

the courts at all levels. The rights set out in international human rights treaties have been incorporated into the Constitution. There is no specific legal norm on the direct applicability under domestic law of an international instrument but Uruguayan legal practice accepts this principle without dispute. A treaty ratified by Uruguay is directly implemented under domestic law and may be invoked before the national courts unless otherwise specified by the treaty itself or unless the nature of the treaty makes this impossible.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 21 February 1967; ratified: 1 April 1970.

Uruguay's third periodic report is due 30 June 2000.

Uruguay's second periodic report (E/1990/6/Add.10) was considered by the Committee at its November/December 1997 session. The government report is detailed and contains information on: foreign trade policy; employment, labour standards and conditions of work, wages, equal pay for work of equal value, occupational health and safety, trade unions and the right to strike; social benefits; the family; the age of majority and provisions related to marriage; measures to protect children and young people; poverty, food and housing; health care programmes; education, the mass media and professional education; and, the right to culture.

The Committee's concluding observations (E/C.12/1/Add.18) welcomed: the high rate of literacy; the steps taken to ensure free primary education and make secondary and higher education free; the establishment of programmes for less favoured children such as the Programme of School Meals; the fact that the rights set out in the Covenant can be invoked before the courts; the employment policies adopted for young and rural workers; and, the measures taken to provide further training for the unemployed.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the fact that a high percentage of the population continues to live below the poverty line, in particular, the black minority; information suggesting continued prejudice against the black minority; the substantial decrease in the number of people affiliated to trade unions; the fact that a minimum wage was established unilaterally only for the agricultural sector and that the minimum wage is totally insufficient; the inadequate allocation of governmental resources to public health and education; the very low wages paid to nurses leading to a ratio of one nurse for every five doctors; the deterioration of teachers' salaries in terms of purchasing power; the increase in labour related accidents because of non-compliance with security measures particularly in the construction sector; the fact that child labour continues to be a serious problem; the incidence of obesity and suicide among the young; the fact that the civil code retains a distinction between legitimate children and children born out of wedlock; continuing discrimination in salaries for equal work between women and men; the insufficiency in information provided by the government related to the status of women generally and domestic violence in particular; the large number of persons with disabilities and the problem of alcoholism leading to a high rate of accidents and traffic fatalities; and, the shortage of housing, high levels of rent and forced evictions.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ provide information on the steps taken to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the black minority and their right to protection against discrimination;
- ▶ take steps to fix a national minimum wage indexed to the cost of living;
- ▶ ensure full implementation of existing legislation on occupational safety and health of workers and strengthen the labour inspection system;
- ▶ adopt legislative and economic measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and street children;
- ▶ repeal all discriminatory provisions in the civil code or family law related to children born out of wedlock;
- ▶ take measures to increase the real salaries of teachers and nurses;
- ▶ take steps to improve health care in rural areas;
- ▶ increase efforts to implement a policy on adequate housing and provide in the next report more information on forced evictions; and,
- ▶ give greater attention to the problem of de facto discrimination against women, implement programmes to eradicate inequalities between women and men in both the public and private sectors, and undertake appropriate legal measures to address crimes of violence against women within or outside the family.

Civil and Political Rights

Signed: 21 February 1967; ratified: 1 April 1970.

Uruguay's fourth periodic report (CCPR/C/95/Add.9) has been submitted but is not yet scheduled for consideration by the Committee; the fifth periodic report was due 21 March 1998.

Optional Protocol: Signed: 21 February 1967; ratified: 1 April 1970.

Second Optional Protocol: Signed: 13 February 1990; ratified: 21 January 1993.

Racial Discrimination

Signed: 21 February 1967; ratified: 30 August 1968.

Uruguay's 12th through 14th periodic reports were due 4 January 1992, 1994 and 1996 respectively.

Reservations and Declarations: Declaration, article 14.

Discrimination against Women

Signed: 30 March 1981; ratified: 9 October 1981.

Uruguay's second, third and fourth periodic reports were due 8 November 1986, 1990 and 1994 respectively.

Torture

Signed: 4 February 1985; ratified: 24 October 1986.

Uruguay's third periodic report was due 25 June 1996.

Reservations and Declarations: Declaration under articles 21 and 22.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 26 January 1990; ratified: 20 November 1990.

Uruguay's second periodic report was due 19 December 1997.

Reservations and Declarations: Paragraphs 2 and 3 of article 38.