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21 February 2022

Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Paraguay and welcome the constructive engagement of the Government of Paraguay during the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the UPR Working Group in May 2021.

As the final outcome report on the review of Paraguay was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 48<sup>th</sup> session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of Paraguay – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and recommendations made by 79 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of Paraguay. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government of Paraguay to implement the 187 recommendations fully supported during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I welcome the Recommendations Monitoring System (SIMORE) and its updated version, SIMORE Plus, as an open government platform for the monitoring of implementation of international human rights recommendations linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the technical cooperation that Paraguay provides to other States in this regard. I welcome the adoption of the National Plan on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons in 2020 and I encourage the government to ensure its effective implementation. I also note the Act on the Comprehensive Protection of Women from All Forms of Violence and the process of implementation of the fourth National Equality Plan (2018-2024).

I welcome the adoption of a National Human Rights Plan and encourage Paraguay to continue implementing it effectively in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate preparations for the fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the national human rights institution and all civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including my Office and other United Nations entities, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

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H.E. Mr. Euclides ACEVEDO  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Paraguay



I also encourage Paraguay to make further efforts to strengthen the Human Rights Network of the Executive Branch for comprehensive reporting and follow-up to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations, linking them to the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR\\_PUB\\_16\\_1\\_NMRF\\_PracticalGuide.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf).

Please note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting States with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. One important measure that can positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I welcome the practice of Paraguay of submitting mid-term reports and encourage the Government of Paraguay to continue with this practice and to submit a mid-term report on follow-up to the third cycle of the review by 2023.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *“The Human Rights Council’s universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council’s recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Paraguay in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Michelle Bachelet  
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: Mr. Mario SAMAJA  
United Nations Resident Coordinator  
Paraguay

Mr. José GALEANO  
Human Rights Adviser of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in  
the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator  
Paraguay

Mr. Jan JARAB  
Regional Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights  
OHCHR Regional Office for South America  
Chile

## Annex

### **Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies**

- Ratifying the human rights instruments to which Paraguay is not yet a party, including the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance, and the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

### **National human rights framework**

- Ensuring the independent functioning of the national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

### **Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

#### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

##### *Equality and non-discrimination*

- Strengthening policies, programmes and institutional frameworks and adopting a comprehensive legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

##### *Development, the environment, and business and human rights*

- Strengthening the normative, policy and institutional frameworks to further integrate environmental considerations and remedy the effects of natural disasters, forest deforestation and climate change.

#### **B. Civil and political rights**

##### *Right to life, liberty and security of person*

- Taking further measures to ensure that the conditions of prisons and other detention centres are in line with the United Nations Standards Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, including by reducing prison overcrowding and improving sanitation and living conditions.
- Ensuring that all allegations of acts of torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary killings by the security forces are duly investigated and prosecuted.

##### *Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*

- Enhancing the independence of the judiciary at all levels, including through a permanent professional training on human rights for judges.

### *Fundamental freedoms*

- Ensuring an enabling and safe environment for journalists and human rights defenders, including through the adoption of a protection mechanism for human rights defenders and journalist, and investigating all acts of intimidation and violence against them.

### *Prohibition of all forms of slavery*

- Adopting further measures to prevent, combat and punish trafficking in persons, including by ensuring that perpetrators are punished appropriately, strengthening the legal and social protection for victims, training judges, lawyers and law enforcement officers, and implementing the National Plan on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons.

## **C. Economic, social and cultural rights**

### *Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*

- Adopting further measures to bridge the wage gap between men and women, including by guaranteeing equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value.

### *Right to an adequate standard of living*

- Taking further measures, including through further implementation of the National Poverty Reduction Plan “Jajapo Paraguay”, to combat poverty and inequality, with particular emphasis on rural areas and in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples.

### *Right to health*

- Adopting further measures to strengthen the public health system, including through further implementation of the National Health Policy Strategy 2015-2030, and providing inclusive, qualitative and accessible primary and comprehensive healthcare services, including access to sexual and reproductive health services, particularly in rural areas.
- Revising existing legislation on abortion to legalize it in cases of rape, incest, risk to the life or health of the woman and severe foetal impairment.

### *Right to education*

- Enhancing measures, including through the implementation of the National Education Plan 2024, to ensure full and equal access to inclusive and quality primary, secondary and higher education for all, in particular for indigenous and Afro-Paraguayan children and children with disabilities.

## **D. Rights of specific persons or groups**

### *Women*

- Continuing efforts to prevent and eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, including through the full implementation of the Act on the Comprehensive Protection of Women from All Forms of Violence and the fourth National Equality Plan (2018-2024).
- Adopting measures to increase the participation of women and gender parity at all levels of political, economic and public life and in decision-making positions.



### *Children*

- Strengthening measures to combat child labour, by, inter alia, strengthening child labour oversight mechanisms, increasing support for poor families so that they can keep their children in the education system, and eliminating the practice of “criadazgo”.

### *Persons with disabilities*

- Ensuring that the national legal and policy frameworks are fully in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a view to prohibit all forms of discrimination against them, and implementing the National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2019).

### *Indigenous peoples*

- Enhancing effective participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes, adopting further measures to carry out free, prior and informed consultations and continuing efforts to implement effectively the Indigenous Peoples National Plan.
- Implementing public policies to effectively guarantee the right of access to land and housing for indigenous communities, incorporating international human rights standards.