



General Assembly

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fortieth session

25 February–22 March 2019

Agenda item 6

Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review *

Belize

Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its thirty-first session from 5 to 16 November 2018. The review of Belize was held at the 12th meeting, on 12 November 2018. The delegation of Belize was headed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Patrick Andrews. At its 17th meeting, held on 15 November 2018, the Working Group adopted the report on Belize.

2. On 10 January 2018, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Belize: Ecuador, Nigeria and Qatar.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Belize:

- (a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/1);
- (b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/2);
- (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/31/BLZ/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Brazil, Liechtenstein, Portugal, on behalf of the Group of Friends on national implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay was transmitted to Belize through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation stated that Belize looked forward to constructively engaging with the member States of the Working Group in order to receive insights on how to overcome some of the challenges faced by the country in the implementation of the recommendations.

6. The preparation of its report for the universal periodic review had provided Belize with an unparalleled opportunity to reflect on the significance of human rights in the context of its national development. Since the previous review, Belize had become party to several international human rights treaties. It remained committed to providing timely reports to international human rights mechanisms; delayed submission was a reflection of inadequate technical, financial and human capacity.

7. To address the issue of late reporting, Belize was cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme to build capacity in that area. Belize was conscious of the importance of a national mechanism for the implementation, reporting and follow-up to the recommendations formulated by international human rights mechanisms and had scheduled consultations with both the public sector and civil society to prepare a draft five-year plan on fulfilling reporting obligations and following up on recommendations.

8. The delegation acknowledged the need for an independent human rights institution in Belize. The Government had commissioned a feasibility study on the matter and requested support from OHCHR. Although Belize did not have a single overarching national human rights institution, it had a number of specialized institutions, particularly focusing on the rights of women, children, the elderly and persons living with HIV. Additionally, the Office of the Ombudsman received and investigated complaints in relation to any public

authority.

9. The Constitution guaranteed the protection of every person from any type of discrimination and the Government was developing an anti-discrimination bill intended to address non-discrimination in a comprehensive manner. Two human rights observatories had also been established to raise awareness of discriminatory laws and procedures for persons living with HIV. Following a request from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex community, the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional the section in the Criminal Code criminalizing sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex.

10. Belize had put in place measures to effectively address excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, including through strengthened inter-agency cooperation between relevant State bodies. The Police Department and the Office of the Ombudsman had signed a memorandum of understanding to investigate complaints, conduct training and joint field operations, and elaborate standard operating procedures to speed up the investigation and processing of complaints. Additionally, offices of the Professional Standards Branch had been established countrywide, with the task of addressing complaints of abuse or other wrongdoing by law enforcement agents. A public education programme to raise awareness among the population of their rights and responsibilities was also about to be implemented.

11. Belize had made significant improvements in addressing prolonged pretrial detention. Among other measures, the Criminal Procedures Rules now specified the time frame for custody, particularly for cases of murder, and two judges had been appointed to the Supreme Court to assist with the backlog of cases. Even though the death penalty had not been abolished, it had not been applied in Belize for over 30 years and a national debate continued on the issue.

12. Belize had legally abolished corporal punishment in institutional settings, including the education system. The complete abolition of corporal punishment in the home remained an issue of national discussion and efforts had been made to raise the awareness of parents of alternative forms of discipline.

13. Belize had adopted several measures to combat trafficking in persons. In particular, the Government had replaced its 2000 Act with a more robust 2013 Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act that, inter alia, established a Council on Anti-Trafficking in Persons as an intersectoral body responsible for the supervision and coordination of the national response on the matter. Furthermore, the Government was training frontline stakeholders in victim identification and referral.

14. Sustainable development was at the heart of growth and the sustainable development agenda in Belize, which reflected an integrated approach by incorporating both national development priorities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government had continued taking measures to address poverty and social exclusion in line with its strategies and vision reflected in the national development framework. In addition the Ministry of Human Development was implementing key social safety net initiatives, such as the programmes “Building Opportunities for our Social Transformation (BOOST)”, “BOOST+” and the “Food Pantry”.

15. Even in the face of an economic downturn, Belize was deeply committed to addressing the challenges of income disparity. Incremental improvements in the standard of living of the poor and indigent populations had been achieved through a number of social programmes, notably the Food Pantry, the national health insurance scheme, the conditional cash transfer programme and high school grants and feeding programmes.

16. The Government continued to provide health-care services to all without discrimination. The national health insurance scheme had been expanded and now reached four out of six districts, with services tailored to the elderly and people living in remote areas. In accordance with the 90-90-90 target of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Government had adopted the “Treat All” policy, which guaranteed immediate access to free antiretroviral medicines to persons living with HIV.

17. With respect to the right to education, the Government had approved the “educational quality improvement programme”, which supported the national education strategy in fields such as governance and teacher quality, and had significantly increased the number of trained teachers at preschool, primary and secondary levels. Furthermore, the subsidy grants and secondary school financing reform, aimed at allocating financial resources for secondary school students with socioeconomic needs, had benefited students from the poorest regions and had been further expanded in 2018.

18. Regarding the empowerment of women, the Government had been implementing the national gender policy and had established committees on gender issues and gender-based violence at the national and district levels. Nonetheless, more needed to be done in the area of women’s representation in the public sector. In that regard, under the auspices of the National Women’s Commission, the “women in politics project” aimed to build confidence and improve the capacity of women to participate in the political process at the highest level. Since its launch in 2010, a total of 98 women had received training on issues pertaining to politics and national development.

19. The Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children had contributed to raising visibility and awareness regarding children with special needs, leading in 2014 to the establishment of the “Inspiration Centre” to provide low-cost comprehensive therapy and medical services. The Government had also provided grants to civil society organizations and the Ministry of Human Development had distributed direct cash assistance to persons with disabilities and involved them in various initiatives. Additionally, the National Council on Ageing was about to launch, with the support of stakeholders, a national campaign to establish a permanent priority service line for all essential services.

20. Belize continued to recognize the important role that indigenous communities played in the definition of the country’s cultural identity. Belize had taken a number of steps to implement the consent order of the Caribbean Court of Justice on the land rights of the Maya people in the Toledo district, including the establishment of the Toledo Maya Lands Rights Commission and the Bilateral Technical Committee, as well as the development of a work plan jointly with all affected persons. Additionally, the Government had prepared a draft customary land tenure policy and developed a reporting and dispute resolution framework to address complaints

that could arise from the implementation of the consent order.

21. Belize was also working on a comprehensive migration policy that would, inter alia, decriminalize irregular migration. It had also re-established the Refugee Eligibility Committee and the Refugee Department in order to increase the efficiency of the asylum requests processing system. As of February 2018, Belize had officially accepted 28 refugees.

22. In conclusion, the delegation stressed that, despite its limited resources, Belize was proud to continue investing in the social and economic development of the country and was determined to continue pursuing the realization of human rights for all.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

23. During the interactive dialogue, 46 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

24. The Netherlands commended Belize on its efforts to decrease gender-based violence and provide better support to victims through their national gender-based violence plan. It also complimented the efforts made by the National Women's Commission on promoting gender equality. The Netherlands remained concerned about several aspects of sexual and reproductive rights and sexual orientation and gender identity.

25. Paraguay stated that during the second cycle of the universal periodic review it had recommended that Belize ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. It noted with satisfaction that Belize had ratified or acceded to those and other international human rights instruments. Paraguay noted with concern that the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families had proceeded to examine the situation in Belize with respect to the implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in the absence of a national report and without the presence of a delegation, which showed the country's difficulty in following up on its obligation and recommendations. Paraguay was also concerned about the inequalities in access to health, which varied according to socioeconomic position, place or residence, gender or ethnicity.

26. Peru recognized the progress made, especially in the treatment of people with HIV/AIDS and with regard to the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers.

27. The Philippines welcomed the progress made towards the mainstreaming of human rights through "Horizon 2030". As a member of the Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, the Philippines recognized the efforts made by Belize in integrating human rights education in school curricula. The Philippines commended Belize on its significant progress towards universal birth registration, achieving registration coverage of 95.7 per cent for children under five years of age.

28. Portugal thanked Belize for its continued commitment to the universal periodic review process. Portugal noted with satisfaction the improvements made by Belize in recent years in access to primary health care and the implementation of important recommendations from the second review cycle, including the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

29. The Republic of Korea commended the commitment of Belize to implementing recommendations from the second review cycle. It welcomed the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2015. It also commended the efforts to expand national policies aimed at preventing gender-based violence and increasing the enrolment rates of students from lower-income families.

30. Senegal praised the efforts undertaken by Belize to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the strategy for growth and sustainable development 2016–2019 and the national strategic health plan 2014–2024.

31. Serbia commended the activities of Belize in implementing the recommendations from the previous review cycle. It welcomed the establishment of two human rights observatories that sought to raise awareness of discriminatory laws and procedures for persons living with HIV and advocated for access to legal rights and fair trials using a human rights-based approach.

32. Slovenia welcomed the efforts made in the area of human rights education, in particular the teaching of human rights in an integrated manner in the primary and secondary school curricula. It welcomed the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment.

33. Spain recognized the progress made in the protection of human rights, in particular by acceding to international treaties and incorporating those treaties into domestic law. Spain noted with concern the situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons who were victims of acts of violence and discrimination. While welcoming the 2016 national plan of action to combat violence against women, it expressed its concern at the increase in cases of gender-based violence.

34. Trinidad and Tobago congratulated Belize for ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its accession to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It commended Belize on the establishment of the Anti-trafficking in Persons Council and noted the commitment undertaken in the elaboration of the national climate change policy, strategy and action plan 2015–2020.

35. Tunisia commended the progress made in strengthening the legislative framework in the area of human rights. It welcomed the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against

36. Ukraine praised the information provided on improving the national human rights mechanisms in accordance with the general guidelines of the Human Rights Council. It commended the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment, as well as the signing of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

37. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland commended Belize for fostering a national debate on the sodomy law and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons but noted with concern that such persons continued to face discrimination in the public sphere, including when making complaints to the police. It recognized the significant steps taken by Belize in addressing the multiple challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and encouraged it to ensure that all regions benefited from increased funding to the health sector, including rural and indigenous areas.

38. The United States of America remained concerned by the human trafficking situation in Belize, particularly official complicity in offences related to human trafficking. It was also concerned by the high rates of gender-based violence, forced labour by migrant workers and child labourers, limited services for the victims and reports of abuse by the security forces amidst growing levels of crime and violence. It appreciated the decriminalization of same-sex sexual conduct among consenting adults, but urged action against violence and discrimination.

39. Uruguay praised the ratification in 2016 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the three Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It urged Belize to continue working along that path and strengthen its commitment to the universal promotion and protection of human rights.

40. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognized the progress made by Belize in the implementation of recommendations it had accepted from the previous review. It appreciated the sustainable development and growth strategy 2016–2020 and praised the implementation of the opportunities creation programmes, which provided economic and social support to families with no regular income.

41. Viet Nam commended Belize for its efforts to ensure the enjoyment of human rights of its people since the previous review. It noted the achievements in promoting equality and combating discrimination. It stated that initiatives to combat poverty and narrow the income gap should be further advanced. Belize should also make further progress in addressing climate change and managing disaster risk.

42. Algeria welcomed the measures taken in the education sector, including access to primary education for all. It noted the steps that had been taken to facilitate access to birth registration but considered that more efforts were needed in that area.

43. Argentina congratulated Belize for ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It also took note of the efforts to combat child labour.

44. Australia commended Belize for the steps taken to improve its approach to development and human rights and for supporting the Office of the Ombudsman. It noted that Belize had not carried out any executions since 1985. Australia expressed concern about reports of the excessive use of force and the engagement in corrupt activity by the security forces. It was encouraged by the legal process to decriminalize consensual same-sex relationships.

45. The Bahamas congratulated Belize on the significant strides made in protecting human rights, despite the challenges of limited human and financial resources and vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural disasters. It noted the accession to international human rights instruments and efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons, combat HIV/AIDS and reduce barriers to providing health care in rural and poor communities. It also praised the decreases in maternal mortality and the quantifiable results achieved through the educational quality improvement programme.

46. Brazil praised the de facto moratorium on the death penalty, the fact that no executions had been carried out since 1985 and that the Supreme Court had overturned the death sentence of the last remaining person on death in July 2015. It commended Belize for overturning the anti-sodomy legislation, for its engagement in the protection of refugees and its commitment to improving the access to and the quality of food and nutrition provided to children.

47. Canada commended Belize for decriminalizing same-sex sexual activity and for its progress in the recognition and protection of indigenous land rights. It encouraged Belize to address resource shortfalls for human rights institutions, the high prevalence of human trafficking and violence against women, and complaints of excessive use of force by the police.

48. Chile noted the efforts made by Belize to strengthen its legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, and welcomed the ratification of international human rights conventions. It also noted the inclusive education policy for children with disabilities. It was concerned that Belize had not been present at the examination of the situation in Belize by the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and had not submitted its national report under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

49. China noted the existence of discrimination against ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups and violence against women in Belize. It also noted that the school dropout rate was high in Belize and that the right to health for all people was not effectively guaranteed.

50. Costa Rica noted that Belize had started implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption. It highlighted efforts made to reflect the Sustainable Development Goals in the strategy for growth and sustainable development 2016–2019 and the signature of the strategy for universal access and coverage to health. Costa Rica noted that Belize had acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and was a party to most international human rights instruments. It was concerned by

the lack of access to justice for migrant workers and a lack of increase in women at the national and municipal levels of government.

51. Côte d'Ivoire noted the considerable efforts made by Belize to improve the human rights situation throughout the country, since its previous review. It welcomed the measures taken to strengthen the normative and institutional framework and encouraged Belize to continue its efforts to address the challenges relating to the protection and promotion of human rights.

52. Cuba noted the positive progress in implementing the recommendations Belize had accepted from the previous review, including the updating of its legal framework and the implementation of measures to combat trafficking in persons. Cuba also took positive note of the efforts to reduce poverty and improve the quality of and access to education and health services.

53. Denmark stated that International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) was an important tool in securing and strengthening international norms concerning the rights of indigenous peoples. Open dialogue was a core element when working together to promote international human rights norms and standards and full collaboration with the special procedures and other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council was of great importance in that regard.

54. Fiji congratulated Belize on the recent development of a climate change and adaptation strategy. It also commended Belize on the initiatives it had implemented under the national health strategic plan 2014–2024 and the Integrated Health Services Delivery Networks Approach, as well as for the implementation of the Education and Training Act.

55. France noted the recent progress made by Belize, such as the decriminalization of homosexuality, and encouraged Belize to continue its efforts.

56. Georgia positively noted the ratification by Belize of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as the establishment of the Belize Crime Observatory in 2015. Georgia also welcomed the inclusion of human rights education in national primary and secondary school curricula and the ongoing drafting process of an anti-discrimination bill. It encouraged Belize to continue its efforts to better protect persons against trafficking and assist victims.

57. Germany appreciated the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

58. Guyana commended Belize on its efforts to address poverty and income disparity among its citizens and on the ratification of several human rights treaties and conventions since its previous review. It congratulated Belize on its efforts to integrate human rights education into national primary and secondary school curricula and highlighted the adoption in 2014 of the national climate resilience investment plan.

59. Haiti noted the efforts made by the authorities in Belize to improve the living conditions of all communities through the adoption of specific measures in the field of the environment. Haiti reaffirmed its firm political support to the territorial integrity of Belize and invited the international community to do the same.

60. Honduras welcomed the ratification by Belize of various international human rights instruments, the establishment of two human rights observatories, the establishment of the National Gender-based Violence Committee, and the adoption of the national climate change policy, strategy and action plan. Honduras also welcomed the strengthening of the legislative framework to combat human trafficking and protect victims, the successful implementation of an inclusive education policy for children with disabilities and the elaboration of a national plan to reduce child labour.

61. Iceland commended Belize for developing strategies and putting mechanisms in place to manage risks associated with climate change. It also welcomed the ruling of the Supreme Court in 2016 to decriminalize sexual activity between consenting adults. However, Iceland was concerned that Belize had not taken action to review the Constitution or to pass specific legislation to address discrimination against different groups.

62. Indonesia welcomed the human rights training provided by the Government of Belize to law enforcement officials in order to better enforce the constitutional rights of the population. It commended the adoption of the growth and sustainable development strategy 2016–2020 in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

63. Iraq noted with satisfaction some of the developments that had occurred in Belize in the field of human rights, such as the accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the measures taken to combat human trafficking.

64. Ireland commended Belize on the progress made since the previous review cycle, including its accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and urged Belize to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. It also welcomed the steps taken to advance the protection of women's rights, including through its national policy on gender equality and the National Women's Commission. However, Ireland expressed concern about ongoing reports of discrimination and violence against women and about the level of unreported cases of discrimination and violence against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community.

65. Italy commended Belize for ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and for acceding to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Italy appreciated the launch of the national gender-based violence plan 2017–2020.

66. Latvia noted the measures taken by the Government and encouraged further efforts in fulfilling human rights obligations and

commitments.

67. Maldives commended Belize for enforcing the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Prohibition Act, which gave effect to and implemented the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

68. Mexico welcomed the Supreme Court's decisions to decriminalize consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex and to establish the need to consult Mayan communities when issuing oil exploitation licences. It congratulated Belize on increasing the budget destined for the health sector and for its progress in addressing the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. Mexico celebrated the ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

69. Montenegro commended Belize for ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It welcomed the efforts made by Belize to address the issue of excessive use of force by law enforcement officials and ensure greater accountability in cases of allegations of misconduct. Montenegro called on Belize to develop specific programmes for addressing violence, in particular against women and children, and urged Belize to address the lack of an explicit guarantee on the right to education.

70. Belize thanked all delegations for their recommendations, noting that the issues raised were aligned with the priority areas of work of the Government.

71. The delegation stated that Belize had made efforts to both prevent gender-based violence and ensure the protection of victims. In that regard, it noted that the national action plan against gender-based violence had served as a platform involving a number of stakeholders, including social services, the judiciary and the police, in order to deal with the issue comprehensively. Furthermore, the Women's Department within the Ministry of Human Development had been combined with the Family Support Unit in order to strengthen the delivery of an integrated response to victims of domestic violence.

72. Another important initiative had been to raise awareness of domestic violence. Belize had recently experienced cases of domestic violence that had led to a public outcry and increased awareness in society about the issue had acted as a driver for strengthening victim protection.

73. The action of the Ministry of Health was guided by the principle of universal access to health. As part of government action in that area, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for women in rural areas and indigenous women had been expanded, and there had been an increase in access to skilled birth attendants or hospital deliveries.

74. Young people should be able to make informed choices regarding education on sexual and reproductive rights. In that regard, the study conducted on the health and family life education curriculum, which was measured against the Sexuality Education Review and Assessment Tool (SERAT) on HIV prevention and sexuality education programmes in schools developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), had provided satisfactory results.

75. A comprehensive dialogue on cultural considerations regarding the need to raise the legal age for marriage had been initiated under the auspices of the National Committee for Families and Children. However, given that Belize also experienced the practice of early informal unions, there was a need for further dialogue to comprehensively address the phenomenon.

76. Belize thanked all delegations for the recommendations provided and looked forward to a continued dialogue with them.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

77. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Belize and enjoy the support of Belize:

77.1 Adopt an open, merit-based selection process when selecting national candidates for United Nations treaty body elections (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

77.2 Strengthen cooperation with treaty bodies, including through taking steps to fulfilling its reporting obligation (Viet Nam);

77.3 Establish an institution specifically dedicated to promote and protect human rights in the country (Spain);

77.4 Establish a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles (Ukraine) (Côte d'Ivoire);

77.5 Increase investments in institutions responsible for access to justice and human rights, including the Ombudsman's Office (Canada);

77.6 Strengthen efforts to establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Chile);

77.7 Continue with the efforts aimed at establishment of the national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Georgia);

77.8 Establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Germany) (Iraq);

77.9 Take further steps in establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Indonesia);

- 77.10 Align the mandate of the national human rights institution with the Paris Principles (Portugal);
- 77.11 Establish a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles, given the Office of the Ombudsman's limited authority and capacity to fully address complaints of human rights abuse (Republic of Korea);
- 77.12 Establish a national human rights institution (Senegal);
- 77.13 Request the United Nation High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen existing cooperation, in order to establish a national system for the preparation of reports, as well as the implementation of and follow-up to recommendations and obligations in the area of human rights (Paraguay);
- 77.14 Consider establishing or strengthening a national process to assist in coordinating its reporting under various human rights instruments, such as a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up (Bahamas);
- 77.15 Take further proper legislative measures to address discrimination against different groups (Ukraine);
- 77.16 Guarantee the rights of everyone to equal protection under the law, in conformity with the international commitments of Belize (Iceland);
- 77.17 Carry out the necessary legal reforms so that the legislation guarantees the protection and promotion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons thereby avoiding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Spain);
- 77.18 Ensure legal protections are enforced to address violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals as well as discrimination such as in housing, employment and government services (United States of America);
- 77.19 Take the necessary measures to investigate and punish cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation (Argentina);
- 77.20 Take further measures to reduce the societal stigma faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including through enacting laws that prohibit discrimination against them (Australia);
- 77.21 Adopt specific legislation aimed at eradicating, punishing and preventing all forms of discrimination, violence or abuse against people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity (Chile);
- 77.22 Combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (France);
- 77.23 Secure equal human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the anti-discrimination legislation, in order to protect such persons against discrimination and violence (Germany);
- 77.24 Take measures to fight all forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Italy);
- 77.25 Include sexual orientation and gender identity in the collection of statistical data in order to develop policies that effectively combat violence, discrimination and harassment against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Mexico);
- 77.26 Further integrate a climate change approach into strategies to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on human rights (Viet Nam);
- 77.27 Continue to consider implementing inclusive policies that take into account the needs, views and vulnerabilities of women, children and persons with disabilities on issues relating to education, health care, climate change and disaster risk management (Fiji);
- 77.28 Investigate and prosecute all alleged cases of security officials using excessive force or engaging in corrupt activity and appropriately penalize offenders (Australia);
- 77.29 Address the use of excessive force by law enforcement, including through training, effective investigation and appropriate disciplinary actions in cases of police brutality (Canada);
- 77.30 Continue and increase enforcement related to the efforts to address excessive use of force by law enforcements officials (Guyana);
- 77.31 Strengthen the capacity of police officers to better treat cases of violence against sex workers and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Uruguay);
- 77.32 Develop and implement training programmes for State authorities, including law enforcement and judicial officials, to ensure non-discrimination and protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Ireland);
- 77.33 Enhance efforts to reinforce the rule of law and prevent and combat episodes of arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings and abuses by the security forces, including against human rights defenders (Italy);

77.34 Expand human rights training to all law enforcement officers including the police and the security forces (Republic of Korea);

77.35 Strengthen the criminal justice system, and speed up the court process to reduce the amount of time prisoners are held on remand before trial (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

77.36 Seek strategic guidance and technical assistance with a view to ensuring the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as soon as possible (Haiti);

77.37 Expand human rights training to all law enforcement officers, including magistrates, judges and lawyers (Portugal);

77.38 Strengthen the protection of human rights defenders against violence and threats to which they may be subjected (France);

77.39 Strengthen measures around investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible for modern slavery offences and ensure adequate victim protection and care (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

77.40 Address human trafficking challenges with a focus on investigating and prosecuting suspected traffickers, including complicit officials (United States of America);

77.41 Invest in legal and social services for trafficking and victims of gender-based violence with an emphasis on accountability mechanisms that ensure legal protection, prevent abuse by security officials, and provide human rights training for front line officials (United States of America);

77.42 Strengthen measures to combat trafficking in persons by investigating and prosecuting those responsible, as well as adopting a protection-sensitive approach to victims (Canada);

77.43 Continue efforts in public awareness-raising and capacity-building training for duty bearers on anti-trafficking in persons (Philippines);

77.44 Adopt legislation to combat and punish trafficking in persons in accordance with international standards, ensuring the protection of victims at all times (Mexico);

77.45 Continue the efforts to overcome challenges in the full investigation, prosecution and punishment of trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Republic of Korea);

77.46 Raise the minimum age for marriage for women to 18 years, and ensure that this age is always the same for men and women (Mexico);

77.47 Continue promoting the programme “Job readiness course” in order to help people improve their skills through capacity-building and the development of individual work plans (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);

77.48 Continue to implement socioeconomic developmental policies to empower and safeguard the rights of youth (Maldives);

77.49 Facilitate access to civil registry centres in rural zones (Senegal);

77.50 Adopt measures aimed at improving the possibilities for persons with disabilities to access health services (Algeria);

77.51 Consolidate the achievements obtained in the area of access to health care and reduce the social and health vulnerability of some population groups, particularly the inhabitants of rural areas and indigenous peoples (Paraguay);

77.52 Continue the effective implementation of the national strategic health plan until 2024, including through programmes that would allow the continued broadening of access by rural populations (Cuba);

77.53 Adopt the national health strategic plan 2014–2024 and increase efforts to ensure the access of all to adequate health care (Guyana);

77.54 Continue to enhance access to health care for the whole population (Indonesia);

77.55 Take concrete steps to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV tests, with particular attention to the specific needs of women and girls and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex population (Brazil);

77.56 Ensure that an effective HIV/AIDS prevention strategy includes the principles of human rights and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, age, sexual orientation or gender identity (Iceland);

77.57 Include education on sexual and reproductive health, including on HIV prevention, in the education system and among health sector staff, and integrate HIV testing and treatment into the public health system without discrimination (Portugal);

77.58 Pursue policies which seek to further stem the dropout rates for primary and secondary schools as well as improving the transition ratio from primary to secondary school (Trinidad and Tobago);

- 77.59 Step up efforts to improve education and to stop school dropouts (Tunisia);
- 77.60 Pass specific legislation on access to education (Ukraine);
- 77.61 Continue reducing the gap in inscription and training between students of rural and urban areas by providing resources for infrastructure and training of teachers in all schools, particularly in the rural areas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 77.62 Increase opportunities within the school system for pregnant adolescents to return to school post-delivery and intensify efforts to stem the premature departure of young males from the school system (Bahamas);
- 77.63 Increase investment in education and health fields to effectively reduce school dropout rates and guarantee to right to health (China);
- 77.64 Continue efforts to ensure access to education, in particular to expand the continuity of studies and inclusive education for children with disabilities (Cuba);
- 77.65 Strengthen the curriculum on health education and family life, framing it within the UNESCO guidelines (Peru);
- 77.66 Intensify efforts in undertaking programmes designed to ensure universal primary education and to reduce school dropout (Indonesia);
- 77.67 Continue the implementation of educational programmes to provide primary education to all (Senegal);
- 77.68 Develop a national policy for education on sexual and reproductive health that guarantees women's rights and that allows informed decisions to prevent HIV to be taken (Uruguay);
- 77.69 Adopt additional policy and legislative measures, including an increased allocation of financial resources, in order to guarantee the provision of education on sexual and reproductive health, particularly in rural communities and indigenous populations and intensify efforts to avoid school dropout among pregnant teenagers (Honduras);
- 77.70 Update the health and family life education curriculum to comply with the international technical guidance on sexuality education and develop a legal framework to ensure its execution (Iceland);
- 77.71 Redouble efforts to ensure the adequate representation of women in public positions (Peru);
- 77.72 Strengthen and expand the measures being taken to address discrimination against women and girls (Guyana);
- 77.73 Intensify measures to reduce gender-based inequalities in the areas of reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity (Philippines);
- 77.74 Put in place concrete measures to implement the national plan of action to combat violence against women and assign sufficient resources to guarantee the rights of women and review the law that allows marriage at the age of 16 (Spain);
- 77.75 Continue efforts to combat violence against women (Tunisia);
- 77.76 Combat violence against women (Ukraine);
- 77.77 Set up a specific programme to combat violence against women (Algeria);
- 77.78 Intensify implementation of a multisectoral approach to eradicating domestic, sexual and gender-based violence that includes appropriate training for law enforcement, educators and medical personnel, as well as effective support and accountability for victims (Canada);
- 77.79 Adopt specific programmes to combat all forms of violence against women (Chile);
- 77.80 Establish a registry of sex offenders with a view to combating domestic violence against women (Costa Rica);
- 77.81 Continue efforts to eliminate violence against women (Peru);
- 77.82 Fully implement the national gender-based violence plan through concrete measures nationwide to decrease domestic violence and discrimination against women (Germany);
- 77.83 Strengthen the implementation of the national policy on gender equality and the national gender-based violence plan 2017–2020 (Philippines);
- 77.84 Formulate specific programmes to combat violence against women (Iraq);
- 77.85 Strengthen measures to address gender violence, including by fully implementing the Domestic Violence Act and national gender-based violence plan of action (Ireland);
- 77.86 Continue the fight against violence against women (Serbia);
- 77.87 Continue efforts to strengthen children's rights in order to protect them from sexual abuse and violence (Tunisia);

77.88 Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by raising the minimum legal age of marriage to 18 to prevent forced child marriage (Netherlands);

77.89 Strengthen the necessary measures in order to raise awareness among the population regarding the consequences of child labour (Argentina);

77.90 Continue and expand the current efforts to make birth registration more accessible and efficient (Guyana);

77.91 Further strengthen the implementation of legislation to fulfil obligations on the protection of children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Philippines);

77.92 Take effective measures to concretely protect the rights of ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups, and formulate a national plan to combat violence against women (China);

77.93 Strengthen the work of the Bilateral Technical Committee for the effective promotion and protection of the rights of the Mayan and Garifuna peoples (Peru);

77.94 Adopt national legislation to harmonize local laws to make them compatible and in line with the terms of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Iraq);

77.95 Take steps to decriminalize irregular migration and to guarantee that when the administrative detention of a migrant is necessary, it is carried out for the shortest time possible and in full compliance with relevant international standards (Brazil);

77.96 Establish a total prohibition on hiring and employing all migrant children under the age of 14, and intensify efforts to combat the work of migrant children (Costa Rica);

77.97 Adopt national legislation on statelessness, in particular regarding a statelessness determination procedure to identify and guarantee the rights and protection of stateless persons (Mexico);

77.98 Adopt comprehensive legislation establishing a statelessness determination procedure to identify and guarantee the rights and protection of stateless persons (Serbia).

78. The following recommendations will be examined by Belize, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the fortieth session of the Human Rights Council:

78.1 Ratify the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (Denmark);

78.2 Establish a national preventive mechanism against torture, in accordance with the obligations contracted (Paraguay);

78.3 Take timely measures to ensure the rights of girls and women, in particular by guaranteeing independent access to sexual and reproductive health services in accordance with the age of consent and without parental permission (Netherlands);

78.4 Approve the draft amendment to the Representation of the People Act that would establish a 33 per cent quota of women in the National Assembly (Costa Rica);

78.5 Include specific programmes on combating violence against women in the gender equality framework under the national growth and sustainable development strategy (Fiji);

78.6 Strengthen the legislative framework on the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples (Honduras).

79. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue/listed below have been examined by Belize and have been noted by Belize:

79.1 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Chile);

79.2 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Spain) (Slovenia); Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Australia) (Chile); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Mexico);

79.3 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Chile);

79.4 Consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Bahamas) (Latvia); Extend an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders (Slovenia); Issue an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders and take better advantage of those mechanisms in order to foster national capacity to combat persistent challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights (Chile); Issue a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Denmark); Issue a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders (France); Extend an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Portugal); Extend a permanent standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Spain);

79.5 Consider extending a standing invitation to the special procedure mandate holders (Georgia);

79.6 Extend an open invitation to the special procedure mandate holders (Montenegro);

79.7 Fully resource and empower the Ombudsman to act as a national human rights institution in full compliance with the Paris Principles, including through investigating complaints against public authorities and police misconduct (Australia);

79.8 Include an explicit prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in the Constitution and amend any other relevant legislation, such as the Administration of Estates Act and the Social Security Act so that same-sex couples enjoy equal rights to heterosexual couples (Netherlands);

79.9 Review the Constitution and legislation in order to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation (Uruguay);

79.10 Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (France);

79.11 Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Iceland);

79.12 Consider abolishing the death penalty (Italy);

79.13 Abolish the death penalty de jure (Portugal);

79.14 Preserve and protect the natural institution of marriage as a conjugal union between a man and a woman based on free consent (Haiti);

79.15 Amend the legislation in order to decriminalize abortion, in particular in case of pregnancy resulting from a rape (France);

79.16 Prohibit corporal punishment at home (Ukraine);

79.17 Explicitly prohibit the corporal punishment of children in all settings through enacting legislation (Montenegro);

79.18 Adopt legislation with a view to prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings (Slovenia);

79.19 Grant asylum seekers the opportunity to apply for a work permit in order to be able to support themselves and their family members (Côte d'Ivoire);

79.20 Comprehensively revise the migration and asylum legislation in order to align it with human rights obligations and international standards and remove from it any discriminatory provision on any grounds (Honduras).

80. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

Annex

[English Only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Belize was headed by H.E. Mr. Patrick Andrews, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and composed of the following members:

- Ms. Judith Alpuche, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation;
- Mrs. Orla Coleman, Director of International Affairs (Cooperation), Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Raineldo A. Urbina, First Secretary, Embassy of Belize, Brussels, Belgium.