



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Thirty-second session

### Summary record of the 760th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 4 March 2025, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Kim Mi Yeon

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

### **Consideration of reports submitted by Parties to the Convention under article 35**

*(continued)*

*Combined second and third periodic reports of the Dominican Republic  
([CRPD/C/DOM/2-3](#); [CRPD/C/DOM/QPR/2-3](#))*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Dominican Republic joined the meeting.*

2. **A representative of the Dominican Republic**, introducing his country's combined second and third periodic reports ([CRPD/C/DOM/2-3](#)), said that the Dominican Republic was committed to building a society that was more inclusive, equal and accessible to all persons and to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. Recent measures to that end had included the adoption of Act No. 43-23, which accorded official recognition to sign language in the Dominican Republic, and Act No. 34-23 on services, inclusion and protection for persons with autism spectrum disorder.

3. Over the course of 2024, a process of consultation with State organizations and civil society had been undertaken with the aim of identifying progress that had been made and challenges that remained in the implementation of Act. No. 5-13, the general law on equal rights of persons with disabilities. The outcomes of that process would determine the content of the National Plan on Accessibility for Inclusion for the period 2025–2035. Standing working groups would be established in the areas of healthcare and rehabilitation, universal accessibility, inclusive education, employment, culture and leisure, and social protection that would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of inclusive policies and coordinating institutional efforts to ensure that inclusion was an everyday reality for all persons with disabilities.

4. Sixty per cent of the 32 institutions that made up the National Board of Directors of the National Council on Disability were organizations of persons with disabilities. The Government supported training and capacity-building measures and provided funding for programmes and projects implemented by civil society in the disability sector.

5. In accordance with the State's obligation to ensure that the health of persons with disabilities was protected and that they had equal access to quality services and social protection, the Government was carrying out policies such as the Disability Assessment, Registration and Certification System, under which approximately 6,200 adults and 8,350 minors had been certified and registered as having a disability. The number of voluntary registrations of adults had increased by more than 360 per cent since 2019. Over 15,000 persons with disabilities and older persons had been granted solidarity allowances of approximately 6,000 Dominican pesos (RD\$) per month, an amount that represented 60 per cent of the public sector wage. Access to the National Fund for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities had been facilitated and more than 4,400 minors now received a monthly subsidy of RD\$ 6,000. It was anticipated that the number of households that benefited from the programme, which had risen from 3,000 to 7,000 over a period of two years, would rise to 12,000 in 2025.

6. Improving protection for women and girls with disabilities, who faced greater risks of violence, discrimination and exclusion, was an urgent priority. The Government had made significant progress in adapting shelters for women who were victims of violence to ensure that they were accessible, including through the removal of physical barriers, the provision of material in Braille and Easy Read formats for women with visual and intellectual impairments, and the training of staff in sign language to ensure that deaf women could obtain access to support.

7. As part of efforts to improve infrastructure at all hospitals in the country, 54 per cent of hospitals had been refurbished and made more accessible and work on a further 17 per cent was ongoing. Approximately 70 newborns with hearing impairments had benefited from a cochlear implant programme that had been launched in December 2022. Those and many other initiatives had been strengthened through inter-institutional agreements between the National Health Service and organizations of and for persons with disabilities.

8. Significant progress had been made in ensuring that persons with disabilities had inclusive and barrier-free access to education. Fifty adapted buses had been added to the fleet of the school transportation programme to ensure that all children were provided with safe and free access to educational facilities throughout the country. The strategy for ensuring reasonable accommodation in the education system had been improved in line with Ordinance No. 05-2024, which set out guidelines for the effective inclusion of children with disabilities in schools by providing one-on-one support and specialized technical assistance. Policies had been implemented that facilitated equal access to education for children with intellectual, visual, hearing and physical impairments. A key initiative for providing technical support, training and adapted equipment and materials for improving accessibility and equal opportunities in the classroom had facilitated the elimination of physical and communication barriers. A total of 27,465 children with disabilities had benefited from efforts to improve the accessibility of infrastructure in mainstream schools. The network of special schools for deaf persons had been improved by promoting a specialized approach to teaching that addressed the individual needs of students. Under a programme for facilitating the transition into adulthood, students with disabilities were able to remain in education until the age of 24 to acquire the skills necessary to ensure their autonomy and inclusion in the labour market.

9. In 2022, the Government had established a programme for promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sport. Its aim was to train coaches, teachers and physical education professionals in adaptive sports to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities and promote the Paralympic Movement and Paralympic events throughout the country. Since 2022, approximately 400 people had been trained and 750 people in nine provinces had been made aware of the importance of including persons with disabilities in community sport and leisure.

10. The Constitution provided that work was a right, a duty and a social function that was to be exercised with the protection and assistance of the State, and that any kind of discrimination in access to work was prohibited. In the public sector, the Ministry of Public Administration was working with State institutions to identify public servants with disabilities in order to ensure that they received the necessary reasonable accommodation, to evaluate the physical accessibility of government institutions, to include disability indicators in the public management and evaluation system that monitored 186 State institutions, and to monitor compliance with the employment quota for persons with disabilities. In the private sector, the Ministry of Labour had conducted awareness-raising activities, trained a body of inspectors pursuant to Act No. 5-13 and updated the employment registration system to enable employers to register their employees with disabilities. Between 2020 and 2023, a total of 44,160 employees with disabilities had been registered out of a total of 3,606,250 registered employees. The information provided would guide public policy and make it possible to provide relevant training and grants, match employers with jobseekers with disabilities and conduct inclusive job fairs through the National Employment Service. As part of a programme entitled “For Talent” (Por Talento), more than 400 persons with disabilities had received support to join the labour market. Tax incentives had been introduced for businesses that employed persons with disabilities.

11. Efforts had been made to improve electoral access, promote participation in political leadership and strengthen relevant consultation mechanisms for persons with disabilities with a view to upholding the rights to participation in political and public life and access to justice, which were enshrined in Act No. 5-13. Approximately 600 sign language interpreters had been trained to work in courtrooms, and judges, prosecutors and public defenders had received training on the rights of persons with disabilities and accessibility mechanisms, which had resulted in fewer instances of revictimization. Courthouses were being adapted to make them more accessible by installing ramps, signs in Braille and accessible digital systems.

12. Engagement in multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the Ibero-American Programme on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had enabled the Government not only to achieve consistent progress internally, but also to project its commitment to stronger and more equal societies internationally. The Dominican Republic was committed to strengthening international cooperation in all forms, including securing investment in

strategic programmes and exchanging information and resources with the private sector and civil society.

*Articles 1–9 and 31–33*

13. **Mr. Makni** (Coordinator, Country Task Force), noting that the definition of disability and some of the terminology contained in the State Party's laws were not aligned with the Convention, said that he wished to know whether the State Party had created a mechanism for harmonizing its domestic laws with the Convention. He wondered whether the State Party planned to establish a strategy for persons with disabilities that was informed by reliable statistical information and allocated a sufficient budget. It would be helpful to learn more about the system for assessing disabilities in the Dominican Republic, including whether it was based on the medical or social model of disability and whether it was carried out in line with the Convention. Given that the State Party had reported that funding for women with disabilities was insufficient and would be reviewed, he wondered what steps were being taken to meet the needs of that and other groups of persons with disabilities.

14. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that Act No. 5-13 was fully harmonized with the Convention. Some laws adopted prior to that Act that contained incorrect terminology and provided for incorrect approaches to disability had since been superseded by more recent ministerial ordinances and orders that had the force of law. For example, provisions relating to special education in the Education Act (No. 66/97), which was currently being revised, had been superseded by more recent ordinances that related to the transition to mainstream schools.

15. With regard to statistics, the combined second and third periodic reports did not reflect the results of the national census carried out in 2022 that had included the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning. That census had been delayed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The data collected were now being analysed and would be included in the next report.

16. The National Council on Disability invested US\$ 5 million annually in social support programmes run by organizations working with and for persons with disabilities. The Government provided a range of benefits for different groups of persons with disabilities, including allowances to help meet housing and other needs.

17. Any shortcomings identified as a result of the analysis of Act No. 5-13 that had been conducted in 2024, including in relation to the scope of allowance programmes, would be addressed in the National Plan on Accessibility for Inclusion, which would be prepared with the involvement of the same government agencies and civil society organizations that had contributed to the analysis.

18. The National Council on Disability, which comprised representatives of both government ministries and civil society organizations, was required by law to meet four times a year but met up to eight times a year when necessary. Under the Constitution, civil society must play a role in the development of government policies, and that requirement was respected in practice.

19. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that Act No. 5-13 established the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation in schools and recognized the right of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunities in both public and private sector workplaces. It also set a minimum hiring quota for State institutions. The Government had made progress in educating justice officials on the rights of persons with disabilities, in increasing the accessibility of courthouses and in providing sign language interpretation services. Act No. 43-23 gave official recognition to sign language interpretation was mandatory during certain official events, and there was an official sign language dictionary.

20. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the Ministry of Education had adopted an inclusive education policy, under Ordinance No. 05-2024, that benefited students up to 24 years of age. With regard to statistics, the Ministry had developed an application that indicated what types of disabilities students had at the different levels of education, and an application under development for the School Management Information System would contain information on all types of disability and the accommodation each required.

21. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the Disability Assessment, Registration and Certification System was based on a biopsychosocial approach and incorporated the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. In 2023, 55 women with disabilities or with dependents with disabilities had received the women's housing allowance. Additional financial assistance was available through the moving allowance, the continuing housing allowance and a tax-based allowance.

22. Mothers caring for children with disabilities were a priority group under the National Policy on Caregiving. The Communities of Care pilot project had been rolled out in two communities. Under the Strategic Plan for a Violence-Free Life for Women, persons who worked with victims of violence had been given training in sign language. Shelters for victims of gender-based violence were physically accessible.

23. **Mr. Makni** said that further efforts should be made to harmonize legislation predating Act No. 5-13 with the Act and the Convention. He wished to know how many women with disabilities, beyond the 55 mentioned by the delegation, were entitled to receive the available allowances. It would be helpful for any statistics provided by the delegation to be disaggregated by disability and gender.

24. He would like to find out what steps the State Party had taken to raise awareness of children's rights among children with disabilities, parents and professionals working with children, and what mechanisms were in place to allow children with disabilities to express their views on issues that affected them, to participate fully in decision-making on such issues and to report cases of abuse, whether at home or at school. It would be helpful to have demographic information on children with disabilities. He would appreciate further details regarding the scope of social protection in the State Party.

25. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that any areas of overlap in the laws on disability and any elements of earlier laws that were inconsistent with Act No. 5-13 would be addressed in the National Plan on Accessibility for Inclusion.

26. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that various government entities played a role in the child protection system, including as members of the National Council for Children and Adolescents. The Attorney General's Office had a special unit for children's affairs. Training was provided on safeguards for children with disabilities in court proceedings, including the use of a Gesell chamber when a child had to give testimony. The justice, health and education systems worked together to ensure the early detection of cases of violence against children. Any report of the abuse or suspected abuse of a child must be investigated by the special unit of the Attorney General's Office, which must also take steps to protect the child. The case would automatically be heard by a children's court, which would order any protection measures needed.

27. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that statistics on the allowances received by women with disabilities would be provided in writing.

28. **Mr. Makni** asked what the State Party was doing to raise awareness of the Convention and the rights of persons with disabilities, what types of awareness-raising materials it used, whether the materials were issued in accessible formats and whether any awareness-raising efforts were led by persons with disabilities themselves.

29. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the awareness-raising workshops for public and private institutions offered by the National Council on Disability were delivered by Council employees with disabilities. Persons with disabilities accounted for 30 per cent of the Council's staff, and the Council's awareness-raising unit included persons with various types of disability. The Council supported awareness-raising programmes run by civil society organizations, which often focused on a specific kind of disability.

30. The Council's awareness-raising unit had prepared a guide to proper terminology. All of the materials developed by the Council were compatible with screen readers and available in Easy Read format. The self-paced courses available on the Council's digital platform, which addressed the dignified treatment of persons with disabilities, universal accessibility, labour market inclusion and accessible tourism, all met accessibility standards.

31. **Mr. Makni** said that he wished to know the status of the standards that the National Council on Disability had been developing in partnership with the Dominican Quality Standards Institute. He would also like to know to what extent public buildings were accessible, what measures were in place to facilitate the access of persons with visual, hearing or intellectual impairments to information and whether the State Party planned to carry out a study on the level of accessibility of the public transportation system. Information on the status and scope of the road map for the development of inclusive municipalities would also be appreciated.

32. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that most State institutions had already been invited to carry out a self-assessment under the National Accessibility Evaluation System put in place by the National Council on Disability, and the Council was following up with a priority group comprising roughly 25 per cent of all public institutions. The self-assessment reports that the institutions would issue were intended to help guide their operational planning and serve as a basis for amending future budgets to incorporate measures related to reasonable accommodation and accessibility. She wished to draw the Committee's attention to the various Dominican technical standards addressing accessibility discussed in paragraphs 43 to 45 of the State Party's combined second and third periodic reports.

33. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability had begun carrying out awareness-raising initiatives in the 14 municipalities where the road map for the development of inclusive municipalities was being implemented on a priority basis. The road map, which had been launched as a pilot project in 2023, was now being opened to all municipalities with the goals of identifying the needs of persons with disabilities and meeting those needs through both central and local government services.

34. **Mr. Makni** said that he would welcome information on the implementation of articles 140 to 143 of Act No. 5-13, which set out the penalties to be imposed for violations of that law. In particular, he wished to know how many penalties had been handed down and by what bodies.

35. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the delegation would provide the Committee with a list of the penalties imposed under the above-mentioned articles in writing. The National Council on Disability sought to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities among the institutions responsible for handling violations of Act No. 5-13 and submitted recommendations and requests to them.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.25 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.*

36. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** asked how many women with disabilities had received support under the National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2020–2030.

37. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** (Country Task Force) said that the delegation might wish to clarify whether private companies were obliged to ensure that a certain percentage of their buildings were accessible to persons with disabilities and describe the penalties handed down to companies that failed to comply with accessibility and universal design standards.

38. **Ms. Fefoame** said that she wished to know what steps had been taken by the National Institute for Comprehensive Early Childhood Services to ensure the inclusion of children with disabilities in its activities. It would be helpful to learn how the Institute defined the term "vulnerable" and how it identified the most vulnerable families.

39. **Ms. Dondovdorj** said that she would appreciate information on the level of involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in efforts to monitor the accessibility of information and communications technologies and the extent to which accessibility was taken into account in the public procurement of such technologies.

40. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that no quotas relating to the accessibility of buildings were in place. Steps were being taken to ensure that the Ministry of Housing and Buildings granted construction permits only for those buildings that were compliant with the regulation governing barrier-free architectural designs. The National Council on Disability issued reports on buildings that were in breach of accessibility standards, in response to which some structures were being demolished and replaced. The

Council was working with the competent bodies to ensure that accessibility standards were taken into account in urban development and infrastructure projects.

41. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the Ministry of Education had compiled a register of students with disabilities who were enrolled in the public education system, grouping them by age, sex, disability type and level of education.

42. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the competent bodies were working to disseminate good practices in the area of accessibility, with a view to developing more inclusive institutions that would subsequently ensure that accessibility issues were mainstreamed across all public policies.

43. All government agencies were taking steps to enhance their compliance with laws and recommendations on accessible communication. Official documents were starting to be produced in Braille. Audiovisual communications were now accompanied by subtitles and sign language interpretation, which was also being provided at certain events. The agencies' efforts to introduce such services were being closely monitored by the Ministry of Public Administration.

44. The Government was currently implementing legislation that would ensure that all State websites were accessible to persons with visual impairments and, at a later stage, to those who were hard of hearing or had an intellectual disability. Steps were being taken to assist State institutions in introducing software that was designed for use by civil servants with visual impairments, which had helped bring about an increase in the recruitment of such persons and facilitated their inclusion in the workplace.

45. **Ms. Gamio Ríos** said that she would appreciate a response to her earlier question and would like to know what criteria the National Council on Disability used to evaluate buildings and whether it was empowered to impose fines for non-compliance with accessibility standards.

46. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity 2020–2030 did not provide for direct forms of support, such as subsidies or other allowances, for women with disabilities. The focus had instead been on the development of indicators to evaluate the proportion of such women who were enrolled in the disability insurance scheme and the number of women with disabilities of childbearing age who had made use of preventive sexual and reproductive health services. Indicators had also been established to determine the number of campaigns that had been run to raise awareness of the rights of women with disabilities.

47. **Ms. Gabrilli** asked how many children with disabilities were currently out of school and whether those who were enrolled in classes had access to assistive technologies.

48. **Ms. Placencia Porrero** said that it would be useful to learn whether the State Party ran awareness-raising campaigns specifically for persons with disabilities who had a low level of income or education, with a view to informing them of their rights and the mechanisms, laws and policies in place to ensure their enjoyment of those rights. Information on the accessibility of social media would also be welcome.

49. She wished to learn whether steps were being taken to ensure that public bidding processes were accessible and whether the State Party had earmarked funds for the delivery of training for engineers, architects and other professionals in order to promote the implementation of its numerous accessibility standards. The delegation might also wish to describe any measures taken to guarantee the accessibility of public transport.

50. **Mr. Makni** said that he would like to know whether persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were consulted during the negotiation of bilateral or international cooperation agreements. It would be interesting to learn whether the State Party planned to seek accreditation for the institution of the Ombudsman from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Clarification of the legal status of the National Council on Disability would be appreciated.

51. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that a centre had been established to produce educational material in Braille and manage the provision of sign language interpretation in schools, thereby supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities in

mainstream classes. The Government had also worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to develop material for persons with visual or hearing impairments and Easy Read resources for persons with autism.

52. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability was working with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology to promote inclusive education and enhance the accessibility of educational institutions. A number of universities had committed to providing sign language interpretation and introducing technology to assist students with visual impairments. Training on the use of that technology had been delivered to children and adolescents with disabilities. Several civil society organizations offered lessons on the use of assistive technologies to adults with disabilities who wished to enter higher education and taught sign language to those who were hard of hearing. Persons who attended such classes were entitled to receive educational grants and support in finding a job.

53. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability had established a department that was devoted to raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities among public and private institutions, civil society organizations and persons with disabilities themselves. The Council also had its own legal assistance service, through which persons with disabilities could seek information on their rights and the services available to them. Several programmes designed to help persons with disabilities lead an independent life were being run by the Government and civil society organizations. One such programme sought to pair persons with disabilities and their families with others in a similar situation so that they could provide each other with mutual support. While social media platforms were generally accessible for persons with disabilities, efforts were made to ensure that the information published was available in an alternative format where necessary.

54. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that a number of articles of the law establishing the Ombudsman institution were incompatible with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), thus preventing the accreditation of that body by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. A bill that would bring the Ombudsman into line with the Paris Principles was currently in preparation.

55. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability had recently signed an agreement that would make it easier for persons with disabilities to participate in public bidding processes and become suppliers to the State. The agreement also established that priority in some public tenders should be given to companies that complied with employment quotas for persons with disabilities and legal provisions relating to accessibility.

56. The National Council on Disability invited civil society organizations to participate in consultations relating to international cooperation in the area of disability. The Council was currently cooperating with civil society to organize the distribution of a large number of assistive devices donated by an international organization. The Council was empowered to monitor institutions and sanction those that failed to comply with regulations on accessibility. It also analysed the laws in force and proposed mechanisms that would allow for closer monitoring of compliance with legislation.

#### *Articles 10–20*

57. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to know whether the Government, in consultation with persons with disabilities, had conducted an assessment of the degree of support afforded to persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and the availability of information in accessible formats. If such an assessment had been conducted, it would be interesting to know whether the Government's emergency plans or services had been amended in the light of the results.

58. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that, in 2019, the National Council on Disability had carried out a study of the social and economic impact of exclusion from the labour market on persons with disabilities. In conducting the study, focus groups of persons with different types of disability had been established to discuss the various kinds of barriers to employment that they faced. The information gathered from the study had been used as



the starting point for the development of policies to enhance access to the labour market for persons with disabilities.

59. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that it was still not clear whether any measures had been taken to assess the support provided to persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

60. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that, in 2020, in response to the pandemic, the National Council on Disability had published guidelines on the provision of healthcare and support to persons with disabilities in situations of risk. The guidelines contained proposals for reasonable accommodation and assistive devices that might be provided to persons with different types of disability in emergency situations. Persons with certain types of disability whose condition made it necessary for them to go outside had been exempted from the requirement to remain at home during the pandemic. Guidelines on the priority evacuation of certain groups of persons during natural disasters had been drawn up.

61. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to know whether the guidelines mentioned by the delegation had been developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and whether they had been officially adopted and made available to the general public.

62. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the guidelines had been published on the website of the National Council on Disability, as had a report on the actions taken by the Council during the pandemic.

63. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that it was still not clear whether persons with disabilities received any kind of financial support in emergency situations.

64. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that, during the pandemic, the Government had launched a programme under which employed persons had received a proportion of their income when it had not been possible for them to work. Emergency vouchers had been distributed to persons in need during the pandemic.

65. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he would welcome information on any supported decision-making mechanisms or services that made it easier for persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities to exercise their legal capacity.

66. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability provided legal assistance to persons with disabilities and their families. The Council was currently developing a project to promote the right of persons with disabilities to exercise their legal capacity. The project was currently at the draft stage.

67. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the Government had established a directorate of accessible justice that collaborated with the National Council on Disability to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities who required access to the justice system. Justice officials received training in the dignified treatment of persons with disabilities, including the use of the correct terminology. Measures were being taken to enhance the accessibility of infrastructure.

68. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that departments for promoting accessibility and tackling discrimination had been established within the Public Prosecution Service and protocols and training programmes on attending to persons with disabilities had been developed for the staff of those institutions. The training provided to judges included a specific programme on working with persons with disabilities.

69. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability had instructed its legal department to establish an agreement with the Bar Association with a view to enhancing the provision of legal assistance to persons with disabilities at the local level. Efforts were being made to develop an agreement with the Notary Association to improve the service that notaries provided to persons with disabilities involved in civil or criminal proceedings. Persons who lacked legal representation automatically received legal assistance from the Public Defender Service.

70. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to know whether persons with intellectual disabilities, including Down syndrome or autism, were allowed to manage their own financial affairs and open their own bank accounts. He wondered whether blind persons were allowed

to open bank accounts and sign financial documents without assistance, if they wished to do so.

71. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the aforementioned project relating to legal capacity was intended to remove the barriers that prevented persons with disabilities from exercising that capacity, including in the management of their financial affairs. Consultations were being carried out with civil society to identify the existing barriers in the financial services sector.

72. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to know whether, under article 140 of Act No. 5-13, the National Council on Disability was empowered to bring legal proceedings on behalf of individuals or groups who had suffered harm and whether compensation awarded in connection with such proceedings was paid to the Council.

73. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the National Council on Disability was empowered to receive complaints from members of the public and take them up with the institution concerned. Complaints could also be addressed directly to institutions, such as local governments. When a complaint was made, the Council engaged with the institution concerned with a view to resolving the situation. If no solution was found, the Council could impose sanctions on the institution. To date, it had been possible to deal with all the complaints raised without resorting to legal proceedings.

74. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that it was still not clear whether compensation awarded in connection with complaints brought by groups or individuals was paid to the National Council on Disability.

75. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that compensation was not paid to the National Council on Disability but was used to resolve the situation that had given rise to the complaint. For example, funds awarded as compensation could be used by a local authority to increase the accessibility of a particular piece of infrastructure. The Council did not act as a party in legal or administrative proceedings; it negotiated with service providers and gave support to persons who required it.

76. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he wished to know whether the Secretariat of State for Public Health and Social Assistance was empowered to undertake so-called preventive procedures to forcibly hospitalize persons believed to pose a danger to others and whether any regulations had been established to ensure the freedom of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

77. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that article 44 of the General Health Act (No. 42-01) provided for the development of rehabilitation and social integration services for persons with mental disabilities. A department of mental health within the Ministry of Health was responsible for providing care to such persons. The National Mental Health Plan for the period 2023–2030 also addressed the promotion of public health in coordination with the national health service and its regional centres.

78. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that it was still not clear whether the forced hospitalization of persons with psychosocial disabilities was legal or illegal in the Dominican Republic.

79. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that the Public Health Act, which long predated Act No. 5-13, did indeed provide for the segregation of persons with disabilities. However, the measures provided for in the Act had been superseded by regulations, systems and plans established more recently. Currently, persons with psychosocial disabilities received treatment in day centres and were not permanently confined to institutions.

80. **Mr. Al-Azzeh** said that he would welcome the delegation's comments on the fact that article 76 of Act No. 5-13 provided for the establishment of centres or homes for persons with severe disabilities. He wondered whether any plans were in place to amend that article.

81. **A representative of the Dominican Republic** said that some of the laws in force in the Dominican Republic were fairly old. The Government was making efforts to modernize national law and bring it into compliance with the international treaties that the Dominican Republic had ratified. All human rights instruments ratified by the Dominican Republic had constitutional status and any national law that contravened such an instrument was automatically rendered invalid. If an institution sought to apply an old regulation that conflicted with an international human rights treaty, an appeal could be brought before the Constitutional Court. Out-of-date laws were not implemented and plans were in place to amend them.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*