



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Honduras*

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the second periodic report of Honduras on its implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/HND/2) at its 26th and 27th meetings, held on 8 and 9 June 2016 (E/C.12/2016/SR.26 and SR.27), and adopted the present concluding observations at its 49th meeting, on 24 June 2016.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the second periodic report of Honduras, notwithstanding the delay of nearly eight years, and expresses its appreciation for the written replies provided to the list of issues (E/C.12/HND/Q/2/Add.1). The Committee also expresses its appreciation for the open and constructive dialogue held with the high-level delegation of the State party.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the State party's ratification of or accession to the following international instruments:

(a) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, on 10 October 2002;

(b) The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, on 9 August 2005;

(c) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 14 April 2008, and its Optional Protocol, on 16 August 2010;

(d) The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons against Enforced Disappearance, on 1 April 2008;

(e) The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, on 23 May 2006;

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-eighth session (6-24 June 2016).



- (f) The First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on 7 June 2005;
 - (g) The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, on 1 April 2008;
 - (h) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 14 August 2002;
 - (i) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, on 8 May 2002.
4. The Committee also welcomes the State party's adoption of:
- (a) The Food and Nutrition Security Act, on 29 March 2011, and the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Strategy, on 24 August 2010;
 - (b) The Public Policy and National Action Plan on Human Rights, on 12 March 2013;
 - (c) The Social Protection Policy, on 8 March 2012;
 - (d) The National Policy on Women and the Second Gender Equality and Equity Plan 2010-2022;
 - (e) The National Mental Health Policy, in 2004.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Justiciability of the Covenant rights

5. The Committee welcomes the valuable information provided by the State party on cases in which the Covenant has been invoked by courts at the highest levels, but regrets that this practice continues to be quite limited. The Committee also welcomes the delegation's statement that consultations need to be launched on ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.

6. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the necessary steps to promote the enjoyment of all the rights recognized in the Covenant, such as by offering training on the content of those rights, including the Committee's general comments concerning what those rights cover, publicizing the possibility of invoking the Covenant before the courts, with a special focus on judges, lawyers and law enforcement officials and on members of the National Congress and other officials responsible for implementation of the Covenant, and organizing awareness campaigns for rights holders. The Committee draws the State party's attention to general comment No. 9 (1998) on the domestic application of the Covenant, and asks that it include in its next report information on cases in which Covenant rights have been invoked by the national courts. The Committee encourages the State party to continue its efforts towards ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant.**

Cooperation with civil society

7. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on its efforts to increase involvement by civil society organizations, but it is concerned that initiatives thus far have been insufficient to guarantee full, broad and representative participation by stakeholders across society.

8. **The Committee recommends that the State party make a greater effort to establish constructive cooperation with civil society organizations with a view to**

ensuring their active, open and transparent participation in public affairs, in particular in the country-wide implementation of the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations and in the preparation of its next periodic report.

Protection of human rights defenders

9. The Committee welcomes the State party's acknowledgement of the role played by human rights defenders and takes note of the passing into law of the Act on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Officials. It is concerned, however, that some of that law's provisions do not guarantee effective protection for human rights defenders and that the resources allocated are not sufficient to ensure the law's effective implementation. The Committee is alarmed by the defamation of, threats made against and, especially, the murder of human rights defenders, including those who defend economic, social and cultural rights, and leaders of indigenous and Afro-Honduran groups; it is especially alarmed by the recent murders of Berta Cáceres and René Martínez.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Investigate all complaints and attacks on the life or physical integrity of human rights defenders thoroughly and effectively, including those who defend economic, social and cultural rights, to which end the Committee recommends that it take specific action such as establishing a special prosecutor's unit within the Public Prosecution Service to investigate such crimes, allocating appropriate human, financial and technical resources for this purpose. The Committee also recommends the State party investigate the recent murders of Berta Cáceres and René Martínez, duly punish those found responsible and widely disseminate the results of the investigations;**

(b) **Take effective and prompt action to prevent any and all acts of violence against human rights defenders and provide effective protection of their life and personal integrity;**

(c) **Ensure that the Act on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators and Justice Officials is effectively implemented, including by allocating appropriate human, financial and technical resources for this purpose;**

(d) **Investigate any and all acts of harassment, bullying or defamation of human rights defenders in connection with the performance of their functions and organize information campaigns to raise awareness about the crucial work done by human rights defenders with a view to creating a climate of tolerance in which they can perform their work free of intimidation, threats or reprisals of any kind.**

Rights of indigenous peoples

11. The Committee welcomes the information provided on the drafting of the framework legislation on prior, free and informed consultation, but it is concerned by reports that indigenous peoples were not properly involved in that drafting process. It is also concerned by reports of failure to respect indigenous peoples' right of prior consultation with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent in respect of decision-making processes that could have an impact on them and that often their views are not taken into account when concessions are granted for the exploitation of natural resources or other development projects. Notwithstanding the State party's efforts in demarcating indigenous lands, the Committee notes with concern that there is limited protection of indigenous peoples' right to dispose freely of their lands and natural wealth and resources (art. 1 (2)).

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Launch a broad-based process of consultation with indigenous peoples to involve them in a participatory way in the preparation of the draft framework law on prior and informed consultation;**

(b) **Ensure that the aforementioned legislation is in compliance with best international standards, including the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;**

(c) **Ensure that indigenous peoples are regularly consulted with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent in respect of decision-making processes that may affect their ability to exercise their economic, social and cultural rights, and ensure that their views are respected;**

(d) **Take additional measures to safeguard the right of indigenous peoples to dispose freely of their lands, territory and natural resources, including through legal recognition and protection as necessary.**

National Human Rights Commission

13. The Committee is concerned by the fact that the National Human Rights Commission lacks the necessary resources, independence and credibility to carry out its mandate effectively and that the institution has been downgraded to category B status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (previously called the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights) (art. 2 (1)).

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure that the National Human Rights Commission is in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and can thus discharge its mandate with regard to economic, social and cultural rights.**

Independence of the judiciary

15. The Committee is concerned by the lack of effective guarantees to ensure the independence and impartiality of judges, magistrates and other judicial officials (art. 2 (1)).

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all steps necessary to ensure that judges and magistrates are selected and appointed by an independent body, in full transparency and with priority given to merit, ability and integrity. In addition, the Committee urges the State party to take all necessary action to guarantee the independence and safety of the judiciary in the exercise of its functions and thereby safeguard the enjoyment of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.**

Corruption

17. While the Committee takes note of the establishment of the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras and of the efforts deployed to investigate corruption at the Honduran Social Security Institute, it is concerned that the anti-corruption effort is not achieving the necessary results (art. 2 (1)).

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party should, as a matter of priority, tackle the root causes of corruption, take all legislative and administrative action**

necessary to ensure transparency in government, both under the law and in practice, and effectively combat corruption and impunity in the public sector.

Fiscal policy and investment in social spending

19. The Committee is concerned that, the recent reforms notwithstanding, the State party's tax policy is not contributing enough to reducing poverty by closing the large inequality gap and that it hinders its ability to collect sufficient revenue to ensure the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee finds it regrettable that no detailed information was provided on budget allocations to the education, health, housing and social security sectors that would make it possible to evaluate compliance with the requirement for maximum use of available resources (art. 2 (1)). The Committee is similarly concerned by illicit monetary flows and tax evasion and fraud in the State party.

20. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the tax code which is being drafted include a tax policy that is progressive and socially just with a view to increasing the funding available to be allocated for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee further recommends that the drafting of the new code and the allocation of budget funds both be done in a way that is transparent and participatory. The Committee requests the State party to provide information in its next periodic report on the annual allocation of resources for the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee urges the State party to take rigorous measures to combat illicit monetary flows and tax evasion and fraud.

Discrimination

21. The Committee is concerned that the State party does not yet have a comprehensive anti-discrimination framework reflecting all the criteria stipulated in the Covenant. It is further concerned by the lack of comprehensive and effective measures for fighting discrimination against indigenous peoples, Hondurans of African descent and persons living with HIV/AIDS and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (art. 2).

22. The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that ensures adequate protection against discrimination consistent with article 2 of the Covenant, bearing in mind as well the Committee's general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights, and that in particular it should:

- (a) Explicitly include all the prohibited grounds for discrimination listed in article 2 of the Covenant and in the Committee's general comment No. 20 (2009);**
- (b) Eliminate from its domestic legal order any provision that might be discriminatory on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity or impede the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender persons;**
- (c) Define direct and indirect discrimination in a manner that is consistent with its obligations under the Covenant;**
- (d) Prohibit discrimination in both the public and the private spheres;**
- (e) Implement effective legal and administrative arrangements to provide protection against discrimination, including by establishing provisions that allow for reparation in cases of discrimination;**

(f) **Take all steps necessary to prevent and combat ongoing discrimination against all disadvantaged or marginalized persons or groups, including through awareness campaigns, so that those persons and groups may fully exercise their Covenant rights.**

Gender equality

23. Notwithstanding the implementation of the Second Gender Equality and Equity Plan 2010-2022, the Committee is concerned by the continued inequality between men and women, in particular in terms of access to employment, health care and social security. The Committee regrets that rural women, indigenous women and women of African descent continue to be victims of multiple and cross-sectoral discrimination, which is reflected in the high poverty rate among these groups (art. 3).

24. **In the light of its general comment No. 16 (2005) on the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take the necessary legislative and other measures to eliminate the persistent inequality between men and women and seek to ensure unrestricted access for women to education, employment, health care, social security and land;**

(b) **Adopt measures to eradicate the multiple and cross-sectoral discrimination faced by rural women, indigenous women and women of African descent by incorporating the principle of gender equality into resource allocation and poverty reduction policies, among other measures.**

Violence against women

25. The Committee is deeply concerned by the continued existence of stereotypes and attitudes that lead to violence against women and finds it regrettable that, notwithstanding the steps taken by the State party, there continues to be a climate of impunity and fear that prevents victims from reporting acts of violence (arts. 3 and 10).

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take all necessary steps to effectively prevent acts of violence against women, including domestic violence and femicide;**

(b) **Step up its efforts to provide protection to all victims of violence, ensuring that they have access to justice through effective remedies, including means of obtaining reparation and compensation, and suitable access to shelters where they can receive immediate physical protection, legal advice and physical and mental health care;**

(c) **Thoroughly investigate cases of violence against women, including domestic violence and femicide, and order appropriate punishment for those found responsible;**

(d) **Organize information campaigns to raise public awareness, and provide law enforcement officials and judges with training as to the seriousness and criminal nature of violence against women, including domestic violence.**

Unemployment and underemployment

27. The Committee is concerned that the various programmes launched by the State party, such as the National Hourly Employment Programme and the “Life is Better with a Job” Presidential Programme, are not effective enough in bringing down the high rates of unemployment and underemployment. The Committee is concerned by the information

received about the number of people working in the informal economy, who are thus not covered by labour legislation or the social protection system (arts. 6, 7 and 9).

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Intensify its efforts to bring down the high unemployment and underemployment rates by, for instance, designing a comprehensive employment policy that includes a plan of action with specific targets and is focused on the groups most vulnerable to unemployment and underemployment, such as young people, women and persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Take all steps necessary to gradually regularize the informal sector of the economy, providing persons working in that sector with access to basic labour benefits, social protection and other rights recognized in the Covenant.**

Minimum wage

29. The Committee notes the progress achieved through social dialogue in determining the minimum wage, but is concerned that the minimum wage is not sufficient to ensure a decent standard of living for workers and their families. It is also concerned that a significant number of workers earn less than the minimum wage (art. 7).

30. **The Committee urges the State party to take the necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure that all workers receive a minimum wage sufficient to ensure decent living conditions for them and their families in accordance with article 7 (a) (ii) of the Covenant.**

Working conditions for women

31. The Committee finds it regrettable that women continue to be subjected to poor working conditions in some sectors, including unsuitable workplace conditions, low wages, negligible job security and risk of exploitation and violence (art. 7).

32. **In the light of its general comment No. 23 (2016), on the right to just and favourable conditions of work, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take the necessary measures to improve working conditions for women, in particular for those employed in the maquila sector and in domestic work, so that they may enjoy the same working conditions as other workers;**

(b) **Strengthen the mandate and capacity of labour inspectors to enable them to effectively monitor the working conditions of women employed in the maquila sector and in domestic work;**

(c) **Establish effective mechanisms for the reporting of abuse or exploitation, bearing in mind the vulnerable status of women employed in the maquila sector and in domestic work;**

(d) **Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).**

Equal pay for work of equal value

33. The Committee notes with concern that article 44 of the Equal Opportunities for Women Act does not recognize the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It is also concerned by the information received about the continued and significant disparity between women and men in this regard (art. 7).

34. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure equality between men and women as to equal remuneration for work of equal value, as set forth in article 7 (a) (i) of the Covenant, both in its legislation and, for example, by conducting**

comparative studies on equal pay for work of equal value among all organizations and professions, with a view to formulating a comprehensive strategy in this regard.

Social security

35. The Committee welcomes the reforms under way in the social security system pursuant to the Framework Act on the Social Protection System. It is concerned, however, that the social security system still does not cover a significant portion of the population and that the State party does not yet have a universal social protection system that provides minimum essential coverage to the entire population (art. 9).

36. **Bearing in mind its general comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security and its 2015 statement on social protection floors, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Ensure that the Framework Act on the Social Protection System provides a system of social security that guarantees universal social coverage and ensures appropriate benefits for all workers and non-contributory benefits for individuals and families from the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, so that they may enjoy an adequate standard of living;**

(b) **Redouble its efforts to set social protection floors that guarantee access to basic services;**

(c) **Take the necessary steps to ensure that the social security system operates effectively, including when the responsibility for guaranteeing the enjoyment of this right, in particular with regard to the pension system, has been delegated to non-State entities.**

Children and adolescents in situations of vulnerability

37. The Committee notes with concern the information received about the vulnerable situation in which many children and adolescents live in the State party, in particular children who live in the street. The Committee regrets that the State party did not provide statistical data on the extent of the problem of street children. The Committee is also concerned by the risk that many children face of being recruited by gangs to commit crimes and by the magnitude of the problem of child labour, especially in the case of children engaged in hazardous work (art. 10).

38. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Establish a system to provide comprehensive protection for children and adolescents, in particular those living in special situations of vulnerability, such as children who live in the street;**

(b) **Conduct a thorough study on the extent of the problem of street children in order to take a comprehensive approach to addressing the problem;**

(c) **Adopt effective measures to protect children and adolescents who are victims of violence and prevent them from being recruited by gangs and used to commit crimes;**

(d) **Adopt effective measures to prevent and counter the economic exploitation of children by ensuring that child labour legislation is rigorously enforced, strengthening child labour inspection mechanisms and providing support to poor families to make sure that their children attend school;**

(e) **Ensure that all instances of economic or any other type of exploitation of children are thoroughly investigated and that those responsible are duly punished.**

Poverty

39. The Committee is concerned by the continuing high rates of poverty and extreme poverty in the State party, especially among indigenous peoples, Hondurans of African descent and persons living in rural areas. It is also concerned by the continued inequality in income and wealth in the State party (art. 11).

40. **Bearing in mind its 2001 statement on poverty and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Step up its efforts to fight poverty, especially extreme poverty, by adopting a national action plan for poverty reduction that includes a human rights perspective, pays due attention to the differences and gaps that exist between urban and rural areas and is sufficiently resourced;**

(b) **Adopt effective measures to address inequality, bearing in mind the needs of the most disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of society, in particular low-income groups, indigenous peoples, Hondurans of African descent and persons living in rural areas.**

Land conflicts and forced evictions

41. The Committee is concerned by the impact that land-grabbing and the hoarding of natural resources have had in the State party, as those practices have triggered serious conflicts, in particular in the Lower Aguán Valley, and have significantly hindered communities' enjoyment of the right to adequate food and the right to water. The Committee is concerned by the information received about the high number of peasant families who have been forcibly evicted or who are facing the risk of being forcibly evicted not only by the police but also by the armed forces and private security officers (art. 11).

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take the necessary steps to ensure fair access to land and natural resources, including the safeguarding of the land-use rights of small-scale farmers in particular;**

(b) **Channel more investment towards local-level farming activity so that small-scale farmers can increase productivity and gain greater access to local markets with a view to boosting rural income levels;**

(c) **Adopt effective measures against forced evictions in line with international human rights standards, and ensure that victims of such evictions have access to effective recourse that allows for restitution of their possessions, return to their home or land and appropriate indemnification. In this respect, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 7 (1997) on the right to adequate housing (forced evictions), which includes guidance on adequate legal remedies, adequate compensation, and consultation, among other things.**

Right to food

43. The Committee notes with concern that, notwithstanding the efforts made by the State party, rates of undernutrition, particularly among indigenous peoples, and of child malnutrition continue to be very high (art. 10).

44. **The Committee recommends that the State party redouble its efforts to safeguard the right to adequate food and strengthen its initiatives to provide an effective response to the situation of food insecurity and child malnutrition, particularly in rural areas, by establishing clear objectives with precise timelines and**

appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the progress of such initiatives. The Committee encourages the State party to take these steps in collaboration with civil society and campesino organizations. The Committee refers the State party to its general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food and to the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Exploitation of natural resources

45. The Committee notes with concern the information received about the negative impact generated by some firms' natural-resource exploitation projects, which are causing irreparable damage to the environment and impinge on the right to health and the right to an adequate standard of living of the affected communities, in particular of indigenous and Afro-Honduran peoples (arts. 1, 11 and 12).

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Draft clear guidelines and regulations for evaluating the social and environmental impact of natural-resource exploitation projects throughout the territory of the State party, in particular those carried out in territories of indigenous or Afro-Honduran peoples;**

(b) **Ensure that communities, including of indigenous or Afro-Honduran peoples, affected by the exploitation of natural resources in their territory are consulted, receive compensation for damages or losses incurred and receive a share of the profits from said activities.**

Internally displaced persons

47. The Committee is concerned at the high number of internally displaced persons resulting from the violence and general lack of public safety in the State party, as this has a negative impact on the enjoyment of the right to an adequate standard of living, in particular with regard to access to adequate housing, to basic services such as water and sanitation, and to education (art. 11).

48. **The Committee recommends that the State party take the appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures to address the root causes of the generalized situation of violence and lack of public safety in the State party. It further recommends that the State party take specific steps to prevent internal displacement and offer effective protection to internally displaced persons so they may have access to an adequate standard of living and to basic services such as water and sanitation, health, education and social assistance, including by assisting in their safe and dignified return to their place of origin wherever possible. In this regard, the Committee urges the State party to give favourable consideration to implementing the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, issued after his mission to the State party (A/HRC/32/35/Add.4), in particular with regard to economic, social and cultural rights.**

Returning Honduran migrants

49. While noting the passing into law of the Act for the Protection of Honduran Migrants and Their Families and the creation of the General Directorate for the Protection of Honduran Migrants, the Committee is concerned by the information received about the lack of appropriate measures to ensure the reintegration of returning migrants back into Honduran society, in particular the fact that many of them are obliged to work under poor employment conditions (arts. 7 and 11).

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to ensure that the Act for the Protection of Honduran Migrants and Their Families is effectively implemented and ensure that returning migrants are reintegrated into Honduran society, in particular by providing opportunities for employment under just and favourable conditions. It urges the State party to continue its efforts to improve living conditions at the centres set up to receive repatriated migrants, especially with regard to access to suitable social, legal and medical assistance, and to work with the countries of destination to coordinate programmes for the safe and dignified return of Hondurans wishing to return to the country.**

Right to health

51. Notwithstanding the efforts made under the National Health Plan, the Committee is concerned by the lack of financial and human resources, weak infrastructure, shortage of medicines and the poor quality and supply of health-care services, especially in remote and rural areas and for persons living on low incomes.

52. **The Committee recommends that the State party allocate sufficient resources to the health sector and continue its efforts to ensure the accessibility, availability and quality of health care, especially in remote and rural areas and for persons living on low incomes. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen infrastructure in the primary care system and ensure that hospitals have the necessary medical staff, supplies and emergency medicines.**

Sexual and reproductive health

53. The Committee is concerned that abortion is considered, without exception, a crime, and it is concerned about the negative impact that the ban on the use and distribution of emergency contraceptives has on women's and adolescents' exercise of the right to sexual and reproductive health (art. 12).

54. **In the light of its general comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Reconsider its ban on abortion with a view to ensuring compatibility with other fundamental rights, such as women's right to health and life, and to respecting women's dignity, in particular within the framework of the Criminal Code reform that is currently under discussion;**

(b) **Lift the ban on the distribution of emergency contraceptives and take the necessary steps to ensure the accessibility, availability and affordability of emergency contraception to all women and adolescents in the State party;**

(c) **Strengthen its efforts to curb the high teenage pregnancy rate, especially among low-income families, and ensure the accessibility and availability of sexual and reproductive health services, especially in rural areas;**

(d) **Incorporate comprehensive, age-appropriate content on sexual and reproductive health into primary and secondary education curricula for both sexes.**

Right to education

55. The Committee is concerned by the fact that free primary education is not yet universal, by the limited availability of preschool education and by the high repeat and dropout rates in both primary and secondary education. The Committee is concerned as well by the reports received about the poor quality of education in the State party and the repeated interruptions of the school year. The Committee is also concerned by reports about the Guardians of the Nation programme, which is conducted by the armed forces at military

installations, as it could lead to a risk of indoctrination and might be incompatible with the principles set forth in article 13 (1) of the Covenant (art. 13).

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Redouble its efforts to achieve universality of free primary education and to increase access to preschool education;**

(b) **Take appropriate measures to bring down the school dropout rate, in particular among disadvantaged and marginalized groups;**

(c) **Take all necessary measures to improve the quality of teaching, including by allocating sufficient resources, increasing the number and remuneration of qualified teachers and improving teaching materials and infrastructure;**

(d) **Take the necessary steps to ensure that formal education and any other type of learning activities for children and adolescents are imparted by entities specializing in children's education, rights and needs, and make sure that all forms of education and training foster active participation in a free society that promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.**

D. Other recommendations

57. **The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to progressively develop and apply appropriate indicators on the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights in order to facilitate the assessment of progress achieved by the State party in complying with its obligations under the Covenant for various segments of the population. In this connection, the Committee refers the State party to the conceptual and methodological framework for human rights indicators prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRI/MC/2008/3).**

58. **The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.**

59. **The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations broadly among all sectors of Honduran society, in particular among indigenous peoples and Hondurans of African descent, public officials, judicial authorities, legislators, lawyers and civil society organizations, and to inform the Committee, in its next periodic report, on the measures taken to implement the recommendations made herein. The Committee also encourages the State party to include civil society organizations in the national-level discussions to be held prior to the submission of the next report.**

60. **The Committee requests the State party to submit its third periodic report, prepared in conformity with the reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee in 2008 (E/C.12/2008/2), not later than 30 June 2021 and invites it to submit its common core document in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).**