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Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Paraguay

Addendum

**Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments
and replies presented by the State under review**

* The present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

1. Paraguay is grateful for the recommendations made in the course of the universal periodic review that took place on 2 February 2011. It would like to reaffirm its strong commitment to the review process and to underscore the fact that this process will benefit the citizens of Paraguay by helping to strengthen the protection of their human rights. Following a thorough consideration and analysis of the recommendations, the Government of Paraguay would like to take this opportunity to present its replies and its views on the recommendations and asks that the following replies be included in the final draft.

Recommendation 86.1

2. The Government of Paraguay accepts this recommendation on the understanding that it is in the process of being implemented within the framework of the Human Rights Council review process and the outcome adopted by the member States in March 2011. When the time comes, the Government will determine whether or not it is appropriate to brief the Council at the midpoint of the period established for the implementation of the recommendations that it has voluntarily accepted.

Recommendation 86.2

3. The Government of Paraguay accepts this recommendation on the understanding that it is in the process of being implemented. As part of its public policy, Paraguay is carrying out programmes to combat poverty and promote social inclusion. These initiatives include the National Indigenous Policy Programme (PRONAPI), which works in the areas of mitigation and support for food production for home consumption, and the ÑEMITY programme, which develops differentiated, sustainable agricultural production strategies.

4. A food security programme benefiting 76 indigenous communities is being funded by the Paraguayan-Brazilian Itaipú Binacional venture. Other initiatives now under way include a development project for indigenous communities in Paraguay that is being funded with a grant from Japan Development and the Sustainable Rural Development Project (PRODERS), which will benefit 73 indigenous communities.

5. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ethno-Development Directorate of the Paraguayan Institute for Indigenous Peoples (INDI) are working to promote family farming. Paraguay does not adopt measures to promote assimilation that fail to take into account the feelings and interests of the people involved. INDI sets up participatory economic development projects for indigenous communities through the Ethno-Development Directorate.

Recommendation 86.3

6. The Government of Paraguay accepts this recommendation on the understanding that it is in the process of being implemented. As part of that process, Act No. 4288 on the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was published in *Gaceta Oficial* No. 80 of 27 April 2011.

7. The passage of this law is an extremely significant step forward in Paraguay's effort to combat torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Civil society was consulted about this law on numerous occasions. The Government of Paraguay would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere thanks to the special procedures and international human rights bodies whose representatives played a constructive role in promoting this policy.

8. The Government believes that the application of this law and the use of the mechanisms established in other laws and regulations provide a solid foundation for the proper rehabilitation of Paraguayan victims of torture. Since a new law on the subject is now in place, it will be instructive, as a first step, to see what results it has in the short, medium and long terms and to analyse that information with a view to any future amendment or update.

9. The Government of Paraguay is, however, very optimistic about the application of Act No. 4288, which will clearly have a strong impact at the national level and particularly on the conduct of officials responsible for administering justice and maintaining law and order.

Recommendation 86.4

10. The Government of Paraguay accepts this recommendation on the understanding that it is in the process of being implemented. The ultimate objective of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare is to have a coordinated, consolidated health-care system and a national health agenda based on a human rights perspective.

11. With respect to this specific issue, a series of measures are being developed in order to provide women with better medical care when they are miscarrying, having an abortion or giving birth, to deliver improved post-partum care and to reduce the number of unsafe abortions by, among other measures, adding contraceptives to the list of essential medicines, providing universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and improving information systems. In addition, work is proceeding on the adaptation, development and dissemination of materials designed to promote a more integrated, humanized approach to care for patients who are having miscarriages.

12. The country's Family Health Units are working to implement the national, regional and local health agendas that are in place. These units make up a primary health-care network that has increased the system's coverage of the general public, including women and their specific sexual and reproductive health needs. Issues of access, the delivery of services free of charge, non-discrimination and the need to overcome social exclusion through the participation of broad sectors of the community and society are also to be addressed.

13. Within this range of objectives, women's rights are unquestionably a high priority, and every effort is being made to fully honour this commitment. The Government of Paraguay regards research and initiatives focusing on the implementation of women's right to health and life as an essential part of its duties. It is important to bear in mind that each state has particular features and special circumstances and that its people have their own customs and their own challenges to face. Taking these elements into account, in the near future the Government of Paraguay expects to achieve a significant reduction in the existing cultural, geographic and economic barriers that hinder access to health services.

14. The Secretariat for Women of the Office of the President, in coordination with the Programmes Directorate of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare, has begun to offer a series of awareness-raising and information workshops on sexual and reproductive rights and on related medical and legal issues as seen from a gender perspective. A ministerial resolution on humanized health care for patients undergoing abortions or miscarriages is also being prepared.

Recommendation 86.5

15. The Government of Paraguay accepts this recommendation on the understanding that it is in the process of being implemented. Paraguay is conducting the Sustainable Rural Development Project (PRODERS) in 73 indigenous communities. In addition, the Secretariat for Social Action has executed the Indigenous Community Food Support Plan for 2009–2010. A development project for indigenous communities in Paraguay, which is being funded by a grant from Japan Development, is building capacity through technical and financial assistance and training in production and income-generating skills. The San Fernando Indigenous Community Development Project is another example of the application of public policy at the state level.

16. In addition, Act No. 3728/09 provides that Paraguayans over 65 years of age who are living in poverty are entitled to a pension, and this includes older adults who belong to indigenous groups and communities around the country.

17. The public social development policy for 2010–2020 entitled “Paraguay for Everyone” provides for universal social and economic policies focusing on the entire population and for specific or targeted policies for families, groups and communities whose members are living in poverty and are excluded from the rest of society. There are 11 flagship programmes, including an INDI programme for safeguarding indigenous territories and a housing improvement programme of the Secretariat for Housing and Habitat (SENAVITAT) which built a total of 252 dwellings for indigenous communities in 2010 and plans to build another 452 housing units in 2011.

18. In order to provide additional information concerning issues that were not discussed in the dialogue with the Working Group, the Government of Paraguay has forwarded its report on compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

19. That report mentions the amendment of the regulations governing obligatory military service through the promulgation of Act No. 3360/07, which establishes that persons under 18 years of age may not perform military service. The report submitted by the Government of Paraguay concerning that protocol is included as an annex hereto.

20. The Republic of Paraguay would like to reiterate its gratitude to all the States that participated and expressed their views during the examination of its report as part of the universal periodic review process. All the recommendations will be taken into consideration in the application of human rights policies in the country. Paraguay also wishes to underscore the importance of taking a constructive approach to participation in the universal periodic review with a view to cooperation and the promotion of good practices. Paraguay has always been and will remain committed to such an approach and to maintaining the type of open relationship with the international community that is called for in discussing human rights issues.