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Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia)
later: Ms. Węgrzynowska (Vice-Chair) (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/71/40; A/C.3/71/4 and A/C.3/71/5)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/71/56, A/71/214, A/71/254, A/71/255, A/71/269, A/71/271, A/71/273, A/71/278, A/71/279, A/71/280, A/71/281, A/71/282, A/71/284, A/71/285, A/71/286, A/71/287, A/71/291, A/71/299, A/71/302, A/71/303, A/71/304, A/71/305, A/71/310, A/71/314, A/71/317, A/71/319, A/71/332, A/71/344, A/71/344/Corr.1, A/71/348, A/71/358, A/71/367, A/71/368, A/71/369, A/71/372, A/71/373, A/71/384, A/71/385, A/71/405 and A/71/567)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/71/308, A/71/361, A/71/374, A/71/379-S/2016/788, A/71/394, A/71/402, A/71/418, A/71/439, A/71/540-S/2016/839 and A/71/554)

1. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that through its jurisprudence, recommendations to States parties and contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had put the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on an equal footing with the other international human rights treaties. In its eight years, the Committee had created innovative jurisprudence involving a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural issues, including the right to vote for persons with disabilities; the cultural and linguistic identify of deaf persons; accessible means and formats of communication for blind, deaf-blind and intellectually disabled persons; the right to inclusive, quality education; the need for open, inclusive and accessible environments and markets; access to health care; the right to social protection and an adequate standard of living, and access to culture, sports, recreation and leisure activities. It had given special attention to the right to live independently and to be included in the community, as well as to the obligation of reasonable accommodation, intersectional

discrimination, non-discrimination and rehabilitation. In relation to deaf persons, she stressed the importance of making sign language an official language of the United Nations.

2. The Committee remained committed to implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. While respecting paragraph 14 on aligned working methods and public consultations, it had cut the time required to produce a general comment from three years to one and a half. It had also significantly boosted the number of reports reviewed, thanks to a substantial increase in the duration of its sessions. However, in view of the massive number of States parties and growing report backlog, the General Assembly should consider increasing its resources.

3. In 2017, The Committee would begin receiving periodic reports, most of which would be prepared using the simplified reporting procedure, and it had appointed focal points to follow up on its concluding observations and views. It provided capacity-building for requesting States and had consistently endeavoured to facilitate the participation of civil society in its work. In the context of its fruitful partnership with the independent monitoring frameworks, it had recently adopted guidelines on their participation (CRPD/C/16/2).

4. It continued to work closely with the Conference of States Parties, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, and it had participated in the workshop on enhancing cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms in October 2014. Its many activities included participation in the World Humanitarian Summit, the Summit on Climate Change and the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as consultation on various documents prepared by other United Nations treaty bodies and mechanisms. It had also submitted a position paper to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and had urged ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

5. To further increase the visibility of its work, it had organized worldwide commemorations of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. In her opinion, the Committee's success was due to its work ethic, its independence and impartiality, its unity in consensus and divergence and its diverse membership.

6. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico), noting the provision of sign language interpretation and captioning services at the meeting, said that they should be available at all United Nations meetings. In response to the Committee's concluding observations on its initial report, Mexico had established a working group to implement its recommendations and had undertaken a broad review of federal, state and local laws. It would appreciate hearing the Chair's views on overcoming obstacles to political participation and equal recognition before the law, including legal capacity, as well as on good practices for the participation of disabled persons' organizations in the implementation of the Convention. It was also concerned about the Committee's composition in terms of gender equality and geographic distribution.

7. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the States parties were increasingly open to participation by persons with disabilities in implementing the Convention and evaluating its implementation, and the Committee itself received very concise and useful contributions from their organizations. States were making progress on both the right to vote and political representation and were generally eager to review their laws as the first step towards ensuring equal representation before the law, including with respect to legal capacity. In that connection, the Organization of American States had compiled a large number of good practices for the exercise of legal capacity of persons with disabilities. To increase the number of women on the treaty body committees, States needed to propose and elect women candidates.

8. **Mr. Al-Hussaini** (Iraq) said that the Constitution guaranteed the rights of persons with disabilities and special needs, and Iraq had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013. Measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities included a requirement for government departments to reserve three per cent of all positions for persons with disabilities and to provide them with

specific facilities. A specific number of units in new housing developments were reserved for persons with disabilities, and accessibility issues were taken into account in building design. A committee had been formed with membership from Government ministries to address issues relevant to persons with disabilities, and a fund had been established to promote their rights. The Government had also established a social rehabilitation program in cooperation with international health organizations and civil society.

9. The Government had created an academic curriculum for children with disabilities, and those children were integrated in both academic and vocational streams in schools all over Iraq at all grade levels. He asked for recommendations regarding psychological support services for persons with disabilities.

10. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the representative of Iraq might refer to the Committee's general comment No. 4 for additional guidance on inclusive education. Although not all children with disabilities needed psychological support, it should be an integral part of an inclusive education system and should be tailored to the needs of each child.

11. **Ms. Laissue** (Switzerland), welcoming the recent general comments on women and girls with disabilities and the right to inclusive education, asked if they had arisen from a need identified after reviewing the reports of States parties. She would also like to know in what areas the United Nations could contribute more actively to promoting the rights of women with disabilities and the right to education and how the Committee could work more closely with the other treaty bodies to optimize its treatment of such cross-cutting issues.

12. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the Committee used the general comments to provide clear, specific recommendations for the States parties on what it considered priority issues. States parties could contribute substantially to mainstreaming disability issues by raising them in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as in their reports to the various treaty bodies and the high-level political forum.

13. **Ms. Fujiwara** (Japan) said that her country had worked hard for the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and welcomed the adoption of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action in May. She would appreciate hearing the Chair's views on how to address the multiple barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian crises.

14. *Ms. Węgrzynowska (Poland), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

15. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that general comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities provided guidelines for situations of risk and humanitarian crises, but that steps should also be taken to ensure that those women and girls could exercise their legal capacity and had access to other rights such as education.

16. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union was proud to be the only international organization that was party to the Convention and was pleased with the outcome of its first-ever review by a treaty body and the follow-up process. The Convention had brought a paradigm shift in the rights of persons with disabilities by recognizing their role in its implementation. The European Union approached the Sustainable Development Goals from a rights-based perspective. Welcoming the new general comments on inclusive education and women and girls with disabilities, he asked if the Chair was aware of any best practices on gender sensitivity among regional organizations.

17. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that regional human rights monitoring mechanisms should be guided by the Committee's jurisprudence and general comments. The time was ripe for integrating the perspective of disabled women into social development.

18. **Ms. Cid Carreño** (Chile) said that the work of the Chair, particularly with regard to promoting gender-related issues, raising the profile of the Committee and emphasizing the importance of geographic representation and monitoring implementation at all levels, had been highly effective.

19. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that she had been inspired by the need to bring women with disabilities to the fore and by her perspective as the citizen of a developing country.

20. **Ms. Westaway** (Australia) said that her country was working with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, the United Nations Statistical Division and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to collect, analyse and report disability-disaggregated data. It also supported the development of individual-level data. She would appreciate suggestions about other ways that States providing international development assistance could support efforts to improve data.

21. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the Committee valued the cooperation of developed countries such as Australia, which made it possible to build the data collection and analysis capacities of developing countries and obtain the best possible disaggregated data. The Committee had relied heavily on available data and statistics to develop the indicators in its guidelines on periodic reporting under the simplified reporting procedure (CRPD/C/3).

22. **Mr. Araújo Prado** (Brazil) asked how gender balance affected the work of the Committee.

23. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that it was important to have the perspective of women, who constituted half of the world's population, in all United Nations bodies. Furthermore, in the case of her Committee, there were activities that required the presence of a woman. She again urged the States to field women candidates and vote for them. There had been competent women candidates who had not been elected.

24. **Mr. Carabali Baquero** (Colombia) said that his country had appreciated the constructive spirit during the interactive dialogue with the Committee on its initial report and had found most of its observations to be accurate and appropriate. However, some questions had not reflected a thorough understanding of its report or replies to the list of issues. It was essential to allot sufficient time for the States to prepare complete

answers and for the Committee members to consider the States' arguments carefully.

25. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the interactive dialogue gave ample time for the State party's initial statement. Next came questions on articles 1 to 10, to which the State party replied, and then questions on articles 11 to 20. The following day, after an evening's preparation, the State elaborated on its answers to the first set of questions and replied to the remaining questions. The dialogue ended with concluding remarks by the representative of the State party and the country rapporteur. Time was also allotted for the State party to present any additional information it wished for the Committee to consider in the concluding observations. The Committee carefully evaluated the State party's report and its responses to the list of issues, but it also received reports from other reliable sources, and its questions and concluding observations were based on all of the information received. She would certainly bring his concerns to the attention of the Committee, but he could rest assured that the Committee adhered to an orderly and rigorous process.

26. **Ms. Lekalakala** (South Africa) said that, in keeping with its obligations under the Convention, her country was developing a disability equality index and had adopted a new national disability rights policy. Her delegation reiterated its call for universal ratification of the Convention.

27. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that he would appreciate hearing her views on how to approach the issues of older persons from the disability perspective and what steps should be taken to protect and promote the rights of older persons with disabilities.

28. **Ms. Cisternas Reyes** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) said that the Committee had addressed the issues of older persons in its jurisprudence and general comments, including the general comment on women and girls with disabilities. Its recommendations related to various articles of the Convention. As for what could or should be done to promote and protect the rights of older persons, insofar as they were disabled, they were protected under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, for non-disability-related protections, it was necessary to look to all of the other human rights

conventions, as had been the case for persons with disabilities before the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

29. **Ms. Devandas-Aguilar** (Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities), introducing her report (A/71/314), said that to uphold their historic commitment to inclusive development in the 2030 Agenda, Member States must tackle the grave marginalization of persons with disabilities, the vast majority of whom were systematically ignored at great social cost to them and to their families. However, the economic cost to their countries was also considerable, since they did not participate in the labour market.

30. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was the best tool for providing the conditions and support they needed to share in the process and results of development. The Convention compelled States parties to consider disability-related issues in all public policies and programmes and to ensure that persons with disabilities played a role in their development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To comply with the Convention, persons with disabilities must be treated as rights holders, not benefit recipients.

31. Under the Convention, States should have strong laws that prohibited any form of discrimination on the basis of disability and provided accessible, effective redress for violations, including the denial of reasonable accommodation. In that connection, she recalled the urgent need for measures to address the intersectional discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities.

32. States should require accessible environments, transport, information and communications and should establish accessible design standards for structures, spaces and services. They should have time-bound accessibility strategies and action plans as well as plans for measuring progress and effective redress mechanisms for violations of accessibility requirements. Worldwide, accessibility compliance was low, even in developed countries.

33. States should provide free assistive devices and technologies to anyone with a disability, as well as personal assistance, communications and decision-making support and services to facilitate access to education, employment and justice. Unfortunately, in

many developing countries, access to assistive devices and technologies was extremely limited, and access to personal assistance was practically non-existent.

34. To develop disability policies, monitor their implementation and measure progress, States needed statistics. She therefore welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Statistical Division, the Washington Group on Disability and various United Nations agencies to ensure that statistical data could be disaggregated by disability and compared internationally.

35. Disability policies and programmes should be developed, monitored and implemented with the full participation of persons with disabilities. To assist States, her Office had prepared a thematic study on the right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making (A/HRC/31/62) which contained specific guidelines for ensuring their participation.

36. **Ms. Andersen** (Norway) asked what could be done to ensure the active involvement of persons with intellectual disabilities in the design, implementation and evaluation of disability policies and programmes.

37. **Ms. Naeem** (Maldives) said that the Maldives was working across all sectors to mainstream disability awareness and remove barriers that prevented the effective participation of persons with disabilities in society. The Government emphasized inclusive education and provided priority housing, free assistive devices and disability allowances. However, as a thinly populated small island developing State, the Maldives faced significant challenges, particularly with respect to the cost of service delivery. Such difficulties must be recognized, and she would like to hear more on that subject.

38. **Ms. Karimdoost** (Islamic Republic of Iran), noting that her country had recently made all of the entrances to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accessible to persons with disabilities, said that in the report on the realization of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (A/71/214), the Secretary-General recommended the application of principles of universal design in all aspects of urban development. She would like to know whether those principles were considered fully applicable in all countries.

39. **Mr. Carabali Baquero** (Colombia) said that States should adopt rights-based disability policies, strengthen their mechanisms for promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and actively encourage non-discrimination, accessibility and the availability of accessible support services. It was important to include the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in international discussions of inclusive development.

40. **Ms. Duncan Villalobos** (Costa Rica) said that her country had established a national disability council to advise public and private entities on integrating the disability perspective in their plans, policies, services and programmes. It was also developing a national disability information system. She asked how States could best support efforts to improve inclusion and accessibility at the United Nations, as well as what type of data States should be collecting. How important was disaggregation?

41. **Ms. Al-Muraikhi** (Qatar) said that her country had been among the first to ratify the Convention and had worked tirelessly to fulfil its obligations, including by adopting a social and economic rights-based, disability-inclusive approach in the Qatar National Vision 2030, She would like to know what steps should be taken to make persons with disabilities a priority in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

42. **Ms. Lavalle** (Mexico) said that her Government's policies encouraged the inclusion of persons with disabilities, although it recognized the need for further action. It agreed with the importance of creating mechanisms to ensure the participation of organizations for persons with disabilities in the development, implementation and monitoring of disability policies and programmes. She would like to know more about good practices for ensuring that persons with disabilities had full access to legal remedies at the subnational level and about successful programmes on access to the labour market, health services, education and social security.

43. **Ms. Anichina** (Russian Federation) said that the decision of the International Paralympic Committee to block Russian athletes from the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro had infringed the rights of athletes with disabilities. The politically motivated decision violated the principle of non-discrimination and was based on the unacceptable principle of collective punishment.

International sports events and sports in general should not be used to exert political influence.

44. **Mr. Araújo Prado** (Brazil) said that the absence of a stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on persons with disabilities reinforced the principle that the promotion and protection of their rights should be a cross-cutting issue. Brazil recognized the importance of ensuring comprehensive accessibility and social inclusion as well as changing the cultural perception of disability. Recalling the recent Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, he reiterated its commitment to the Paralympic Movement.

45. **Ms. Carl** (United States of America) said that the report rightly emphasized non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation, as well as the importance of accessibility, assistive technologies, developing indicators and monitoring. However, there was no universal agreement on some of the practices mentioned, such as providing assistive technologies and support services under a State's universal health care system. As indicated in the report, historical preservation regulations sometimes conflicted with accessibility requirements. She wondered how those competing interests could be reconciled.

46. **Ms. Devandas-Aguilar** (Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities), referring to measures to promote the participation of persons with intellectual disabilities, said that, within the United Nations system, she had begun publishing all of her reports in easy-to-read versions and hoped to see the practice extended system-wide. Also, for the first time, a person with intellectual disabilities had recently been elected to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In the civil sphere, one of the first international forums of persons with intellectual disabilities would soon take place. However, both the United Nations system and States needed to invest substantially more in educating persons with intellectual disabilities to participate in decision-making, and States should review all legislation limiting the legal capacity of persons with disabilities, which primarily affected those with intellectual disabilities.

47. With regard to disability-inclusive social protection, developing countries faced greater challenges. If countries such as Zambia could implement inclusive systems, however, it should be

possible for the vast majority of countries to do so, especially with the availability of cost-saving new technologies.

48. The principles of universal design, which aimed to ensure universal accessibility, were applicable everywhere. When there was a conflict between accessibility requirements and historical preservation, solutions could generally be found, and she would be happy to discuss best practices after the meeting.

49. Disaggregated data were essential for the implementation of the Convention. There was a growing need for technical assistance, and it was vital for the United Nations system to be able to provide support to national statistical offices on disaggregating data and including the Washington Group set of questions in all demographic surveys. Furthermore, States must commit to reporting regularly to the high-level political forum on how they disaggregated data and the actions they took to promote social inclusion.

50. The situation of older persons with disabilities had always been part of the Special Rapporteur's mandate. In 2017, an expert meeting would be held to explore the intersections between the situation of older persons and that of persons with disabilities. Any international instrument on the rights of older persons should be based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

51. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that in order to ensure that persons with disabilities shared in the fruits of economic and social development, China had enacted a law on the protection of persons with disabilities and had set up interdepartmental committees at all levels of governance to coordinate disability matters. It had established comprehensive measures to improve their standard of living and gave full consideration to their needs in the areas of education, employment, social security, poverty reduction, sports and information technology. It stood ready to strengthen its cooperation with other countries on disability issues.

52. **Ms. Marteles Gutiérrez del Alamo** (Spain) said that her country's laws provided a broad legal framework that addressed the concerns mentioned in the report. Spain had a highly decentralized form of governance, and examples of good practices for facilitating coordination between the national and

subnational levels and equalizing the services and benefits provided would be of interest to her delegation.

53. **Ms. Wahid** (Australia) said that her country recognized the intersection of gender inequality and disability and was committed to addressing the imbalances of power and intersectoral discrimination experienced by women and girls with disabilities. Ideas on how to address imbalances of power would be welcome.

54. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that the rights of persons with disabilities were protected under her country's 2011 Constitution and new disabilities law. Morocco had recently developed a public policy to promote the rights of persons with disabilities that encompassed the development of indicators and collection of data. She would appreciate recommendations concerning cooperation among States on non-discrimination policies.

55. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that disability-inclusive policies should focus on the most marginalized groups. The European Union remained committed to developing such policies, as evidenced by the recent proposed directive on a European disability act. He asked what were the key considerations for involving persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in policy development and what could be done to improve cooperation within and between States and other actors.

56. **Ms. Otto** (Palau), noting that as a small island State, Palau had first-hand knowledge of the importance of integrating the needs of persons with disabilities in emergency response planning, inquired about the interrelationship between climate change and disabilities. She would also like to know how disability-inclusive policies could best address the needs of persons with psycho-social and intellectual disabilities and what constituted the minimum set of reasonable accommodations for them.

57. **Ms. Lekalakala** (South Africa), concurring with the need to provide affordable assistive devices and support services, said that she would appreciate hearing her views on how States could best deal with development challenges whilst fully discharging their obligations under the Convention, as well as on how

States could be helped to address infrastructure challenges, particularly with regard to the collection of disaggregated data.

58. **Ms. Hasan** (Indonesia) said that her country's recently enacted law on persons with disabilities, developed in partnership with disabled persons' and other civil society organizations, marked a shift towards a human rights-based approach to disability. She asked what could be done to ensure more coherent intersectoral coordination among stakeholders in designing and implementing disability-inclusive policies.

59. **Ms. Devandas-Aguilar** (Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities) said that she would address gender-equality-related questions in an upcoming report. She would be meeting soon with the Special Rapporteur on the right to health to discuss the needs of persons with psycho-social disabilities with a view to a thematic report in that area as well. With respect to the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, the delegations would find suggestions in her March report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/31/62](#)).

60. In the case of decentralized systems of government such as the system in Spain, it was important to base subnational laws on a national framework law and to discuss the funding for implementing those subnational laws at the national level. Steps should be taken to restore the role of the communities in service delivery and to facilitate policy development at the community level.

61. On the issue of coordination, the United Nations needed a system-wide action plan that addressed both technical capacities and implementation of the different instruments. In keeping with her central focus of changing society's perception of disability, she had worked with some of the Geneva-based agencies to organize the A Day for All celebration, which would take place on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

62. Climate change-related internal displacement was particularly traumatic for disabled people. Despite the positive contribution of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action,

much more work was required in the area of emergency response protocols.

63. With regard to international cooperation, while more resources were needed, the limited resources already available could be better deployed. In particular, it was imperative to halt international cooperation efforts that created barriers for persons with disabilities.

64. **Ms. Ero** (Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism), introducing her report (A/71/255), said that albinos faced problems comparable to those of minorities discriminated against on the basis of colour and were protected under racial discrimination laws. Her report gave a preliminary overview of the root causes of the problem based on relevant literature, findings from a recent consultation forum and responses to a questionnaire sent to Member States, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations.

65. Albinos were abducted, hunted down and hacked to death alive for their body parts. One of the root causes was culturally entrenched misbeliefs about persons with albinism: that they were ghosts who could not really be killed and that their body parts had potent magical powers, for example. Unfortunately, information on the scientific basis of albinism was often insufficient to unseat such beliefs.

66. A closely related root cause was the belief in witchcraft, which did not seem constrained by socioeconomic class, level of education or rural or urban context. Efforts to combat the practice were complicated by the ambiguity between witchcraft and traditional medicine, the difficulty of identifying practitioners, a reluctance to give witchcraft legal character and the outdated nature of many of the existing legal instruments.

67. Given the black market value of the body parts, poverty was also a root cause. Aggravating factors included socioeconomic pressures, the visibility of persons with albinism among dark-skinned people, their demeaning portrayal in films and literature and impunity and weak judicial response. Albinos were at greater risk in remote rural areas, especially where weak border patrol facilitated cross-border trafficking in persons and body parts.

68. The report recommended sustained public education with a focus on rural and border communities; legal provisions to combat trafficking in body parts; clarification of what constituted witchcraft as opposed to traditional medicine in order to deal adequately with the former and regulate the latter; adequate sanctions for discrimination against persons with albinism; continued efforts to address poverty; reasonable accommodation for visual impairment, especially in schools; free or affordable sun protection products and skin cancer treatment and stronger cross-border cooperation on trafficking in persons and body parts. Given the relatively small size of the albino population, cost was not a factor. She also recommended mainstreaming efforts to protect albinos in existing social protection programmes.

69. **Ms. Mbuya** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that in June 2016 her country had hosted the consultative forum on action on albinism in Africa. During its universal periodic review, it had accepted the recommendation to give priority to the investigation and prosecution of crimes against persons with albinism. Albinos were protected under the Penal Code and the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010, and a special task force had been established to arrest and convict perpetrators of crimes against them. Her Government included religious leaders, the community and local governments in its efforts and was in the process of reviewing pertinent legislation. Although it guaranteed free health care for persons with albinism, its efforts were constrained by limited resources.

70. **Mr. Yusuf** (Somalia), particularly welcoming the Independent Expert's country visits, asked what strategies she considered potentially effective for combating witchcraft practices, given their entrenched nature.

71. **Ms. Nunoshiba** (Japan) said that the problems faced by persons with albinism should be approached from both a human rights and a social development perspective.

72. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union was concerned at the rise in human rights violations against persons with albinism and at the absence of specific legislation to protect them in many countries. He would welcome ideas on how to ensure real changes.

73. **Ms. Simovich** (Israel) asked about the results of the 2016 country visits and for her opinion on the best way to tackle witchcraft practices, which some considered a matter of cultural and religious freedom.

74. **Ms. Goldrick** (Panama) said that her country educated albinos on sun protection products and had specialists who cauterized skin cancers in the albino population. She would welcome more information on best practices for discouraging attacks on persons with albinism.

75. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that his Government had adopted a multisectoral action plan involving the media, awareness-raising campaigns and the collection and analysis of data on albinos. However, as the roots of the problem went beyond national borders, it should also be addressed through international cooperation.

76. **Ms. Ero** (Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism) said that, while the very considerable efforts of the Republic of Tanzania were paying off, it needed to develop clear strategies for allowing albinos who had sought refuge in special centres to return home safely. Regarding witchcraft practices, she would be working with other experts to analyse the problem holistically and make recommendations for combating it. Witchcraft, which affected other groups, should be addressed through criminal law and social tools. She was working with African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to develop a regional action plan. She wished to recognize Malawi and Mozambique for the highly commendable, precedent-setting actions they had taken within a few months following her visit, such as amending the Penal Code, reviewing witchcraft provisions and adopting trafficking laws. With regard to best practices, given the lethal nature of skin cancer among albinos, one very good example was the establishment of an integrated mobile clinic service to serve albinos where they lived.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.