



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Seventy-third session**

Summary record of the 1876th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 28 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Dah

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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

Seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Ecuador (CERD/C/ECU/19; CERD/C/ECU/Q/19 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Ecuador took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Holguin** (Ecuador), introducing the seventeenth to nineteenth periodic reports of Ecuador, said that his Government attached the utmost importance to cooperation with the international human rights system and to transparency and frankness in the reporting process. Following its examination under the universal periodic review mechanism in April 2008, Ecuador had presented 48 voluntary commitments to the Human Rights Council, many of which pertained to issues relevant to the Convention. Proud of its open human rights policy, Ecuador was deeply attached to the promotion and protection of human rights.
3. **Ms. Melo** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador was a sponsor of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and had participated actively in the development of the Andean Charter for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. All the international instruments that it signed and ratified were directly applicable at the national level.
4. Domestic instruments relevant to the implementation of the Convention included the Constitution, the Criminal Code, provisions on the collective rights of the Afro-Ecuadorian people; and Metropolitan Ordinance No. 216 issued by the Quito Metropolitan Council. The Constitution provided for protection from discrimination on grounds of race and guaranteed all Ecuadorians, without discrimination of any kind, the free and effective exercise and enjoyment of the human rights established in domestic and international instruments. The National Constituent Assembly was currently drafting a new Constitution which provided for broad protection of indigenous rights. The draft established inalienable rights of nature (*pachamama*) and the right to Sumak Kawsay (“good living” in Quechua) as a system of social equity and inclusion. Articles 212-A to 212-E of the Criminal Code laid down penalties for the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred; incitement to racial discrimination; the commission of acts of violence on the basis of race; and the financing, aiding or abetting of any kind of racist activity. Heavier penalties were imposed if such crimes were committed by public officials. Racist grounds for the commission of an offence were considered an aggravating circumstance.
5. The 2006 Act on the Collective Rights of the Black or Afro-Ecuadorian people recognized the right of Afro-Ecuadorians to set up their own institutions. Metropolitan Ordinance No. 216 provided for the social inclusion of the Afro-Ecuadorian people of Quito and established the Metropolitan Social Council for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2007).
6. Institutions in charge of human rights protection included the Secretariat for Peoples Social Movement and Participation; the Council for Afro-Ecuadorian Development (CODAE); the Council for the Development of Ecuadorian Nationalities and Peoples (CODENPE); the Ombudsman’s Office; and the Department of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DINEIB) attached to the Ministry of Education. The Department conducted education and literacy campaigns in Quechua and Spanish. The National Indigenous Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health was responsible for addressing the specific health needs of indigenous peoples.

7. In addition to the laws and institutions that had been developed, public policies had been adopted in order to facilitate implementation of Ecuador's international commitments. The National Human Rights Plan, for example, contained an analysis of Ecuador's human rights situation and proposals for addressing key issues through the adoption of specific measures and activities, including through an operational plan on the rights of black and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples. The National Human Rights Plan contained a separate chapter on the right of indigenous peoples to develop and strengthen their individual and collective identity and affirm their values in order to promote their full inclusion in Ecuadorian society, without discrimination. The Plan provided for the autonomy of indigenous peoples within the limits of the law; free, prior and informed consent to the exploitation of resources on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral lands; and the enactment of legislation promoting the rights of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples.

8. The national development plan for 2007 to 2012 guaranteed the economic, social and cultural rights of the Ecuadorian people and placed the human being at the core of public development policies. The Government's housing policy focused on rural and marginal urban areas, where the majority of Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous peoples lived. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MIDUVI) issued housing grants of up to US\$ 3,500 to the rural and urban poor and set aside funds to subsidize home renovation and purchase. Poor families were also entitled to solidarity loans and human development vouchers.

9. Steps had been taken towards free universal health care. In order to guarantee equal access to health services, the Government had developed intercultural community-based health-care models, provided training for health teams in all provinces and created posts for 5,000 new doctors. Patients suffering from terminal illnesses, including AIDS, were provided medicines free of charge.

10. Measures to enhance access to quality education included the revision of school curricula, the institution of large-scale teacher training programmes and the elimination of barriers to education. School enrolment fees had been abolished, new selection processes had been introduced, teaching materials in Quechua had been made available and school meals and uniforms were provided free of charge.

11. Food supply was also a concern. The Alimentate Ecuador food programme aimed at ensuring food security for low-income households and sought to educate people about healthy eating. The programme encouraged autonomous local production and a return to the ancestral food practices of the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples. Data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity were not yet available, but relevant variables and indicators would be developed so that the programme's impact on the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations might be evaluated. The Equal Opportunities Plan, prepared as a follow-up to the Indigenous Women's Conference held in 2004, addressed many of the concerns of indigenous women regarding their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

12. One of the main challenges to equality and non-discrimination was a lack of awareness among public officials and the judiciary about racism itself and the relevant legislation. Other problems that needed to be addressed included barriers to indigenous access to housing and health services; low school enrolment rates among indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian children; economic and structural impediments to combating racism; under-resourced complaints mechanisms; the absence of effective anti-discrimination policies and of a comprehensive plan against racism; the low level of participation of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples in government and decision-making; lack of resources for development; and persistent structural discrimination in the education system.

13. The Government was keenly aware of those issues and had adopted a series of measures to promote social inclusion and equal rights for all, with special emphasis on

marginalized segments of society. Quechua and Shuar had been made official languages of intercultural communications. The new Constitution recognized the plurinational nature of Ecuador, a society composed of nationalities, peoples and communities that held collective rights and ancestral title. It recognized for the first time the rights of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation.

14. Replying to question 1 of the list of issues, she said that the population and housing census conducted in 2001 by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC) had yielded data on the ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics of the population according to which 6.9 per cent of the population described itself as indigenous, while Afro-Ecuadorians accounted for 4.98 per cent. However, in the 2006 standard of living survey, which might be somewhat more reliable, 5.7 per cent of the population had identified itself as Afro-Ecuadorians. INEC, in cooperation with the National Commission on Statistics for Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples, had already started to collect ethnicity-related data in the run-up to the next census, scheduled for 2011.

15. Turning to question 2, she said that international instruments were directly applicable at the national level. Norms contained in international treaties and conventions, once they had been promulgated in the *Official Gazette*, formed part of the domestic legal order and took precedence over laws and other norms of a lower rank. Most of the provisions of the Convention had been incorporated into the 1998 Constitution.

16. On question 3, she said that no mechanism had been set up to evaluate the impact of the Development Project for Indigenous and Black Peoples of Ecuador (PRODEPINE) after its conclusion. However, according to the Council for Afro-Ecuadorian Development (CODAE), the project had had little impact on Afro-Ecuadorians: the benefits derived by indigenous peoples had greatly outweighed those of Afro-Ecuadorians. In order to remedy the shortcomings, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion was funding a number of rural and marginal urban development projects targeting indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian organizations.

17. Replying to question 4 of the list of issues on the practical implementation of article 23, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, she again cited articles 212-A to 212-E of the Criminal Code, on racist offences, and Metropolitan Ordinance No. 216, on discrimination-related issues.

18. The Equal Opportunities Plan (question 5) had been prepared with the broad participation of indigenous women's organizations: the Indigenous Women's Conference held in March 2004 had been part of that process. The Plan took account of indigenous women's main concerns, including gender-based violence; political participation; social rights such as access to education and health; and economic rights, especially access to land and microcredits.

19. Turning to question 6, she said that the acts defined as crimes related to racial discrimination were cited in articles 212-A to 212-E of the Criminal Code, which were in line with article 4 of the Convention.

20. The bill on the harmonization of the functions of the indigenous justice system with those of the regular judicial system (question 7) had been submitted to Congress in 2002, but had not been debated thus far. Once the National Constituent Assembly tasked with drafting a new Constitution had completed its work, a new bill would be presented. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights had made the revival of the bill one of the key priorities for its 2009 plan of action. Indigenous peoples were extremely interested in promoting regulations to facilitate the application of indigenous justice, to the extent that it was compatible with the ordinary justice system.

21. Replying to question 8 of the list of issues, she said that article 84, paragraphs 5 and 6, of the Constitution established the right of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples to be consulted on plans and programmes for prospecting for and exploiting resources to be found on their lands. Implementation of those provisions fell to the Ministry of the Environment. According to the rules governing public consultation, any project involving environmental risk must obtain the proper environmental permit. The public consultation exercise involved, inter alia, the opening of an information and enquiries office where all residents were duly informed of the project's details, benefits and risks.

22. In order to eradicate "cultural violence" against women, especially indigenous women (question 9), the National Council for Women (CONAMU), in cooperation with local government, had implemented literacy programmes in areas mainly inhabited by indigenous peoples. The Government had set up credit programmes and a Women's Bank to facilitate indigenous women's access to education, employment and business ownership and thus improve their overall socio-economic status. The Council for the Development of Ecuadorian Nationalities and Peoples (CODENPE) had conducted awareness-raising workshops in indigenous communities on collective rights, women's rights and domestic violence.

23. With regard to the practical role of the human development voucher and the social agenda (question 10), she said that women heads of households, older people and persons with disabilities could obtain from banks a voucher in the amount of US\$ 30. A total of 1,289,158 people had benefited from the programme to date. There were no disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of the related Alimentate Ecuador food programme aimed at ensuring food security.

24. Turning to question 11, she said that the Department of Border Relations with Colombia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had done its utmost to reach an understanding with Colombia to contain and thus alleviate the pernicious effects of aerial spraying on indigenous peoples living in the border area. Those efforts had included the establishment of three separate scientific commissions in each of the two countries in order to address the issue at the technical level. Unfortunately, none of those efforts had borne fruit, and on 31 March 2008 the Ecuadorian Government had taken the matter before the International Court of Justice in pursuit of the cessation of aerial spraying and the payment of corresponding compensation. The internal armed conflict in neighbouring Colombia had disrupted the tranquillity and well-being of Afro-Ecuadorian families, including through the influx of displaced Colombians, particularly in the province of Esmeraldas.

25. The Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior and Police had signed an Inter-Institutional Cooperation Agreement to Implement the Protective Measures Plan for the Taromenane and Tagaeri Peoples (question 12). The Plan for the Protection of Indigenous Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation, adopted under the Agreement, provided for the establishment of an 18-member joint army-police team to monitor the area and prevent illegal logging. Another important initiative was a project aimed at protecting people in the "untouchable zones" which sought international support to prevent the exploitation of oil resources located on the Ishpingo-Tiputini-Tambococha (ITT) reserve in Yasuni National Park.

26. Turning to question 13, she said that the National Council for Women (CONAMU) was engaged in a range of activities aimed at increasing indigenous women's access to health in application of the Free Maternity and Childcare Act. Services provided by traditional midwives were recognized under the Act. Special attention was accorded to victims of violence, and the Ministry of Health had undertaken to update the guidelines on comprehensive care for survivors of sexual and gender-related violence and to work towards their nationwide application in coordination with the legal sector.

27. The Department of Bilingual Intercultural Education (DINEIB) had launched several literacy projects targeting indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations (question 14), including the National Basic Education Programme for Young People and Adults, which concentrated on Afro-Ecuadorians, mestizos and indigenous peoples. A total of 9,068 illiterate indigenous persons had benefited from the indigenous languages component of the Programme from September 2007 to May 2008.

28. In order to guarantee that indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian children and adolescents had access to and remained in the education system (question 15), the Government was implementing a Ten-Year Plan for Education. The Plan provided for improvements to the education infrastructure; teacher training; salary increases; the abolition of the US\$ 25 voluntary enrolment fee; and free textbooks and school uniforms.

29. Replying to question 16, she said that the National Department for the Indigenous Peoples (DINAPIN), which in February 2008 had been replaced by the National Commission for the Human Rights of the Indigenous Peoples (CONADHPIN), had helped to settle a total of 259 cases from 2003 to 2006, 120 through mediation and 139 without it. Cases resolved by DINAPIN included disputes over individual and collective property rights; the right to work; the right to education; the right to an identity; the right to water; the right to compensation; and inter-family problems.

30. Replying to question 17, she said that the Metropolitan Centre for Mediation, set up in 2007, provided legal advice and mediation and socialization services to Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous communities in the Quito Metropolitan District and adjacent cantons. Alternative dispute settlement had been an effective tool in combating racism and racial discrimination.

31. Turning to question 18, she said that 63 human rights training workshops attended by 2,200 participants had been held under the National Human Rights Plan since 2003. The workshops had addressed issues relating to the rights of detainees, young people, consumers, older persons, children and adolescents, migrants and refugees; trafficking in persons; torture; mental health; sexual diversity; the Andean Charter for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; public policies; and human rights and local government. In view of the importance of issues pertaining to the rights of Afro-Ecuadorians and racial discrimination, a series of workshops would be held starting in late 2009 in order to identify the needs of that population group and raise awareness of its rights. The outcome of the workshops would inform policymaking. Afro-Ecuadorians also benefited from specific operational plans aimed at protecting their rights.

32. The measures taken to eliminate prejudices and negative stereotypes affecting indigenous peoples and people of African descent (question 19) were mainly educational. The Programme of Education for Democracy had been set up with the aim of building a sense of citizenship, valuing the country's diversity and thereby contributing to the construction of a democracy that dignified the lives of all Ecuadorians. The Municipal Education Department of the Quito Metropolitan Council had set up a civic education programme, and Metropolitan Ordinance No. 216 was another important tool in that regard.

33. With regard to training for public officials on the promotion of human rights and the prevention of discrimination (question 20), she said that the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights was planning a series of workshops for members of the police and the armed forces on a range of human rights issues. Together with the Ministry of the Interior and Police, it had drawn up a human rights and non-discrimination training programme for the national police. An anti-racism campaign being prepared jointly by a number of ministries and civil society organizations would be launched in the second half of 2008. Under a cooperation agreement, members of the national police attended human rights training courses held by the Ombudsman's Office.

34. Replying to question 21, she said that the Human Rights Coordination Commission would take all the necessary action to distribute the Committee's recommendations to all State institutions and civil society organizations concerned. Those recommendations and other pertinent documents were also published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

35. **Mr. Cali Tzay** (Country Rapporteur) requested additional information on the enforcement of criminal legislation on acts of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance. While the report stated that neither the courts nor the prosecution service had received any such complaints, it also indicated that the Department for Indigenous Peoples (DINAPIN) had processed 289 cases of racial discrimination between 2001 and 2005 and that amicable settlements had been reached to uphold the complainants' collective rights. He asked whether the disparity between the number of cases handled by the judiciary and by the Department might be due to ethnic minorities' reported lack of confidence in the ordinary legal system and, if so, what had been done to address that problem. He also invited the delegation to comment on the reported arrest of a group of Afro-Ecuadorian merchants setting up stalls in the La Carolina park in Quito.

36. It seemed possible that Afro-Ecuadorians might perceive the term "black population", used repeatedly in the report, as discriminatory, and that the use of the term in public policies might not be well received. Clarification was needed about the different terms used in the report to refer to indigenous peoples.

37. With regard to the benefits for the communities concerned of the exploitation of subsoil resources pertaining to indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian lands (paragraph 59 of the report), he explained that the Committee was interested in the benefits directly derived from such exploitation, rather than secondary benefits such as infrastructure improvements. The Committee also wished to hear about the social and environmental impact of such activities.

38. While the new draft Constitution included relevant provisions from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the legal position of indigenous peoples in respect of recognition of their ancestral lands was unclear. The Committee would welcome additional information on the 2004 ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights concerning oil exploitation without prior consultation, referred to in paragraph 60 of the report. What measures had been taken to eliminate racist allusions, discrimination and negative stereotyping of Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples in everyday speech? How did the Government address those peoples' failure to "accept their own race", as described in the report?

39. More information was needed about the way in which the indigenous justice system interacted with the ordinary judicial system. The reference in paragraph 125 of the report to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (No. 169) as the instrument applicable to the Roma population group was somewhat surprising. Other international instruments would appear to be more pertinent.

40. The written reply to question 7 of the list of issues asserted that "the indigenous nationalities and peoples are looking forward to the Constituent Assembly's completion of its task so that they can press on with the process of adopting new subsidiary legislation to bring indigenous justice into line with the national judicial system". Had that comment emanated from indigenous groups themselves?

41. He requested data on murders of indigenous women and asked what measures had been taken to stop such acts of violence. With regard to the reported difficulties of indigenous women in obtaining microcredits, he asked how the current programmes provided for such access, even if women could offer no guarantees for repayment.

42. Reiterating question 17 of the list of issues, he invited the delegation to give examples of cases resolved through the indigenous mediation system and pointed out that the written replies referred to alternative conflict resolution, which was not the same thing.

43. **Mr. de Gouttes**, commending the State party for following up the Committee's recommendation to involve civil society in the preparation of the report, asked which NGOs had participated.

44. The discrepancy just mentioned between the total lack of complaints of racial discrimination received by the justice system and the large number of complaints examined by DINAPIN needed to be explained. Also, as just noted, information on action taken by the Government to implement the provisional measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in its 2004 ruling should be provided.

45. What remedies were available to enable the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples to seek compensation for environmental damage to their lands? What measures had been taken to combat the objective and subjective aspects of racial discrimination that resulted in the failure of Afro-Ecuadorians to self-identify as such, thus distorting survey data on the country's ethnic make-up? He would welcome clarification on the difference between indigenous nationalities, peoples and communities.

46. The reasons for the short duration of indigenous peoples' participation in politics, referred to in paragraph 135 of the report, needed to be explained. He wished to know what progress had been made in the adoption of the bill to bring indigenous justice into line with ordinary justice and enquired which of the penalties traditionally imposed by indigenous law might undermine respect for the physical integrity of persons.

47. He requested further details on the implementation of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination; constitutional protection of the inalienable rights of nature; recognition of indigenous peoples' views of the relationship between humankind and nature; and the concept of Sumak Kawsay.

48. **Mr. Diaconu** noted with appreciation the innovative practice of categorizing the population as "nationalities" and "peoples", rather than majority and minority groups. The principle of prior informed consent regarding the environmental impact of projects had had limited application in practice, but he reminded the State party that such consent was mandatory under international law. The establishment of an information and enquiries office where all residents were duly informed of project details, benefits and risks, as mentioned in the report, might not suffice to comply with those requirements. The State party should review the situation with that concern in mind.

49. He asked whether Quechua, Shuar and other ancestral languages were used as official languages by State institutions and the judiciary. The delegation should elaborate on the relationship between the indigenous and ordinary justice systems and explain whether indigenous court rulings could be appealed before an ordinary court on grounds of incompatibility with international norms. Action should be taken to ensure that the Roma were covered by domestic and international human rights legislation.

50. **Mr. Avtonomov** asked whether there were any textbooks to support indigenous language teaching and whether Ecuador cooperated with neighbouring countries in indigenous language education, for example in Quechua. It would be useful to know which criteria the State party used to distinguish between different ethnic groups and whether all indigenous groups were formally recognized as such. Given the discrepancy in the number of complaints of racial discrimination handled by DINAPIN and the courts, he asked why victims of discrimination did not seek judicial redress.

51. He requested additional information on human rights education for public officials, the representation of Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous peoples in the police force and measures taken to reduce the Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous prison population.

52. It was unclear why prejudice should lead to the qualification of Roma as “gypsies” rather than “Ecuadorians”: ethnic affiliation was unrelated to citizenship status. He also failed to understand why the Roma’s nomadic habits and their resulting transnationalism should preclude them from protection under international human rights treaties.

53. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** requested disaggregated data on progress made since the 2001 census with regard to the integration of Afro-Ecuadorians. What measures had been taken to increase the participation of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations in the forthcoming survey, thus ensuring greater reliability of survey data?

54. He asked whether the draft Constitution provided for affirmative action aimed at enhancing the access of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples to employment, education, health and political participation, for example by way of a quota system, and whether it safeguarded ancestral land rights and collective rights. To what extent had indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians been involved in the constitutional process?

55. Question 11 of the list of issues might be interpreted as suggesting that the Committee had information before it corroborating the pernicious effects of aerial spraying along the Colombian border with Ecuador, which to his knowledge was not the case. Given the controversial nature of the issue, the tremendous and sustained efforts made by the two countries to normalize relations and the pending decision of the International Court of Justice, the Committee should be careful not to adopt a position that could be interpreted as prejudging the outcome.

56. **Mr. Thornberry** asked whether Afro-Ecuadorians did not “accept their own race” for fear of discrimination or because they had rejected an identity thrust upon them by the recent population survey. Were indigenous nationalities, peoples and communities categorized as such for statistical purposes or with reference to their rights? The use of the term “nationalities” was somewhat unusual, as it generally applied to describe national minorities. Clarification was needed on whether the “indigenous peoples” who had submitted to Congress a bill to bring indigenous justice into line with ordinary justice were indigenous groups or individuals or some other protagonists. He associated himself with the remarks by Mr. Diaconu with regard to the Roma.

57. He invited the delegation to comment on allegations of violence by members of security forces working for oil companies and to provide additional information about the consultation of indigenous peoples on the exploitation of resources on their lands. The delegation should clarify the State party’s understanding of collective rights, which were repeatedly referred to in the report.

58. The absence of NGO presentations on Ecuador had been somewhat disappointing, since the involvement of NGOs was a useful and constructive part of the Committee’s procedure and indicated active mobilization of civil society on the relevant issues.

59. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** commended the State party for its comprehensive report, positive aspects of which included the exemplary scope of the human rights training courses for law enforcement officers and the unrivalled anti-discrimination provisions contained in the draft Constitution.

60. With regard to the composition of the population, he asked whether the people referred to as “mestizo” had self-identified using that term. If so, he had no problem with that terminology. He also asked how the principle of indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination was implemented in practice and requested clarification on the nature of the international missions given to Afro-Ecuadorians, described in paragraph 136 of the report.

61. **Mr. Amir** said that the lack of statistical data to evaluate anti-discrimination training activities was regrettable. There was also no mention of people with disabilities belonging to ethnic minorities. In the absence of information about the situation of majority groups, it was impossible to assess the relative situation of or treatment afforded to minorities in Ecuador.

62. He asked why the size of a given minority group was correlated to school attendance, as illustrated by the figures contained in the report; why access to education was much lower in rural areas; and why so few children acceded to higher education.

63. He enquired about the reference to the Roma being “considered gypsies”, rather than Ecuadorians, and asked how that circumstance affected their rights. Did the Roma have Ecuadorian passports?

64. **Mr. Lahiri**, pointing out inconsistencies in the data provided on the ethnic make-up of the population, requested an explanation of the marked increase in the number of Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples in 2001 and 2005. Did it reflect greater acceptance by indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples of their ethnicity? Additional statistical data was required on illiteracy and housing, among others, in order to evaluate progress, and information was needed on indicators to facilitate a comparative analysis of the situation of different ethnic groups over the past decade.

65. The delegation had explained that Quechua was a “language of intercultural communication”, but Ecuador was home to 13 nationalities and 27 peoples: why had Quechua, rather than another indigenous tongue, been chosen?

66. Although the new Constitution had not entered into force, it would be useful to obtain additional information on new provisions and ones that departed from the Constitution currently in force, including on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples’ access to health and education.

67. **Mr. Peter** welcomed the frank dialogue with the delegation and the State party’s recognition of lacunae that still needed addressing.

68. He asked why the Roma, although they had lived in Ecuador since colonial times, had only been formally recognized in 2001. What had been done to address discrimination against the Roma in employment? Given the reported difficulties in guaranteeing the protection of transnational Roma under international instruments, he asked why the State party had not ratified the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Lastly, he requested information on the rights, status and treatment of Afro-descendant migrant workers from neighbouring countries.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.