



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 29 April 2025, 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 and twenty-fifth periodic reports of Mauritius (continued)
([CERD/C/MUS/24-25](#); [CERD/C/MUS/Q/24-25](#))

1. **The Chair**, welcoming the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the meeting, explained that the other members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
2. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be grateful for an update on steps taken towards the implementation of a well-resourced strategy to address the deep-rooted discrimination faced by the Creoles, including those living on Agalega and Rodrigues islands. It would also be helpful to find out more about measures taken by the State Party to ensure the equal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by ethnic minorities, including special measures to ensure access to adequate housing, healthcare and a quality and inclusive education. She wondered whether ethnic minority representatives and civil society organizations had been involved in the design and implementation of such measures. She wished to learn more about measures taken to ensure the effective participation and representation of ethnic minorities in public and political life, in particular State institutions, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, including by way of special measures, and any plans to give Kreol Morisien the status of a national language. It would be useful to know what specific measures were being taken to mitigate the impact of climate change on tourism and development projects, including measures relating to access to justice and compensation for those affected. Information on national actions relating to the business and human rights agenda would be appreciated. She also wished to learn more about the ongoing electoral reforms and the effectiveness of the “best loser” system.
3. She wondered how the State Party ensured that the rights of the Chagossian people were being taken into account in the ongoing negotiations with the Government of the United Kingdom, in particular the right of all Chagossians to return to the Chagos Archipelago, reparations, full financial compensation, and the restoration of the islands in preparation of resettlement.
4. **A representative of Mauritius** said that, when talking about strategies to address discrimination faced by Creoles, it was important to note that the principle that all races, communities and religious groups must be treated on an equal footing and guaranteed full and equal enjoyment of economic and social rights was at the heart of all government policies. The zero-tolerance policy on racial discrimination went hand in hand with effective complaints mechanisms, and victims of such discrimination were entitled to judicial or administrative remedies. It was also important to acknowledge that the proverbial *malaise creole* typical of the early 1990s, when opportunities for Creole people had been far and few between, had long been overcome with the adoption of appropriate legislation and the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission, among other things.
5. The Chagossians had the same rights and freedoms as other Mauritian citizens, and their elected representatives engaged regularly with the authorities on social, cultural and educational matters affecting that community. The Chagossian Welfare Fund provided the overall framework for delivering targeted health, welfare and education support measures, including scholarships, regular visits to senior citizens and bedridden persons, and recreational activities to strengthen bonds between communities. Efforts to promote Chagossian culture at the national and international levels were also bearing fruit and, in 2019, the Sega tambor Chagos had been included in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
6. The Government remained firmly committed to the resettlement of Chagossians on the Chagos Archipelago once effective control over the territory had been restored and funds in the 2024–2025 budget had been earmarked for technical site visits and logistical preparations for resettlement. During the negotiations with the United Kingdom, the Government had requested the creation of a special fund to finance the resettlement of the Chagossian people. Internationally, it was advocating for the full decolonialization of the

Archipelago, including the restoration of the rights of Chagossians displaced in 1965. Although the primary responsibility for redress and compensation rested with the Government of the United Kingdom, Chagossians living in Mauritius were afforded a host of services to mitigate the consequences of displacement and safeguard their human rights pending resettlement. The negotiations on the exercise of sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago were ongoing. The signing of the final text of the agreement had been deferred as a result of the change in the Administration of the United States of America.

7. Public service recruitment fell within the purview of the Public Service Commission or Local Government Service Commission. Vacancies were open to all qualified candidates, irrespective of ethnicity, and publicized widely. The decisions of those commissions could be appealed before the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal and, ultimately, before the Supreme Court. Measures to enhance the accountability of law enforcement agencies and build trust, in particular among minority communities, included the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the Judicial and Legal Services Commission, which were responsible for the appointment of judicial and legal officers. Again, vacancies were open to all candidates irrespective of their ethnic background and were widely advertised. The Committee's suggestion to include discrimination on the basis of language as a ground for complaint in the Equal Opportunities Act had been well noted.

8. The effective representation of ethnic minorities in the political life of the country was ensured through the "best loser" system, which provided for the allocation of additional seats in the National Assembly to underrepresented communities. Nonetheless, the system was based on the 1972 census and was admittedly outdated; pending the broader overhaul of the electoral system, smaller reforms included the abolition of the requirement for constituency candidates to declare to which community they belonged. In the 2024 elections, 60 candidates who had retained their seats were members of the Alliance du Changement, as compared to just 2 members of the Rodrigues People's Organization. Of the 62 directly elected members, 36 were Hindus, 9 Muslims, 2 Sino-Mauritian and 15 were members of the general population. The Constitution provided for the allocation of a maximum of 8 additional seats to persons who had stood as candidates for election but had not retained their seats to ensure adequate representation of all ethnic groups. According to the "best loser" system set out in article 5 of the First Schedule of the Constitution, the first four seats had been allocated to candidates from the general population. In the light of the election results, articles 5 (4), (5) and (6) of the First Schedule of the Constitution had not been applicable.

9. Although the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provided that proceedings and debates must be conducted in English or French, in recent years members had sometimes derogated from the rules and addressed the Assembly using a few sentences in Creole, where appropriate. A recent request by a member to deliver an entire address in Creole had been rejected by the Speaker on the basis of the Standing Orders. However, in her reasoning of that decision, the Speaker had encouraged the Assembly to consider putting the use of Kreol Morisien as an official language for its proceedings on the agenda of the Standing Orders Committee.

10. In January 2024, all 425 registered primary schools had been incorporated into the free education scheme, which had been allocated 338 million Mauritian rupees. The values of mutual respect and understanding of diversity were mainstreamed across national education curricula, and human rights and non-discrimination were woven into a range of subjects taught at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. A student behaviour policy had been introduced in 2024 to enhance respect for diversity at school. Counselling services had been expanded, with 14,517 counselling sessions delivered in the first half of 2024, and the number of reported cases of school bullying had decreased from 184 cases in 2023 to 57 in the first half of 2024. Pre- and in-service teacher training curricula included modules on human rights education. Pre-primary teacher training programmes included a compulsory module on citizenship education, and other training programmes included modules on social inequality, values and ethics.

11. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that, while she appreciated the information provided on isolated activities carried out by the State Party to improve the situation of ethnic minorities, it would be helpful if the delegation could clarify whether there was an overarching strategy for addressing all relevant issues on a comprehensive basis. She also wondered whether the

welfare, assistance and educational measures in question had been designed in consultation with the ethnic minorities concerned and were part of a broader strategic plan. The delegation might wish to clarify whether the support programmes for the most disadvantaged segments of the State Party's ethnic minorities were anchored in legislation and thus sustainable beyond the bounds of individual legislative mandates. Could the delegation provide specifics on scholarships and special measures taken to ensure equal access to housing and healthcare for ethnic minorities?

12. **Ms. McDougall** said that when segments of a population had been disadvantaged over long periods of time, equality could not be achieved merely by declaring that everyone was equal and establishing a welfare system. It required an honest reckoning with past injustices, which she struggled to discern from the responses provided by the State Party thus far.

13. She wondered whether the agreement on transferring sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago included a budget for compensation for the victims of that wrongdoing. If so, she wished to know how that sum would be distributed among the people affected.

14. Given the complexity of the electoral reform process, she wished to know what had been done to ensure that political parties were not constituted along religious lines and that political participation and representation were not influenced by ethnicity. As it was unclear that the allocation of seats under the "best loser" system effectively ensured the equal enjoyment of political rights, she wondered what steps were being taken so that the State Party's political and electoral system, which dated from the colonial period, would treat everybody equally.

15. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she would be interested to know whether the anniversary of the abolition of slavery was celebrated by all groups in Mauritian society or only by people of African descent. Since she knew that, in the Caribbean, it was not customary to refer to people as Creoles, she would welcome clarification regarding the identity of the Creoles of Mauritius and, more specifically, whether they were people of African descent.

16. **A representative of Mauritius** said that, although the anniversary of the abolition of slavery on 1 February was a national celebration, attendance at the various commemorative events was, unfortunately, well demarcated along ethnic lines. Creole was a term used to describe a category of people who self-identified as being of mixed descent, which did not necessarily include African descent. It was also the name of the language that was spoken on the island – a patois that had been influenced by English, French, Bhojपुरi and Hindi.

17. With regard to measures to promote the equality of minorities, he would like to point out that the current Government, which had assumed office following the general election of November 2024, had taken a drastically different approach from that of its predecessor and was committed to a more open and proactive form of engagement with the human rights treaty bodies. The Government had recently adopted its programme, entitled "A Bridge to the Future", which would completely overhaul the country's electoral and judicial systems. The process would be entrusted to a constitutional review commission that was currently being set up. Ethnic minorities had not been consulted on the programme but were involved in policymaking at the highest levels of government.

18. One example of consultations with ethnic minorities had occurred a few months previously, when the Agalega Islands had been devastated by a tropical cyclone. The Deputy Prime Minister and three other ministers had travelled to the islands to assess the damage and consult with the Agalegan people, who numbered fewer than 500, including on policies for improving their welfare. One proposal that the Government viewed favourably was for schoolchildren from the Agalega Islands to be allowed to sit their secondary education examinations there, instead of requiring them to travel to the island of Mauritius. Specific information on the scholarships available to children from minority groups would be provided to the Committee in writing.

19. With respect to the situation of the Chagossians, in 2022 the Governments of Mauritius and the United Kingdom had entered into negotiations on the recognition of Mauritian sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, which in 1965 had been illegally annexed and incorporated into British Indian Ocean Territory. On 3 October 2024, the two countries had reached a political agreement whereby the United Kingdom accepted Mauritian

sovereignty over the islands. On the basis of that agreement, a treaty was being negotiated and would likely be signed in the coming weeks; its content, however, could not yet be divulged.

20. The Government acknowledged that the “best loser” system was outdated. As an interim measure, it planned to amend the Constitution so that candidates standing for parliament would no longer be required to declare their affiliation with a particular ethnic community. Subsequently, the constitutional review commission would consider the entire electoral process with a view to replacing the “best loser” system with a measure of proportional representation.

21. **Ms. McDougall** said that, notwithstanding the ongoing treaty negotiations, she was disappointed that the delegation had failed to acknowledge the need for reparations and restitution for the Chagossian people, who had suffered long-lasting harm as a result of their forced displacement. She wished to point out that, under the Convention, any reparation or restitution provided – with or without the agreement of the United Kingdom – must benefit those who had suffered violations of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addition, the Government must involve the Chagossian people in the negotiations so that, at the end of the process, they would be satisfied that they had received redress for the harm suffered.

22. One broader issue of concern was that the Government seemed to consider that equality could be achieved merely by adopting new laws, without recognizing the need to repair the harm done in the past or the disadvantages still faced by the descendants of those who had been brought to Mauritius as slaves. Mauritius was not alone in struggling with the legacy of colonization and the need to address inbuilt inequalities in the electoral system. She therefore encouraged the Government, as part of the electoral reform process, to apply the lessons learned and the best practices of other countries in a similar situation.

23. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she would be interested to know how Mauritius had marked the International Decade for People of African Descent and what programmes had been implemented to support recognition, justice and development for people of African descent. She would also like to know whether the Government had considered any steps that might be taken in the framework of the recently proclaimed Second International Decade for People of African Descent, which renewed the call for recognition, justice and development. She wondered whether the use of the term “Creole” might mask the real situation among certain population groups, including people of African descent.

24. On a visit to Mauritius, she had been left with the impression that people of African descent continued to face the legacies of chattel enslavement, as their level of economic development appeared to be lower than that of other groups. She would be interested to know whether there had been any improvement in their general situation. She wondered whether the Government might, in the framework of the Second International Decade, establish memorial sites in recognition of those who had been subjected to such enslavement.

25. **Ms. Tlakula** (Follow-up Coordinator), noting that the State Party had established a ministerial committee to look into the development of a road map for teaching the Kreol Morisien language in upper secondary schools, said that she would welcome up-to-date information on measures to facilitate the use of that language in the government administration and in the judiciary, in line with the Committee’s recommendation in its previous concluding observations ([CERD/C/MUS/CO/22-23](#)). She would also appreciate an update on the work being done to set up the Akademi Kreol Repiblik Moris to follow up on the development and use of Kreol Morisien.

26. The Committee had taken note of the joint statement of October 2024 affirming the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago. In that regard, the delegation might provide further information on the current state of affairs, including on whether the Government had developed a road map and a timetable for the Chagossians’ return and whether it planned to include them in future negotiations with the United Kingdom.

27. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that paragraph 114 of the periodic report contained information on the number of cases of racial discrimination, stirring up racial hatred, inciting racial hatred and profanation registered in 2019. According to those figures, there had been

six reported offences of stirring up racial hatred, of which three had resulted in inquiries and three had led to no further action. There had been only one reported case of racial discrimination, with no further action. There had been one case of inciting racial hatred resulting in an inquiry, but there was no indication of whether any action had been taken. The figures on damaging a place of worship, theft from a place of worship and violating a tomb also suggested that few prosecutions had been brought. She therefore invited the State Party to provide up-to-date information on the number of complaints registered with the courts or any other national institution concerning acts of racial discrimination, racist hate speech and racist hate crimes and on the number of related investigations, prosecutions and convictions.

28. **Mr. Amir**, recalling that Mauritius was a member State of the African Union, said that, in Africa, colonial Powers had once purveyed the idea that the lands under their domination were inhabited by multiple tribes; their purpose in doing so had been to help them to divide and rule the people. In his own country of Algeria, such notions had been dispelled only with the coming of independence. The foundation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 reflected the desire of the newly independent States not to return to a past in which African people and territories had been thus divided. He urged the Government of Mauritius to resist the influence of the United Kingdom and not to allow the unity of the Mauritian people to be undermined.

29. **A representative of Mauritius** said that the Mauritian people had striven, particularly in recent decades, to foster unity among all communities and followers of all religions. Significant efforts had been made to distance the country from the divisions imposed by colonial masters and to reduce inequalities, and successive Administrations had taken great care to ensure equality of opportunity among all segments of the population.

30. Theft from places of worship remained the most reported offence relating to racial or religious discrimination in the period from 2020 to 2024, although the number of cases had decreased over that period. Between four and eight cases of damage to a place of worship had been reported each year in that time frame; reports of cases of stirring up racial hatred had peaked in 2021 and 2022. A number of isolated reports of incitement to racial hatred had been reported between 2020 and 2024. A significant proportion of offences relating to racial discrimination, in particular those concerning places of worship, remained under investigation, and at least half were unresolved. In the light of the low prosecution rates for such offences, the Government was exploring how to improve investigating authorities' accountability and follow-up. No complaints of racial discrimination, racist hate speech or racist hate crimes on the part of the Independent Broadcasting Authority had been recorded, and there were no investigations involving the Authority in progress. A relevant case in that regard was that of Mr. Fardeen Okeeb, who had been charged in 2021 with stirring up racial hatred and had received a fine and a two-year prison sentence.

31. Mauritius had always maintained its claim to sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia. The political agreement reached in October 2024 with the Government of the United Kingdom had not set out the provisions to be contained in a treaty on the matter. The Mauritian Government was currently finalizing negotiations with the Government of the United Kingdom regarding the return of the Chagos Archipelago and was confident of a positive outcome. It was important to note that the Government of the United Kingdom required the support of the Government of the United States of America before it could agree to the terms of a treaty with the Mauritian Government. The voices of Chagossians were being heard in the relevant processes: Mr. Olivier Bancoult, the leader of a group of Chagossians in Mauritius, had been involved in negotiations and had been part of a Mauritian delegation to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, and Ms. Liseby Elysé had given evidence on behalf of Mauritius in the country's case before the International Court of Justice.

32. Activities carried out to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent had included the establishment of the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture, which highlighted the voices of people of African descent in its projects by, among other things, involving community leaders, descendants of enslaved people and cultural experts in its exhibitions and conferences. Other activities had included the inauguration of the Valley of the Bones Trail and annual events to commemorate the abolition of slavery. In 2024, the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund had organized two consultative forums, composed mostly of

people of African descent, to promote collaboration between civil society and the administration of the La Morne Cultural Landscape. Furthermore, the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund had worked with primary and secondary schools across the country to educate schoolchildren about the history of indentured African and Malagasy labourers in Mauritius. No activities had yet been scheduled to mark the Second International Decade for People of African Descent (2025–2034).

33. While English was the primary language used in the courts, the use of French and Kreol Morisien was also accepted. It was the duty of the courts to ensure that all parties understood what was happening during criminal and civil proceedings held in English; defendants were therefore entitled to the services of a Creole-speaking court interpreter. Although most administrative documents were written in English, civil servants were on hand to provide linguistic support. The Government was exploring the possibility of introducing the use of Kreol Morisien in parliament and launching a dedicated television channel to broadcast the simultaneous interpretation of parliamentary proceedings in Kreol Morisien.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

34. **Mr. Sibande** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to know how the State Party ensured that domestic workers' complaints of ill-treatment were duly addressed. In addition, he wished to receive an update on measures taken by the State Party to raise awareness of the Convention and provisions relating to human rights contained in the Constitution of Mauritius and other domestic laws. In particular, it would be interesting to hear about steps taken to include human rights issues in curricula at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and efforts to combat racial discrimination in the development of school curricula, university programmes and teacher training courses.

35. He would welcome information on the work of the judiciary with regard to matters concerning racial discrimination and on any relevant jurisprudence. He would also be grateful to receive information regarding human rights education, training and awareness-raising activities offered to the staff of law enforcement agencies, the prison and immigration services and the defence forces.

36. It would be useful to learn about any measures taken and programmes developed with a view to ensuring the full participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions in human rights education and awareness-raising activities and in the State Party's engagement with international human rights accountability mechanisms and processes, such as the preparation of reports for submission to the human rights treaty bodies.

37. In the light of reports that the funding for services for victims of trafficking in persons and sex trafficking had been sharply reduced, he wished to hear how the Government planned to ensure that adequate funding was allocated to the fight against trafficking in persons, including in terms of protection and assistance services offered to victims. Information on educational and awareness-raising programmes rolled out by the State Party on combating trafficking in persons would also be appreciated.

38. The Committee had learned from alternative sources that foreign nationals – in particular persons with an irregular migration status, stateless persons and asylum-seekers – encountered barriers to access to healthcare and that all other foreign nationals were required to pay for services provided at public healthcare institutions, with special consideration given to those married to Mauritian citizens. The delegation might wish to provide clarification in that regard and describe how the Government ensured access to healthcare services for all without discrimination on the basis of migration status. It would also be interesting to hear about any programmes for raising awareness of the availability of healthcare services among the entire population, including migrant workers.

39. **A representative of Mauritius** said that all people in Mauritius, including migrants not married to Mauritian citizens, were entitled to free public healthcare services. If the reports received by the Committee about any instances of discrimination in relation to access to healthcare services proved to be accurate, the Attorney-General's Office would endeavour to rectify that situation.

40. The Government took a structured, long-term approach to addressing prejudice and intolerance in accordance with its obligations under article 7 of the Convention. Central to its response was the objective of mainstreaming human rights education across the national education system, from pre-primary to tertiary levels. Measures implemented with the aim of reaching all groups included the establishment of support systems for disadvantaged learners, inclusive teaching practices and the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity, including through the teaching of Kreol Morisien, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil and other languages. Human rights and the principle of non-discrimination were embedded in formal curricula and teacher training programmes, and awareness-raising campaigns targeting students, parents and educators were being carried out. Tailored support services for vulnerable and marginalized groups included a special educational needs programme. Policies aimed at combating bullying and ensuring respect for diversity had been strengthened and had led to a reduction in reported incidents of bullying.

41. The National Human Rights Commission played a pivotal role in promoting respect for human rights by working to raise awareness of issues relating to racial discrimination, in particular through partnerships with NGOs and State-run bodies. Notably, one of the Commission's members was elected by NGOs. The Commission had been involved in the production of educational materials such as a Creole-language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which had been distributed to schools across the country and, in 2024, it had worked closely with the Ministry of Education to organize awareness-raising sessions and public campaigns, reaching over 100,000 individuals. The Commission's initiatives were part of a broader strategy to combat racial discrimination and promote social cohesion in the education system. The Government was committed to addressing gaps and strengthening inclusive, evidence-based and participatory approaches in collaboration with civil society and international partners.

42. Regarding the involvement of civil society in policymaking, it was useful to note that the Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-Up, which was responsible for ensuring that the Government complied with its human rights commitments and with recommendations issued by United Nations human rights bodies, comprised representatives of ministries, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations. The Mechanism was led by the minister responsible for human rights and helped to coordinate efforts across different sectors with a view to improving respect for human rights at the national and international levels. Representatives of two NGOs had had the opportunity during a meeting in February 2021 to peruse the country's combined periodic reports under the Convention and to fill in any gaps in information concerning the Government's follow-up to the Committee's recommendations with details of relevance to their remits. Those NGOs had also attended a similar meeting in January 2022.

43. At the February 2023 meeting of the Mechanism, its members had been informed that, of the 308 NGOs registered with the Mauritius Council of Social Service, 29 had been invited to attend the Mechanism's meetings, thereby enhancing civil society representation. The Council served as a focal point for NGOs, disseminating information and gathering their input on human rights issues, and supported the consolidation of the national human rights action plan for 2024–2030 and the country's report under the universal periodic review process. At that meeting, the Mechanism had been apprised of the Government's obligations under regional and international conventions and had been made aware of the valuable contributions made by NGOs to the country's socioeconomic development. The Mechanism had also called for all NGOs to provide input for the national human rights action plan for 2024–2030 and the universal periodic review report.

44. In cooperation with the police, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions had established a dedicated unit for combating trafficking in persons with a view to expediting inquiries, decision-making at the prosecution stage and court proceedings. That unit had adopted a victim-focused approach to its investigations. The Government would examine the reports received by the Committee regarding the cuts in funding for services for victims of trafficking and provide an explanation in due course.

45. **Mr. Sibande** said that he would welcome information on the outcomes of the cases of Bruneau Laurette, Wayne Attock, Akil Bissessur and Doomila Moheeputh, who had been arrested on allegations of drug trafficking after criticizing the Government and the police. He

would also like to know what steps were being taken to ensure that citizens were not punished for criticizing the State and that journalists could operate freely. He wondered how the State Party had addressed the complaints of online harassment filed by three journalists from Le Défi Media Group, Nawaz Noorbux, Jean-Luc Émile and Al-Khizr Ramdin, along with the Managing Director of the Top FM radio station, Balkrishna Kaunhye. He would also be grateful if the delegation could provide further details on the measures taken to ensure that public buildings were accessible to persons with disabilities.

46. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she wished to reaffirm that the Committee did not intend to create division by focusing its questions on individual members of the Mauritian community. Rather, it aimed to encourage the creation of a harmonious society by unpacking the inequalities that existed within the nation's diverse communities.

47. **A representative of Mauritius** said that, since 2021, the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies in Mauritius had offered a number of lectures and courses on human rights issues covering topics such as the application of international conventions within the justice system, freedom of expression and opinion, and domestic and gender-based violence. Between 2018 and 2024, numerous awareness-raising campaigns on racial discrimination had been conducted by the media and the police. Detailed information on those courses and campaigns would be provided in writing.

48. The high-profile cases of Bruneau Laurette and Akil Bissessur were still ongoing, as the authorities were investigating the possibility that drugs had been planted on those individuals. The inquiry relating to the cases of the three journalists was also still under way.

49. **Mr. Sibande** said that he would like to know what measures had been implemented to ensure that all languages spoken in Mauritius, including minority languages, were recognized and that human rights education was delivered in all of the country's languages. He also wished to know whether all minority groups were formally recognized by the Government and whether their specific needs were reflected in public policy and development initiatives.

50. **A representative of Mauritius** said that there was adequate access for disabled persons to all courtrooms, although further improvements were still needed. Additional information regarding the accessibility of other public buildings would be provided in writing.

51. Over 90 per cent of the population in the Republic of Mauritius spoke and understood Kreol Morisien. In court proceedings, individuals could speak in the language of their choice, including Kreol Morisien, Urdu, Hindi or Bhojpuri, and interpreters were provided to guarantee equal access to justice. National television news bulletins were broadcast in Kreol Morisien, French, Bhojpuri and English.

52. The translation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment into Creole was already under way, and the translation of other United Nations conventions into Creole would follow.

53. The hybrid legal system in Mauritius was an outgrowth of the country's colonial past. French civil law, introduced under French rule, had been retained after the British had taken power in 1810. Those laws had been translated into English and both versions were still used in court. Since independence, all legislation had been enacted in English and had not been translated into French. Teachers regularly used a mix of English, French and Creole to ensure that all students understood their lessons.

54. The constitutional review commission would decide whether to abolish the outdated "best loser" system or to update the system to reflect self-identified ethnic categories and their respective sizes. As the latter option could risk undermining national unity and equality by reinforcing ethnic divisions, it might be preferable to replace the existing electoral system with an alternative such as proportional representation.

55. **Ms. Boker-Wilson** said that she wished to thank the Attorney General and the delegation he headed for their active participation in the constructive dialogue, as well as for their openness and spirit of accountability. She also commended the Government on its

reassessed approach to engaging with the review process, which had significantly contributed to the quality of the exchange.

56. **A representative of Mauritius** said that, on behalf of the Mauritian delegation, he extended his sincere thanks to the Committee. The constructive dialogue was not considered a mere exercise in reporting, but rather an opportunity to reflect openly on the situation in the country and to recommit to the principles of the Convention. He also wished to extend his country's gratitude to the former Chief Justice Yeung Sik Yuen for his participation in the Committee, which exemplified the commitment of Mauritius to upholding the values of equality enshrined in the Convention.

57. The sixtieth anniversary of the Convention was a time for all member States to renew their shared determination to build societies founded on dignity and equality. Mauritius had sought to contribute to that collective endeavour through both national and international initiatives.

58. While there was no doubt that discrepancies persisted and that history had cast long shadows, his delegation stood firm in its belief that progress had been made and would continue to be achieved. Further efforts were needed to ensure that the principles of the Convention were reflected not only in national law but also in the lived experience of every citizen.

59. **The Chair** said that he wished to thank the delegation and his colleagues for the fruitful dialogue. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention, he encouraged the Mauritian Government to consider recognizing the Committee's competence to receive and examine individual communications under the Convention.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.