



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 114th session

### Summary record of the 3113th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 27 November 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Balcerzak

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article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

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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)*

*Twenty-fifth periodic report of Ecuador* ([CERD/C/ECU/25](#); [CERD/C/ECU/Q/25](#)) *(continued)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Ecuador joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Tlemçani** (Country Rapporteur) said that, in the light of reports that many Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian people continued to live in poverty and face racial discrimination and exclusion in areas such as access to justice, land, clean water, education, healthcare, housing and jobs, he would be grateful if the delegation could provide information on the specific measures taken to combat structural discrimination against Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio communities as part of the National Lifelong Development Plan 2017–2021; the tangible results of inclusive and identity-sensitive development policies for those groups; and the way in which those policies took into account specific cultural needs. He would also welcome information on the extent to which anti-poverty programmes had improved access to employment, social security programmes, housing, healthcare and education for the aforementioned groups; the indicators used to measure the effectiveness of such programmes on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by those groups; and specific initiatives to promote employment and economic security in marginalized communities. In that connection, he also wished to know what measures had been taken to combat intersectional discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and socioeconomic status; how the Government monitored and evaluated the impact of those measures on groups that faced multiple forms of discrimination; and what efforts were being made to include the perspectives of marginalized groups in the design, implementation and evaluation of anti-discrimination policies.
3. The State party's twenty-fifth periodic report ([CERD/C/ECU/25](#)) provided very little information about the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. He would therefore appreciate information on the role of national committees on human mobility in combating discrimination; the policies in place to ensure that migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers did not face discrimination in access to essential services such as healthcare, education and housing; the specific measures taken to prevent refoulement and ensure that asylum cases were assessed in the light of protection needs; the procedures in place to ensure that collective expulsions respected migrants' fundamental rights; the mechanisms established to ensure that asylum-seekers and other persons in need of international protection had fair and effective access to refugee status determination procedures; means of appeal at national level for asylum-seekers whose applications for asylum were rejected; and initiatives to train immigration officials to more effectively identify the international protection needs of migrants and asylum-seekers. Lastly, he would welcome information on the specific measures in place to protect human rights defenders, in particular leaders and defenders of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and Montubio people against acts of violence; mechanisms to ensure a rapid and effective response to the persecution of or harassment and violence against human rights defenders; and the actions taken by the authorities to investigate incidents of violence against human rights defenders and the impact of those investigations on the prevention of such incidents.
4. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the State had prioritized measures to address structural and intersectional discrimination, including collaboration with community radio stations to raise awareness about human rights and violence prevention, especially in remote areas where communication infrastructure was limited. Through the National Agenda for Equality of Nationalities and Peoples, public policies were being developed to close gaps in areas like intercultural health, education, justice, territorial governance and employment, with input from various government and private institutions. In line with the International Decade for People of African Descent, the Government had issued Decree No. 915, reinforcing national policies to recognize, deliver justice to and support the development of Afrodescendent communities. The Government had expanded the institutional presence of the Secretariat of Bilingual Intercultural Education and Ethno-Education and was establishing a national directorate of ethno-education to strengthen Afro-Ecuadorian and

Montubio educational systems. Further efforts included increasing the recruitment of teachers from those communities, developing culturally relevant curricula and promoting sustainable local food practices in schools.

5. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Organic Act on Human Mobility regulated deportation and expulsion processes, ensuring that persons in need of international protection were not deported, expelled or denied entry to the country. Coordination between migration authorities, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility protected persons whose life, liberty or safety was at risk, with procedures in place to initiate refugee or stateless status determination where necessary. Expulsion, which was different from deportation, could occur only after a criminal sanction of more than 5 years of imprisonment, when it had been included as part of that sanction; in such cases, the Ministry of the Interior consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility to ensure that the person to be expelled had not applied for international protection. Collective expulsions were prohibited both constitutionally and legally in Ecuador. The principle of non-refoulement was enshrined in the Organic Act on Human Mobility and was upheld in every immigration control and human mobility process.

6. In 2021, the State had amended the Organic Act on Human Mobility to strengthen protection by including gender-based persecution as grounds for refugee status. During the refugee and statelessness status determination procedures, victims of gender-based violence had the option of being interviewed by either a man or a woman, to minimize the possibility of re-victimization. Measures such as gender-sensitivity training for immigration officers and improved access to online platforms for asylum applications facilitated fair treatment and reduced barriers for those seeking protection. Persons granted international protection received humanitarian and legal assistance and could not be criminally sanctioned by reason of their entry into or presence in the country in an irregular situation. Recognized refugees received an identity card that afforded them equal access to all the rights and services available to nationals. Acts that violated the right to equality, including those committed on the basis of a person's migration status, were punishable under articles 176 and 177 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code.

7. Ecuador had prioritized the regularization of migrants to reduce vulnerabilities and promote social inclusion. Between 2022 and 2024, the country had regularized the status of 96,000 persons, primarily Venezuelans, and initiated a new process to regularize an additional 94,000. In total, 300,000 Venezuelan migrants would have their status regularized, in accordance with high international standards. Healthcare services were also accessible to migrants, with over 4.1 million medical consultations provided to migrants between 2020 and May 2024. The Government had invested in anti-xenophobia campaigns, such as the "One Direction" (Un Solo Rumbo) campaign, under which, between 2016 and 2023, 20,000 persons, including teachers and government officials, had been reached through awareness-raising activities and diverse educational materials had been produced to promote inclusion and diversity.

8. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, while the Constitution recognized the right to protest, allowing peaceful demonstrations and marches, bad actors sometimes disrupted legitimate protests, creating chaos and discrediting the genuine efforts of communities advocating for peace and rights. To restore harmony, the State had occasionally declared states of emergency in response to conflicts, particularly those instigated by terrorist groups seeking destabilization. Those states of emergency had been subject to constitutional review by the Constitutional Court, which had sometimes restricted the measures planned to ensure compliance with constitutional rights. The Court had acknowledged that the country faced significant challenges related to decentralized armed groups connected to international organized crime and equipped with sophisticated weaponry. Those groups perpetuated violence to assert control over specific regions.

9. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that, in paragraph 32 of its concluding observations on the State party's combined twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic reports ([CERD/C/ECU/CO/23-24](#)), the Committee had expressed its concern about administrative barriers that migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees faced in gaining access to healthcare, education, employment, family support programmes and the Human Development Bond cash transfer programme and, in paragraph 33 (c), had recommended removing those barriers and

expediting the registration of refugees and the issuance of identity documents to facilitate their access to basic services. While the information provided by the State party in follow-up to the concluding observations ([CERD/C/ECU/CO/23-24/Add.1](#)) provided information on legislative and other measures adopted to address those barriers, the Committee would welcome additional details on the tangible impact of those measures.

10. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that, since protests by human rights defenders could sometimes be disruptive, she wished to know how the State party balanced the imperative of maintaining public order with the need to protect human rights defenders from violence and harassment, particularly during states of emergency.

11. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Government had taken coordinated measures to facilitate refugee status determination and the issuance of identity cards and to promote the economic and social integration of refugees. The general impact of State policy had been very positive for migrants and refugees alike. Refugee status had been granted to more than 77,000 people, mostly Colombian and Venezuelan nationals. More detailed information on the quantitative and qualitative impact of the measures taken would be provided to the Committee in writing.

12. **A representative of Ecuador** said that article 23 of the Organic Act on the Ombudsman's Office defined human rights defenders as persons or groups who promoted and protected human rights, whether in a professional or individual or collective capacity. The State had reaffirmed its commitment to the protection of human rights and nature by setting up an inter-institutional committee, led by the Ombudsman's Office and the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, to develop a comprehensive policy for the promotion and protection of the rights of human rights defenders. The committee had drafted a concept paper as the basis for the formulation of that policy and was currently gathering information to assess the situation with a view to identifying the problems and conflicts facing human rights defenders.

13. The Government had called for harmony, dialogue and the avoidance of conflict. Ministries engaged directly with local communities and social leaders to hear their views, prevent lawsuits over the mere fact of being human rights defenders and seek solutions to problems. Convening round tables was not always effective, as sometimes the discussions were attended not by genuine community representatives but by other actors with their own agenda. With financial support from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Government had put in place a procedure for the collection of information from human rights defenders through interviews, surveys and focal points. The Attorney General's Office had drawn up a criminal justice policy that ensured access to justice for human rights defenders and their protection during criminal investigations.

14. **Ms. McDougall** said that, notwithstanding efforts to establish formal mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders, it was unclear that the authorities recognized their responsibility to protect those who took to the streets to exercise their right of peaceful assembly and their right to protest. In that context, she wished to know whether it was true that over 300 human rights defenders had been prosecuted at the initiative of foreign mining companies. If so, she would like to know under what circumstances they had been prosecuted and how the State had protected their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

15. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, while the Constitution enshrined the right to resist, that did not mean that human rights defenders were free to commit violence during demonstrations. The exercise of the right to resist required them to engage in dialogue and state their opposition to actions or omissions by the State or private actors. The current reality was that demonstrations were exploited by criminal groups to create conflict with the police. Any citizen who believed that his or her rights had been violated was entitled to take legal action before the competent authority. Public and private companies that had been harmed in some way were entitled to file a criminal complaint. However, the State provided alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation by the Public Defender Service, and some cases had been referred to the Indigenous justice system in order to find alternatives to imprisonment and other harsh penalties.

16. **A representative of Ecuador** said that article 17 of the Organic Code of the Judiciary stated that the administration of justice was a basic and fundamental public service that contributed to upholding respect for the rights enshrined in the Constitution and applicable international human rights treaties. The Ecuadorian courts guaranteed access to justice free of charge and the right of persons to the prompt and impartial protection of their rights and interests. Private companies had not interfered with the administration of justice.

17. **A representative of Ecuador** said that there had been situations in which people believed that their human rights had been infringed, but could not provide details of what exactly had occurred or who was responsible. Some people – usually not community leaders or activists – had claimed to be victims in order to raise their profile.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.*

18. **Mr. Sibande** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee welcomed the good practices that had been adopted and the positive steps taken to guarantee the rights of people of African descent. It particularly appreciated the launch in Ecuador, in 2016, of the International Decade for People of African Descent, and noted the provisions under articles 1 and 58 of the Constitution that established an intercultural State and recognized the collective rights of people of African descent. However, Afro-Ecuadorians continued to suffer from racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including Afrophobia. He would be interested to know what steps were being taken to ensure that laws and policies for the promotion and protection of the rights of people of African descent were properly implemented and enforced. He would also like to know what measures were being taken to reduce high poverty levels among people of African descent and to ensure their equal access to education, healthcare, housing and economic opportunity.

19. The Committee was concerned at reports of the State's failure to properly monitor and punish industries – notably the forestry, palm oil, mining and oil industries – that were responsible for the most serious human rights violations. It would appreciate information on the activities carried out by multinational companies, particularly in the oil and gas sector, in areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and Montubio people. It would like to know what had been done to prevent the undue influence of those companies over the State. The delegation might provide information on the number of court cases involving persons from Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio communities living in the vicinity of extractive operations, and on the outcome of such cases. The Committee would also welcome information on measures taken to prevent environmental degradation. Given the reported contamination of a river in Esmeraldas Province that was used by Afro-Ecuadorians for drinking, bathing and washing clothes, the Committee wished to know what steps had been taken to ensure that Afro-Ecuadorian communities enjoyed the right to safe drinking water and a clean environment.

20. As the Committee had been informed that some persons of African descent had been prosecuted in a bid to silence opposition to extractive projects, he wished to know what efforts the State had made to ensure that activists, human rights defenders and civil society organizations could continue to advocate for the rights of people of African descent, Indigenous Peoples and Montubio people living in areas where extractive industries were present.

21. Despite the constitutional guarantee of the right to land, the Committee had been informed that thousands of hectares of ancestral land had been awarded to multinational companies for extractive activities. It would therefore be grateful for information on efforts to promote and protect the right to land of Afro-Ecuadorians, and on any measures taken to ensure that State officials stood on the side of vulnerable people and not that of wealthy multinational companies.

22. Another concern related to impunity and human rights violations committed by the Japanese company Furukawa Plantaciones C.A. According to reports, Ecuadorians of African descent had been working for the company for decades on abaca plantations in the Provinces of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Los Ríos. Workers did not have formal employment contracts or social security benefits; were at high risk of eviction because they lived on land owned by the company; and endured deplorable living conditions in makeshift camps with no access to drinking water, electricity, lighting or toilet facilities. Other

allegations related to child labour; lack of healthcare, including cases in which workers had been mutilated or sustained physical disabilities as a result of occupational accidents; and the failure to register the births of children born on the farms, resulting in the denial of their right to a nationality. Although in 2019 the authorities had ordered the company to suspend its activities, it appeared to have resumed operations. The delegation might therefore provide an update on the current situation and explain how the State promoted, protected and upheld the rights of people of African descent living in the provinces of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas and Los Ríos.

23. Lastly, Afro-Ecuadorian women faced intersectional discrimination on account of their ethnicity and gender. A 2019 survey had found that they were more likely than other Ecuadorian women to have experienced violence. The Committee would therefore appreciate information on measures being taken to address gender-based violence, especially against women who belonged to vulnerable groups, and intersectional discrimination against Afrodescendent, Indigenous and Montubio women.

24. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, under international law, the State was obliged to conduct an independent and objective investigation into any allegations of violence against human rights defenders. In that regard, the Attorney General's Office had proposed to establish, within its Directorate of Human Rights and Citizen Participation, a department for the investigation of illegitimate use of force, whose officers would be operationally independent of the police. The Directorate had delivered training to police officers on the use of force, human rights and international standards, including the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death. Moreover, the Judicial Training Academy had provided training on human rights and environmental issues to judges, prosecutors and other justice officials. In 2023 and early 2024, some 5,700 persons had been trained in human rights. In 2024, the Government had published a handbook on human rights and the legitimate use of force in police procedures, which set out guidelines on policing from a human rights perspective. In accordance with article 62 of the Organic Act on the Legitimate Use of Force, the police provided its officers with comprehensive continuous training on subjects related to the use of force, ensuring that they understood the role of the police in protecting the free exercise of rights.

25. In 2019, his country had joined the Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean project, which was funded by the European Union and run by the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The purpose of the project was to encourage companies in the nine participant countries to adopt responsible business practices that were compliant with international standards. Since 2020, training on the matter had been delivered to more than 250 public officials, civil society representatives, entrepreneurs and academics. The Government had developed a national baseline study on the topic, which covered aspects such as gender equality, the role of the State as an economic actor and a guarantor of human and labour rights, access to justice, the protection of human rights defenders and environmental activists, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and Montubio people, the right to free, prior and informed consultation with respect to extractive activities and the use of force by State agents. The results of the study would be used to develop a national plan of action on business and human rights.

26. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Government had adopted various measures to combat the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio women and promote their inclusion, well-being and enjoyment of fundamental rights. In the area of education, for instance, it ran intercultural and bilingual programmes aimed at increasing the number of such women who had access to and remained in school. Women belonging to those groups who lived in rural areas were able to participate in training courses specifically tailored to their needs. Steps had been taken to create spaces that would help them participate in all levels of political life and to build their capacity to do so. Provisions on the promotion of gender equality were contained in the Organic Act on Elections and Political Organizations. Projects had been run to encourage entrepreneurship among Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio women and increase their employability, with a focus on those in rural areas. In the health sector, policies had

been drawn up to guarantee their access to culturally sensitive services, including sexual and reproductive health services. Despite those efforts, the Government recognized that significant challenges remained in eradicating the structural barriers faced by the women concerned.

27. A number of government bodies formed part of the Comprehensive National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women, which was responsible for coordinating government-wide efforts to address the issue and formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating relevant regulations, policies and programmes. Its work to monitor and evaluate those instruments was based on an intersectoral and intercultural approach.

28. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Government was seeking to strengthen the State institutions responsible for protecting and promoting women's rights. The Ministry of Women and Human Rights had 45 comprehensive protection offices that provided women with psychological support, social assistance and access to legal aid. In 2022, those offices had helped almost 66,000 women, adolescents and children. The Ministry also ran five shelters that offered temporary refuge to women victims of violence who lacked a safe support network, in addition to 22 centres delivering interdisciplinary support to women, adolescent and child victims of domestic and sexual violence. The shelters and centres were managed in cooperation with a number of human rights organizations with which the Ministry had entered into public-private partnerships. Eight Purple Centres had been opened to prevent gender-based violence against women and deliver comprehensive care to victims, with a focus on women's empowerment, the restoration of their rights and the promotion of gender equality.

29. In 2022, around \$747 million had been allocated to the government bodies that formed part of the Comprehensive National System for the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women. For 2023, that figure had stood at \$512 million as of August. The Government had made significant progress in adopting laws that guaranteed the rights of women, in particular their right to a violence-free life. In 2021, for example, gender-related persecution had been incorporated into the Organic Act on Human Mobility as grounds for granting refugee status.

30. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Ministry of Education facilitated the school enrolment and transfer of Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and migrant students of all nationalities through an online application.

31. The Government was working to tackle poverty by combating transnational crime, running employment and training programmes for young people and supporting economic recovery through the Opportunity Creation Plan 2021–2025. Vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, were entitled to receive human development cash transfers designed to prevent them from falling into extreme poverty. One of the objectives of the National Development Plan 2023–2025 was to reduce the rate of extreme poverty from 9.81 to 9.12 per cent and the rate of poverty, as measured by basic unmet needs, from 30.84 to 30.11 per cent over the period covered. The Plan provided for actions to improve the population's living conditions, such as the promotion of equal access to health services, housing and social support, the development of employability skills, the facilitation of access to financing and the inclusion of actors from the grass-roots and solidarity-based economy.

32. The results of the 2022 census had pointed to an increase in access to basic services. The rate of access to water from the public network had risen from 72 per cent in 2010 to 84.2 per cent in 2022. Sewage system coverage rose from 53.6 to 65.8 per cent over that same period, and the rate of waste collection increased by 11.7 percentage points, reaching 88.7 per cent. The Organic Act on Social Housing established the legal framework for the protection of the right of all citizens to a decent and adequate home, granting priority to vulnerable families.

33. With regard to access to food, a technical secretariat had been established to prevent and reduce chronic malnutrition among children. The purpose of the Organic Act on the System of Food Sovereignty was to guarantee food security and self-sufficiency by promoting campesino, artisanal, agroecological and family farming. The implementation of a national strategy to support women farmers had enabled around 5,700 such women to obtain access to marketing channels. New and improved drainage and irrigation systems had

been installed on the farms of some 5,600 women, and almost 4,000 women in rural areas had been trained in sustainable farming techniques. Flexible credit amounting to more than \$19 million had been provided to approximately 7,500 rural women.

34. **Mr. Sibande** said that he would appreciate a response to his earlier questions on abortion and the impact of the activities of multinational companies on the rights of vulnerable groups. The delegation might comment on reports that the authorities had failed to respect the result of the referendum of 20 August 2023, in which the population had voted to halt oil drilling in the Yasuní National Park. He wished to know why Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio people tended to be employed in a limited number of sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing, and what prevented them from obtaining jobs in other areas. It would be helpful to hear about the steps being taken to ensure that Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Ecuadorians, Montubio people, migrants, asylum-seekers and members of the Roma community had access to all levels of education. An update on the impact of the “Homes for All” project on the Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and Roma communities would be welcome.

35. **Ms. Shepherd** said that, in view of complaints from Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent regarding the use of racial profiling by law enforcement officials in the State party, she would like to know to what extent the State party had made use of the Committee’s general recommendation No. 36 (2020) to address that issue. It would be useful to learn how effective the Comprehensive Organic Act on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women had been in addressing gender-based violence. She wondered whether the State party considered that people of African descent who felt that their socioeconomic rights continued to be affected by the historical disadvantages they had suffered could be entitled to reparations.

36. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she wished to know what measures the State party had taken to give effect to the Committee’s opinion concerning communication No. 61/2017, which had been submitted by Yaku Sacha Pérez Guartambel in relation to the refusal by the State party to recognize his marriage on grounds that it had been officiated by an Indigenous authority.

37. **Mr. Diaby** said that the response to his question put at the 3111th meeting regarding the drop in the representation of people of African descent in the general population census, which the delegation suggested was owing to how people self-identified, raised questions about the reliability of the census records themselves. He was concerned that a further drop in the share of the population identifying themselves as people of African descent would further compromise the quality of the records. More details on the overrepresentation of people of African descent in prisons, with 4 per cent of the general population, according to the latest census, accounting for 21 per cent of the prison population, would be welcome. He would like to know what steps were being taken by the health authorities to care for persons whose communities had been the victims of environmental racism, with the systematic contamination of their surroundings and intimidation of human rights defenders and environmental activists seeking reparation or healthcare to deal with the consequences. He wondered whether Afro-Ecuadorian athletes who had been subjected to racism, in particular the footballer Felipe Caicedo, had been supported by the State party’s authorities.

38. The Committee would welcome an update on the case of Leonidas Iza, the leader of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador who had been arrested in June 2022, and an explanation of the specific charges against him. He wished to know whether all persons who identified as belonging to Indigenous communities were able to enjoy their collective rights and what the State party was doing to protect such rights in disputes between those communities and mining and agricultural companies.

39. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would be interested to hear about the outcomes of the meetings held between the State party’s authorities and representatives of Afro-Ecuadorian community organizations in order to examine matters linked to the International Decade for People of African Descent. Did the State party plan to organize any relevant activities going forward?

40. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that, in view of reports that large extractive companies in Esmeraldas Province employed armed security guards, he would like to know whether the State party required persons who wished to purchase and keep a gun to obtain a licence in



order to do so. It had also been brought to the Committee's attention that the State party's authorities had mostly abandoned their efforts to maintain security in that province. Accordingly, it would be helpful to know how many police officers in the province continued to be employed by the Government.

41. **Ms. McDougall** said that she would appreciate clarification of whether foreign companies carrying out mining activities and running palm oil plantations had been accused by Indigenous Peoples of encroaching on their ancestral lands without their free, prior and informed consent. It would be interesting to learn whether it was a legal requirement for environmental impact studies to be conducted before such companies were granted licences and then periodically while they operated.

42. **A representative of Ecuador** said that the Furukawa case was being dealt with by the relevant administrative and judicial bodies, in line with national law. The Constitutional Court would shortly issue a ruling on the matter. Investigations were ongoing into claims of trafficking in persons for the purposes of labour exploitation. In connection with the violations of labour and other rights, the Ministry of Labour had imposed administrative sanctions on the company, including fines totalling \$185,840. Approximately 90 children of the company's workers had been enrolled in the education system, although some of them had since dropped out, and 235 children had received late-registration birth certificates thanks to the efforts of mobile units of the Civil Registry that visited remote areas of the country.

43. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, in connection with the case of Yaku Sacha Pérez Guartambel, the issue of registration of ancestral marriages had been considered by an inter-agency working group composed of representatives of the Ministry of Human Rights, the National Council for the Equality of Peoples and Nationalities and the civil registration authorities. The working group had determined that Mr. Pérez Guartambel's marriage had never been registered. As a result of the precedent set by the case, changes had been made to the system, and it was now possible for ancestral marriages to be registered by the relevant authorities.

44. **A representative of Ecuador** said that, in May 2023, the Constitutional Court had approved the wording of a question to be put to the people in a referendum on halting the extraction of petroleum in Block 43 in Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini. Although the population had voted in favour of ending the extraction, local communities and the companies involved had made attempts to block the Government's efforts to give effect to the decision of the electorate. Questions remained concerning the funding that had been provided for activities that were now to be halted, the budget required for social security payments and the defining of a contingency plan to offset the income that had been expected to be generated by the extraction activities, which was estimated at more than \$17 billion, and the impact, in terms of lost development investment, on the Indigenous Peoples living in the area. In line with the plan set out by the Ministry of Energy and Mines, 9 of the 10 extraction points in Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini would be closed before the end of 2024.

45. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she would welcome clarification of whether peaceful street protests had been banned.

46. **A representative of Ecuador** said that peaceful protests were not prohibited. Article 98 of the Constitution upheld the right of resistance in cases where citizens felt that their rights had been violated. On some occasions, however, despite the best intentions of protest leaders who called for demonstrations to remain peaceful, organized groups took advantage of the situation to cause damage to public and private property. In such instances, the authorities had to take appropriate action. The Government's preferred method for dealing with dissatisfaction was to seek dialogue with protest leaders.

47. Ecuador was committed to continuing its efforts to eradicate racial discrimination and achieve peace and harmony. The Government was seeking to reduce the levels of insecurity that it had inherited from previous administrations and was confident that it would be possible to build a safe country where individual and collective rights were respected.

*The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.*