diversity Fund had been operated by the Department of Education from 2014 to 2020 to support schools in helping teachers from underrepresented groups progress towards leadership roles.

67. School attainment and attendance levels among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students remained low at every stage of education. The Department of Education recognized that issue and had established a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group, which met on a regular

basis to hear about the experiences and challenges of the communities concerned and sought to contribute to the Department's work in order to ensure that children and young people from those communities would benefit from any reforms implemented.

68. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, in Northern Ireland, thematic groups had been established to determine the key health, education and accommodation challenges faced by Traveller and Roma communities and identify measures to improve their well-being. The groups were composed of individuals and representatives of organizations who worked closely with the communities concerned. The Northern Ireland Executive was committed to providing the Irish Traveller community with adequate and culturally appropriate accommodation options and services, and measures to that effect were being taken under the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2021–2026. Such measures included a strategic review of Irish Traveller sites to identify options for their future improvement or replacement and the completion, together with the housing agency of the Government of Ireland, of an all-Ireland review on transitory living. While the Unauthorized Encampments (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 remained in effect, it should be noted that, in cases in which the trespassers were members of the Irish Traveller community, the police service was required to consult the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to identify a suitable caravan pitch within a reasonable distance of the site of the trespassing.

69. All asylum-seekers and migrants and members of ethnic minorities who were resident in Northern Ireland had equal access to health and social care. The provision of mental health support for all communities was a priority for the Northern Ireland Executive, which had developed the Mental Health Strategy 2021–2031 to set the future strategic direction of mental health services. Community-based services specifically for members of the Irish Traveller community were available. While the number of neonatal deaths among black and Asian infants was low in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the United Kingdom, there was recognition of the need to provide mothers from those groups with appropriate support during their pregnancy. Improving the health and well-being of all mothers and babies, especially those from disadvantaged communities, remained a priority.

70. Children from ethnic minorities were overrepresented in the Northern Irish care system, which could partly be explained by the recent increase in the number of unaccompanied child asylum-seekers arriving in the country. The Northern Ireland Executive was working with community stakeholders and volunteer groups to prevent children from ethnic minority backgrounds from entering the care system by offering targeted support to such children and their families. In the 2023/24 academic year, some 21,000 pupils who came from outside the United Kingdom and did not share a language with their teacher had been enrolled in Northern Irish schools. Students with a low level of English received additional language support until they reached the level of their peers. School staff working with children for whom English was an additional language received cultural awareness training through Queen's University Belfast.

71. Despite improvements in recent years, school attendance remained a challenge and was a particular problem among children from the Irish Traveller community. Work was thus under way to update the school attendance strategy to reflect the challenges facing students and their families since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provided that schools were required to keep a record of all bullying incidents, the motivation behind the incidents and the action taken to address them. The Act was intended to assist schools in identifying issues between pupils from different racial backgrounds and implementing suitable measures to address racist bullying.

72. The new anti-poverty strategy would set out the Northern Ireland Executive's long-term commitment to addressing the impacts of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, including among ethnic minorities. Consultations had recently been launched to determine how employment laws could be improved to increase the proportion of the working-age population holding a decent job. Almost 37,000 individuals from ethnic minorities aged between 16 and 64 years were employed, equating to an employment rate of 73.2 per cent.

73. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Scottish Government recognized that racism and discrimination were key drivers of health inequalities and was

addressing the issue based on recommendations made by the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity and evidence highlighting the areas for improvement. Key areas of focus were type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, perinatal care and mental health. Efforts were being made, for instance, to ensure that women's lived experiences were at the centre of work to develop perinatal health policies. All National Health Service executives had been asked to incorporate an anti-racism focus into their business objectives for 2024/25 and develop an anti-racism plan. Guidance on supporting anti-racism planning would be published shortly.

74. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan contained measures to ensure that members of ethnic minorities had a say on mental health policy and laws. The Ethnic Minorities Mental Health Task and Finish Group had been established, and a new mental health strategy would focus on underserved groups. Guidelines were being developed to enhance psychological care for individuals from black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups. Efforts had been made to improve the mental health support offered to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, as part of which an annual amount of £1.2 million was allocated to the "Traumatic Stress Wales" initiative. A network had been established to share good practices in the creation of culturally appropriate mental health resources.

75. The Welsh Government recognized that black and Asian women had a higher maternal mortality rate than white women and had thus established the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Support Programme to implement changes to maternity services that would improve the experiences of women from ethnic minorities. Steps were being taken to enhance the collection of relevant data from those groups. All Welsh maternity units had signed up to a programme aimed at improving their staff's cultural awareness. Representatives of ethnic minorities were part of a group that had been set up to support efforts to transform children's services in Wales. Funding for projects offering referral-based services to children and young people from ethnic minorities had been provided through the Third Sector Scheme.

76. **Ms. Esseneme** said that the Committee had been informed that black employees were paid less than their white counterparts who had the same qualifications and performed the same roles. She would like to know why that was the case and whether the State party planned to review its employment policies to ensure that all workers received equal pay for equal work.

77. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she would welcome assurances from the delegation that schools would not teach a watered-down version of the State party's difficult past as part of the history curriculum. It would be helpful to hear whether the State party supported the conclusion of the 2021 report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities that family structure had an impact on the educational attainment of students from ethnic minorities and whether it considered that the institutionalized and structural discriminatory practices affecting those students should also be highlighted as a factor. The delegation might wish to explain whether the human rights education provided in the State party addressed the right of individuals affected by the legacy of British colonialism, in both the State party and its former colonies, to receive reparations. Would the new Government be willing to respond positively to the growing demand for such reparations?

78. **Mr. Tlemçani** said that he would like to know how the State party intended to tackle the systemic discrimination faced by children from ethnic minorities, especially at the hands of the police, and what steps would be taken to protect young people participating in demonstrations and avoid their detention. The Committee would be interested to hear what the new Government would do to address the impact of the two-child benefit cap on ethnic minority families and what other measures it would implement to support such families.

79. **Ms. Tebie** said that it would be useful for the delegation to provide statistics on incidents of workplace racism and the national or ethnic origin of the victims, as well as the details of any legal or administrative measures taken to ensure that they received reparation. She would like to know what mechanisms were in place to identify overt and covert forms of workplace racism and whether the State party would amend its laws to shift the burden of proof to the alleged perpetrators of racist incidents. The Committee wished to learn how

many magistrates had received training on racial discrimination and whether awareness-raising campaigns targeting both employers and employees had been run.

80. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wished to know whether the State party intended to adopt laws recognizing slavery as a crime against humanity and providing for reparations. It would be helpful to learn whether the Inclusive Britain Action Plan had been evaluated and whether the related recommendations on responsible and accurate reporting on race issues had been prepared. He wondered whether an assessment had been conducted into the effectiveness of the rules of the independent media regulator concerning harmful and offensive material, incitement of crime, disorder, hatred or abuse and responsible religious programming.

81. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Scottish Government was tackling the ethnic minority pay gap through its Anti-Racist Employment Strategy. The Government had recently established a programme to provide teachers with training on anti-racist practices and principles, and the role of Scotland in the transatlantic slave trade was addressed in the curriculum. Principles for an anti-racist curriculum had been published in 2023 and had been developed in consultation with young people with expertise in anti-racism matters and the Scottish Children's Parliament.

82. A 2021 review of the housing needs of ethnic minorities had revealed that the highest-earning members of ethnic minorities were more likely to live in private rental accommodation than their white counterparts. Individuals from such minorities were also more likely to live in relative poverty after housing costs. Accordingly, more than £613 million had been invested since 2017 to provide discretionary housing payments aimed at reducing poverty, safeguarding tenancies and preventing homelessness. The Scottish Government intended to deliver an additional 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, at least 70 per cent of which would be social housing.

83. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Welsh Government recognized that more needed to be done to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities had access to culturally appropriate and decent accommodation and was committed to monitoring progress in that area as part of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. Local authorities were required to assess the accommodation needs of those communities and, in the 2024/25 financial year, had been allocated £3.44 million to ensure that those needs were met.

84. A total of £11 million had been earmarked to improve the educational outcomes of learners from ethnic minorities and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Lessons on the cultural heritage of black, Asian and other ethnic minority groups were now a mandatory part of the curriculum. While certain groups of ethnic minority students were outperforming their white peers, the results of other groups, especially Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students, remained concerning. Specific guidance on supporting those students had therefore been developed in consultation with the relevant communities. Statutory anti-bullying guidance would be updated later in 2024 to take account of recent data on learners' experiences of bullying.

85. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the new Government had announced its intention to ensure that ethnic minorities were covered by the equal pay regime and introduce a requirement for large employers to report on their ethnic minority pay gap. The Equality Act 2010 provided a robust framework for tackling direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimization on a range of grounds, including race and ethnicity.

86. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that new information boards had been installed to explain the background of old monuments that could be interpreted as celebrating individuals who had been involved in the transatlantic slave trade.

87. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the new Government would give careful consideration to the matter of reparations for the country's role in the transatlantic slave trade. With regard to the conflict in the Gaza Strip, the Government continued to call for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, an increase in humanitarian aid to Gaza and compliance with international humanitarian law, in addition to supporting a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-State solution.

88. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that, in the year ending in March 2024, a total of 40 children aged 17 years and under had been arrested for terrorism-related activities, marking a 5 per cent increase on the previous year. The new Government had recently established a task force to address the issues contributing to child poverty and a mission to ensure that an individual's background would not determine their chances of success in life.

89. **Mr. Kut** said that he wished to call on the State party to tackle its challenges head-on and show the political will needed to overcome its persistent problems.

90. **A representative of the United Kingdom** said that the delegation would provide the Committee with additional written information after the meeting. The British Government was fully committed to building a fairer country and taking the action required to address racial inequalities in the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom, the British Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies. The United Kingdom was a country that embraced difference and encouraged individuals to be proud of their identity; the Government looked forward to working with the Committee to ensure that that was the case for everyone.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.