



## ALTERNATE REPORT TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS COLOMBIAN PLATFORM ON HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee is about to finalise assessing the seventh periodical report submitted by the State of Colombia. According to the established procedure and willing to contribute to final observations to be adopted by this body, the Colombian Platform on Human Rights, Democracy and Development submits the main concerns on state obligation fulfilment for consideration as listed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Platform is a network made up of over 150 social and human rights organisations, committed to advocating for and promoting economic, social, cultural, environmental and nature rights (ESCENR). This report summarises the detailed analyses jointly carried out by social and human rights organisations as well as ethnic, labour, academic and territorial movements across the national territory, appended to the accompanying document.

Concerns and recommendations hereby posed stem from four complementary perspectives: the new national context, the rights acknowledged by the Pact, the different demographic groups and some strategic territories.

### A. CURRENT CONTEXT

#### 1. Armed Conflict and Peace: Structural Effects on ESCENR

The Final Agreement signed in 2016 remains a roadmap to cement peace and make progress in necessary social reforms. Nearly nine years after its endorsement, implementation is still vastly insufficient. Out of its 578 directives, only 34% had made full progress, 19% were in an intermediate state and 73% of measures related to integral rural reform had not made any significant progress whatsoever. The same could be said about gender and ethnic areas (Kroc Institute, 2025). The high number of peace signatories murdered or disappeared led the Constitutional Court to rule an unconstitutional state of matters<sup>1</sup> due to safety guarantees listed by the agreement not being met (Ruling SU-020 issued in 2022).

Under the presumption that reaching a negotiation with the National Liberation Army guerrilla group as well as agreements with armed groups and criminal organisations would contribute to consolidate peace, the current Government adopted *total peace* policies leading to establish new dialogue and negotiation scenarios. The process with the National Liberation Army was suspended and most others are currently stalled due to the lack of a robust legal framework and efficient monitoring and assessing means from several of the groups.

After a violence decrease period, armed groups expanded in size and influence to 790 municipalities throughout the last two administrations, adding up to 71% of the national territory (Public Defender, 2024). Said groups have targeted the civil population as shown by the rise in massacres, lock-downs, forced displacement and the recruitment of minors, directly affecting indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Besides involving serious violations to civil and

---

<sup>1</sup> The 'unconstitutional state of matters' in Colombia is a legal structure ruled by the Constitutional Court when there is a massive, generalised and structural violation of fundamental human rights, therefore requiring the intervention of multiple State entities to re-establish constitutional normalcy.



political rights, the reconfiguration of the armed conflict has led to serious ESCENR infringement with long-lasting effects on homes and individuals affected, as had been the case with war regarding the displaced population and other victims in the last decades.

Violence against human rights advocates is still concerning, with 1,584 of them having been murdered or disappeared between 2018 and March 2025, 466 during the current administration<sup>2</sup>. The situation has not changed despite the Constitutional Court ruling an unconstitutional state of matters regarding the persistent, grave and generalised violation of fundamental human rights of this population (Ruling SU–546 issued in 2023).

### **Recommendations:**

(1) Urgently and comprehensively implementing the Final Agreement, ensuring sufficient resources and participative monitoring mechanisms which incorporate gender and ethnic perspectives especially in critical points such as integral reform, political participation and reincorporation of former combatants.

(2) Extending the Final Agreement implementation for four more years by mutual consent with signatories from the now defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army.

(3) Guaranteeing *total peace* policies having a sound legal framework, monitoring mechanisms and human rights focus without substituting or undermining duties stemming from the Final Agreement as well as ensuring effective community participation.

(4) Supplementing the reform to the current protection model, ensuring effective civil participation within the National Process of Guarantees framework, comprehensively addressing gender, ethnic, territorial and other foci.

## **2. Persistence of High Poverty and Inequality Levels**

Poverty and inequality indices remain high, with particularly high impact on urban areas. Monetary poverty incidence for 2024 was 31.8% on a national scale and 42.5% in scattered and rural dwellings, similar indices to 2019 when national monetary poverty was 36.4%. This has stemmed from the upturn recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic, when national monetary poverty reached 43.1%, which for the countryside rose to 48.6%.

Extreme monetary poverty, for its part, has not been significantly reduced since 2019, when it was at 12% across the nation, rising to 17% during the pandemic and recorded at 11.7% in 2024. For scattered and rural dwellings, extreme poverty has remained relatively stable, going from 23% in 2019 to 21.8% in 2024.

### **Recommendation:**

(5) Adopting a nation-wide universal basic rent system as a structural measure to face poverty and ensure minimum living conditions for the entire population.

## **3. Limits to Materialise an ESCENR-Incorporating Political Agenda**

---

<sup>2</sup> Colombia was the country in which the largest amount of land and environmental advocates were assassinated in 2023: 79 out of 196, 31 of whom were indigenous (Global Witness, 2024).



Social discontent rose during the pandemic, with thousands of homes hoisting red flags indicating hunger while the Government bolstered a regressive tax reform. The massive 2021 protests were known as a social outcry, stemming from ‘structural and historical demands from the Colombian society as listed by the Political Constitution of 1991 and the Peace Agreements of 2016<sup>3</sup>’ (IACHR, 2023), which were instrumental for the first left-wing government in Colombia having been elected in 2022, vowing to overcome historic unfairness and exclusion via measures which favoured social and environmental rights (National Development Plan 2022–2026).

The previous report to the Committee by the Platform (2017) stressed that the progressive deactivation of war could be translated as attaining stable and long-lasting peace if the path chosen by the Colombian society was the ESCENR being enforced. It is an important breakthrough for them to cease being marginal to the political agenda, instead becoming an articulating axis of citizen vindication, the government plan and the statutory debate. At least three general barriers, however, keep the results from policies adopted by the Colombian State from being compatible with their ‘minimum obligation to guarantee each and every one of the rights at least in essential levels’ (ESCR Committee, 1990):

- Limited resource availability for funding new ESCENR-guaranteeing measures. Between 2019 and 2024, social expenditure rose from 16.3% of the GDP to 17.6%. The Constitutional Court recently restricted the chance of increasing it via a ruling in which forbidding income tax deductibles for companies exploiting non-renewable natural resources was deemed unconstitutional as it allegedly violated the principle of tax equity and was a confiscatory measure (Sentence C-489 issued in 2023).
- Inefficient social expenditure management. Annual budgetary execution (debts notwithstanding) averaged at 93.23% between 2011 and 2017, decreasing to 87.01% in 2024 and then to 81.9% in 2024 (the lowest since 2000), with investment rubric at 57% with only 34.97% for the rural sector<sup>4</sup>.
- Expenditure management without impact. Besides the chronic absence of inter-institutional coordination<sup>5</sup>, governmental institutions have very limited means to materialise policies in the territories and focus them in the most excluded and poverty-ridden areas.

Furthermore, some of the proposed structural reforms have not been approved due to difficulties in draft bill procedures as well as strong opposition within the Congress.

### **Recommendation:**

(6) Strengthening the adoption of progressive tax measures ensuring social expenditure can be maintained and increased. It is also a priority for governmental authorities to overcome obstacles keeping them from optimising social investment as well as results and impact.

---

<sup>3</sup> The IACHR added that, during its June 2021 visit, it ‘noticed broad consensus between State representatives and civil society regarding grounds for discontent involved in the civil unrest, as well as profound inequality in distribution of wealth, poverty, extreme poverty and access to economic, social and cultural rights, particularly education, work and healthcare. Likewise, high levels of violence and impunity as well as ethnic-racial and gender distribution’ (IACHR, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Data from the Treasury and Public Credit Department compiled by the Pontifical Xavierian University Fiscal Policy Observatory (2025).

<sup>5</sup> This has been recorded and monitored through a number of Constitutional Court rulings, particularly T-025 issued in 2004, T-760 issued in 2008, T-388 issued in 2013, T-762 issued in 2015, SU-122 issued 2022 and T-302 issued in 2017.



## B. RIGHTS

### 1. Right to Work and Freedom of Association

Even though the labour reform recently approved by the Congress (Law N° 2456 issued in 2025) constitutes progress in guaranteeing the right to work, its essential level of implementation is not guaranteed by the State: (i) unemployment went from 10.9% to 10.2% between 2019 and 2024 after the high levels it reached during the pandemic (16.5%), but the ratio of individuals outside the workforce rose from 32.26% to 36.09%, two-thirds of whom were women; (ii) informal employment is still considerably high at 55.9%; (iii) 24.2% of people aged 15 to 28 do not work or study, 65% of them being women (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025a); (iv) work-related mortality fell from 4.57 to 3.49 per 100,000 staff members and work-related accidents from 5.88 to 4.99 per 100 workers, but 2024 still presented a high number of deaths (434) and accidents (533,145) (Ministry of Health and Social Protection, 2025); and (v) though it recently increased in size, the work inspection staff barely represents half of the standard recommended by the International Labour Organisation (one inspector per 100,000 workers) and is still particularly insufficient to perform its duties in rural areas (Castro et al, 2025).

Freedom of association is also severely limited by persistent violence and lack of effective guarantees. 267 attacks on union members were recorded between 2023 and 2024, including 49 murders, which means labour union remains a high-risk activity. 511 collective pacts were signed, besides, often used to obstruct negotiations with unions. Nearly 700 new unions were set up between 2022 and 2024, but they face an adverse regulatory framework and restrictive legal rulings limiting their collective action.

#### Recommendations:

(7) Considering the Constitutional Court reiterated the right to strike ‘in essential public services as long as minimum supply is ensured’ (Ruling C–134 issued in 2023), the Congress must heed the high court exhortation and regulate its practice serving the administration of justice.

(8) Regulating branch negotiation and banning illegal mediation and outsourcing.

### 2. Right to Health

Even though the healthcare system in Colombia has membership coverage on 98.5% and operates with resources adding up to 9.02% of the GDP, it faces a structural crisis to ensure accessibility, availability, affordability and quality of care. It remained a frequent occurrence, moreover, for effective access to service –especially within the most vulnerable sectors– to require writ for protection<sup>6</sup>, rendering the financial management model crisis more evident from 2023 onwards: (i) high administrative system costs compared to the rest of the OECD<sup>7</sup>; (ii) high debt accrued by healthcare providers with clinics and hospitals; (iii) infringement by some of these when it came to their legal obligation to keep liquid investments supporting their technical reserves to pay for

<sup>6</sup> 5,947,857 writs for protection were filed between 2016 and June 2025, 1,696,140 (28.52%) health-related. Next to the right of petition (41.94%), no other right has such a high litigation volume. Writs for protection due to healthcare rose from 156,357 to 265,173 between 2022 and 2024 (Constitutional Court, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> The average amongst countries in this organisation is 3.5%, whereas Colombia rises to 5.4%.



services given to insured population<sup>8</sup>; and (iv) structural financial deterioration of the health insurance system: negative net worth adding up to COP 10.2 B, as well as COP 1 B operational losses and expired liabilities over COP 27 B compromising their feasibility, resource allocation to healthcare providers and timely healthcare to users (Así Vamos en Salud, 2025).

### **Recommendations:**

(9) It is urgent to bring forward a structural healthcare system reform, with the Congress and Government agreeing as soon as possible on a new system ensuring accessibility, availability, affordability and quality care for everybody and which can overturn the historic lack of access for rural, indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations.

(10) Forensic resource management audit is required for healthcare providers over the past 30 years in order to clear the lack of correspondence between high functioning costs and ineffectiveness in guaranteeing the right to health for the entirety of the population.

### **3. Right to Food**

25.5% of Colombian homes lived in moderate to severe food insecurity in 2024, adding to about 14,438,000 people having difficulties with access to food due to lack of resources, financial or otherwise<sup>9</sup>. Grave food insecurity affected 5%, which means nearly 2,740,000 were starved for at least a day<sup>10</sup> (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025d). The former index rose from 32.5% in 2022 to 34.2% in 2024 in rural areas, whereas the latter fell from 6.1% in 2022 to 5.8% in 2024. Depending on who is head of the household, insecurity is higher in homes led by indigenous (46.2%), Afro-Colombians (39.3%), rural residents (35.4%) and Venezuelan migrants (35.3%). On the other hand, Colombia was the South American country with the second-highest percentage of population (36.6%) not affording a healthy diet in 2022 (FAO, 2025).

### **Recommendations:**

(11) Considering the constitutional endorsement of the right to adequate nutrition for all the people (Legislative Act N° 1 issued in 2025), it is necessary to initiate the progressive right to food guarantee system and define public policies leading to malnutrition and starvation prevention, increase in production and access to food, minimising loss and promoting safety, sovereignty and autonomy, prioritising sustainable production and activities leading to the greatest possible food availability across the national territory.

(12) Notwithstanding the FIES, periodically carrying out the National Food and Nutrition Security Assessment (2005, 2010 and 2015) in order to collect technical comprehensive data on aspects such as breastfeeding, weight gain, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, feeding practices and hidden hunger, leading to informed measurements on integral impact stemming from food policies.

### **4. Right to Adequate Housing and Habitat**

---

<sup>8</sup> Obligation established via Decree N° 2702 issued in 2014. In June 2023, technical reserves for 14 of 24 healthcare providers had a COP 5.5 B shortfall (National Superintendence of Health, 2023; Hernández, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> The situation is critical for La Guajira as a whole (52.4%) and its rural areas (66.6%), as well as those in Atlántico (58.3%) and Sucre (49.8%), where food insecurity continued affecting around half of their households, or more.

<sup>10</sup> Grave food insecurity rates in La Guajira (15.7%) and Sucre (11.9%) more than doubled the national average in 2024.



Total residential deficit decreased from 32.8% (5.3 million homes) in 2019 to 26.8% (4.9 million homes) in 2024. There is a critical gap, however, between rural (61.2%) and urban (17.3%) areas, with 40.5% qualitative and 21.3% quantitative deficit for the former (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025c). It is also estimated that three out of five homes built are informal, with no licence or basic guarantees. Even though nearly 200,000 housing allowances were allocated between 2018 and 2022, structural barriers persist such as soil speculation, unequal credit access and exclusion of rural, ethnic and displaced communities, reflecting a deep debt the State has with the right to adequate housing and habitat.

#### **Recommendations:**

(13) From a perspective of rights, reassessing housing policies chiefly focused on new unit availability for urban areas relying on financial subsidies mediated by real estate practices seeing housing as a financial asset rather than a fundamental right to dignified adequate livelihood.

(14) Abiding by international duties, the State ought to guarantee adequate resource allocation for a sustainable approach ensuring living conditions, access to drinkable water, essential services and protection against natural risks according to adequate housing standards established by the Pact.

### **5. Right to Education**

Nursery, primary and secondary school faces a concerning prospect: (i) school-age population (5-16 years) outside the school system rose from 7.45% (707,097 individuals) in 2019 to 9.54% (907,606) in 2023; (ii) consistent enrolment decrease, especially over the past two years, has had regressive effects on access and availability: gross coverage rate in the school system went from 104.48% to 100.69% and net coverage rate from 93.25% to 90.27%; (iii) learners being held back rose from 1.93% to 8.1%; (iv) failing rates rose from 5% to 6.47%; and (v) dropout rates during each school year rose from 2.99% to 3.75% (Educational Trajectory Observatory, 2023; Ministry of National Education, 2024b).

#### **Recommendations:**

(15) Adopting a strategy focused on eradicating illiteracy.

(16) Comprehensive nursery, primary and secondary education assessment carried out across the school system leading to a strategy to ensure its implementation throughout a demographic context of decreasing birthrates in order to preserve its progress, reduce the historic coverage shortage amongst vulnerable sectors, thus enhancing its quality.

### **6. Right to Land and Territory**

Colombia faces grave structural lagging when it comes to guaranteeing the right to land and territory due to high delay in enforcing Peace Agreement measures in terms of Integral Rural Reform. Even though 31,007 families have benefited from land restitution until 2005, that is only 5.76% of the 537,503 deprived. Concentration persists: 1% of owners control 47% of the rural area, with a Gini coefficient of 0.87. Decree N° 4633 issued in 2014, acknowledging and protecting ancestral ownership by indigenous communities victims of the armed conflict, has had minimal implementation: only 12 favourable rulings have been issued in over a decade, out of



around 200 requests. The Agricultural and Rural Jurisdiction, key to solve these conflicts, is not operational yet.

### **Recommendations:**

(17) The Committee must urge the State to approve and enforce the Agricultural and Rural Jurisdiction guaranteeing (i) the protection of the weakest parties of agricultural liaisons; (ii) sufficient budget for effective functioning in rural areas, particularly those with difficult geographical access; (iii) support and accessibility to contact the Agricultural and Rural Jurisdiction; and (iv) adequate implementation of gender, ethnic and cultural foci developing, particularly, strategies aimed at women realising their rights to land and access to justice means at their disposal.

(18) Enforcing the Agricultural and Rural Jurisdiction and public land redistribution policies adequately involving gender, ethnic and cultural foci as well as having necessary resources for their execution.

(19) Reinforcing the specialised land restitution jurisdiction across institutional, technical and budgetary levels to guarantee higher promptness, efficiency and coverage, ensuring access to justice and integral rights restitution to dispossession and forced displacement victims.

## **7. Right to a Healthy Environment**

The climate crisis in the country is closely related to four sources: (i) extraction and production of fossil fuels and mining, releasing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O); (ii) deforestation to expand agricultural industries and extensive farming reducing ecosystems being able to capture greenhouse-effect emissions as well as releasing carbon stored in soil and biomass; (iii) methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) emissions due to extensive farming; and (iv) the use of nitrogenised fertilisers generating greenhouse-effect gas N<sub>2</sub>O with a considerably high potential for global warming.

Regarding the former, even though the Government has fostered energy reconversion, its implementation has been slow, is not sufficiently funded and faces resistance from powerful actors in that economic sector. Regarding the latter, deforestation rates are highly concerning: 819,255 hectares were removed between 2018 and 2022 (163,851 per year on average), then 115,000 in 2023 and 105,000 in 2024 (Eco-Synergy and Guillermo Ferguson Group, 2025). Despite a reduction over the past two years, extensive farming, drug-trafficking and armed conflict remain the main structural deforestation causes.

Despite governmental efforts, environmental impact stemming from entrepreneurial activity are still not adequately controlled and there are no penalty or reparation mechanisms regarding damages.

### **Recommendations:**

(20) Urgently strengthening deforestation control and woodland/rainforest management strategies as well as reforestation and ecological restoration with community involvement.

(21) Broadening moorland protection to preserve 86% of areas still preserving their vegetative covering.



(22) Streamlining and deepening energy and agro-ecological transition ensuring sustainability and respecting the rights of local communities, guaranteeing the free, well-informed, binding and protected involvement of environmental advocates, thus strengthening legal frameworks and public policies for healthy environment, effective strategic ecosystem protection and integral reparation of extraction-ridden territories.

(23) Enforcing Decree N° 1275 issued in 2024 granting reinforced environmental jurisdiction to indigenous authorities and acknowledging their role as territorial and environmental guardians, as well as conceding Afro-Colombian communities the same role within their own territories.

## **8. Right to Water**

Right to water is compromised by an inequitable resource management and the pressure of high-consumption economic sectors, with agriculture and hydro-electric generation adding up to over 68% of the national water demand, whereas its domestic use is below 9%, reflecting that the economic model has been prioritised above population welfare. This situation is aggravated with the degradation of key ecosystems such as moorlands, wetlands and basins, essential for water-cycle regulation. Regions such as La Guajira, María la Baja or the Magdalena Medio are chronically in shortage or under severe water pollution, especially affecting rural, ethnic and impoverished communities.

Despite recent regulatory progress, there is still weak institutional jurisdiction to guarantee fair and sustainable access to water. 43.3% of available water is destined for agriculture and only 8.8% for domestic consumption, while over 12 million people lack consistent access to drinkable water. Ecosystems such as moorlands, basins and wetlands face degradation due to deforestation, mining and agricultural industries. The Magdalena-Cauca basin holds 64% of the national water demand, exacerbating pressure on this territory without sufficient structural measures to overturn this trend.

### **Recommendation:**

(24) Modifying the water crisis response from reaction to structural prevention taking climate change and water management into consideration. Effective prevention must include: (i) ecosystemic monitoring system with measurable indices to anticipate critical points in water vulnerability; (ii) institutional strategic ecosystem reinforcement for basins and moorlands; (iii) transitioning towards economic models which respect territorial load capacity, and (iv) community participation in decision-making regarding water resources.

## **9. Cultural Rights and Technology**

Governmental social expenditure in culture and sports had an average of only 1% between 2019 and 2023, below the 1.18% historic average, with an increase to 1.4% in 2024 after years of sustained cuts. Cultural participation has also been limited: less than 10% of the population had access to libraries, museums, galleries or handicraft fairs in 2019, reflecting financial and access barriers. Regarding the digital setting, even though 63.9% of households had internet connexion in 2023, only 26% carried out intermediate activities such as education or participation, suggesting low digital appropriation.





## Recommendations:

(25) The Committee should advise Colombia to increase public funding destined to the cultural sector in order to guarantee effective access for all the population to cultural growth and development.

(26) The State must promote stable, affordable, accessible, effective and quality internet access for the entirety of the population without jeopardising content regulation, urging companies to use accessible formats and languages from a differential perspective to democratically reduce digital inequality.

(27) The Committee should urge the Colombian State to design a national route to enforce the UNESCO 2005 Convention in digital environments or, otherwise, developing cultural diversity advocacy and protection online.

## C. POPULATIONS

### 1. Women

Discrimination against women is still constant. While households led by women rose from 38.4% in 2019 to 46.5% in 2024, the gap in access to paid work tripled the odds of having insufficient own resources compared to men (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025a; 2025b). High participation of this population outside the workforce (47.3% vs 23.7%) and unemployed (11.9% vs 9%) as well as the low representation in general work participation ratios (53.4% vs 76.3%), the wage gap<sup>11</sup> and lack of recognition of its role in care are instrumental factors undermining their autonomy and keeping substantial equality from materialising.

Regarding rural women, low access to land and productive resources diminishes their chances of exercising their right to dignified labour, food autonomy and an adequate standard of living. Insufficient sexual and reproductive healthcare services in rural areas (55%) compared to urban ones (78%) is, furthermore, a significant barrier against ischemic cardiomyopathy and cerebrovascular disease<sup>12</sup> as well as to reduce early maternal mortality<sup>13</sup>, which tends to be disproportionately high amongst Afro-Colombian and indigenous women<sup>14</sup>.

Violence against women, besides, has worsened, especially since the pandemic, in extremely alarming levels: 872 femicides were recorded only in 2024 (Colombian Femicide Observatory, 2025)<sup>15</sup> and 323 were human-trafficking victims<sup>16</sup> (House of Woman, 2025).

The creation of a Ministry of Equality in Colombia was approved in November 2022. Even though it is already operational, the Constitutional Court ruled its creation had been affected by grave

---

<sup>11</sup> Monthly work payment gender inequality fell from 12.9% to 6.6% between 2019 and 2022, which can be explained by more women having been terminated from the workforce (National Administrative Department of Statistics *et al*, 2024).

<sup>12</sup> That was the main (24.7%) cause of death amongst women in 2024 (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025c).

<sup>13</sup> Maternal mortality in the 20-34 age group was 37 per 100,000 births in 2024, 82.8 for those aged 35+ (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025c).

<sup>14</sup> The most recent disaggregated data (National Institute of Health, 2022) states maternal mortality in rural areas (72) being far higher than the national average (42.9) and disproportionately high among Afro-Colombian (83.1) and indigenous (125.1) women.

<sup>15</sup> Vastly superior to the 2019–2023 annual average of 579 femicides (Colombian Observatory of Femicides, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> According to the Home Office, there were 436 human trafficking victims in 2024, 19.47% of the 2,239 recorded cases since 2008 (House of Woman, 2025).



formal irregularities, thus ordering the Government to submit a new draft bill before the Congress in order to rectify them. It has taken the Government over a year to do so and the Congress has not prioritised its procedure so far.

**Recommendations:**

(28) Congress and Government ought to prioritise and adopt necessary measures to approve the new bill by the Ministry of Equality ensuring both constitutionality and lawfulness in its creation as well as its adequate operation and sustainability.

(29) Adopting and funding structural measures to close the gender gap in formal employment, land ownership, productive resources and citizen support services, including public care systems.

(30) Reinforcing the healthcare system, especially in rural areas, guaranteeing universal, affordable and timely access to sexual and reproductive healthcare including prenatal care, birth control, emergency OB/GYN care and prevention of cardiovascular disease.

(31) Adopting urgent, integral and structurally-focused GBV prevention and eradication measures involving effective protection and justice access for victims alongside investigation and arraignment for perpetrators as well as sociocultural transformation and violence prevention.

**2. LGBTQI+**

There has been strong bigotry-based discrimination when it comes to ESCR access for the LGBTQI+ population in Colombia, as well as persistent structural exclusion despite some regulatory progress. Unemployment for this population was 11% in 2024 compared to 9.6% overall, and during the pandemic it rose to 16%. 90% of trans individuals reported healthcare discrimination and nearly 80% in hiring procedures. School bullying persists up to university levels without any efficient guidelines. Culturally and environmentally, their participation is still made invisible and there are no sustained differential policies.

**Recommendation:**

(32) Besides promoting a culture opposing bigotry stemming from sexual orientation or gender identity, it is necessary to jointly develop national LGBTQI+ policies which are inter-sectional, cross-sectional and include concrete actions throughout work, school, healthcare, cultural and ecological environments.

**3. Senior Citizens**

Senior citizens face multiple barriers for their ESCR to be fully enforced. Even though they are 14.5% of the population, around 60% lack a pension and around 363,545 have lost their homes due to forced displacement. Regarding healthcare, 21.2% have some degree of dependency and chronic and mental illnesses have significantly risen. 20% of rural residents, besides, lack access to healthcare or drinkable water. Despite the adoption of the National Public Ageing and Old-Age Policy 2022–2031, there is still weak territorial articulation and low social inclusion, with concerning increase of unipersonal households in this population.

**Recommendation:**



(33) The Committee should urge Colombia to encourage research on senior citizens across cultural, social and economic contexts to submit updated pertinent data leading to effective public policy design and execution.

#### **4. Individuals with Diverse Abilities**

Individuals with diverse abilities face multiple ESCR violations. Despite being nearly 6% of the population, their work rate is only 25.2% compared to 66.4% of individuals without diverse abilities, with income being 18.3% lower on average and strong exclusion from formal employment, especially for psychosocial or cognitive impairments. 17% of this population are illiterate, and only 71% have access to basic education, with low secondary school coverage. Over 425,000 individuals with diverse abilities, moreover, have been victims of the armed conflict, and the country still lacks differentiated protocols for their care within climate emergency contexts. There is, consequently, a structural debt the Colombian State has with this population.

#### **Recommendation:**

(34) Setting up, within the Ministry of Labour, an area focused on work inclusion for individuals with diverse abilities, which: (i) boost public policy proposals related to affirmative action and guaranteeing the right to work; (ii) jointly design training and support procedures across the national territory for individuals with diverse abilities and institutions and companies accommodating inclusion procedures; (iii) monitoring the development and implementation of reasonable adjustments for staff members with diverse abilities, and (iv) advising individuals with diverse abilities throughout selection, hiring and retirement stages, thus holding the State accountable for areas hitherto covered by private foundations and companies.

#### **5. Minors**

Economic, social and cultural rights of minors have been seriously violated in Colombia between 2019 and 2024. 10.8% of kids under the age of five were chronically malnourished in 2022 and 370 deaths related to this were recorded. Only 44 of every 100 students enrolling in primary graduate from secondary, while child labour affected 419,000 minors in 2023 with 8.7% incidence in rural areas. Besides, 113,180 migrant minors crossed the Darién in 2023, being exposed to violence and exploitation. Lack of investment, corruption in assistance programmes affecting 3.9 million kids in 2024 and the 49% rise in forced recruitment confirm a structural crisis in rights guarantee.

#### **Recommendation:**

(35) The Committee ought to advise Colombia to implement specific programmes to prevent and fight multiple and intersectional discrimination affecting minors, particularly female minors as well as those in ethnic minorities, migrants and individuals with diverse abilities.

(36) The Committee ought to advise Colombia to launch national awareness campaigns promoting respect and non-discrimination, and to guarantee equal access to basic services such as education, protection and healthcare, ensuring adequate response to specific conditions and needs of groups in higher vulnerability.



(37) The Committee ought to advise Colombia to strengthen recruitment prevention for minors incorporating a community focus facing structural roots of their vulnerability such as poverty, social exclusion and lack of opportunities.

## 6. Migration and Forced Displacement

1,034 multiple and massive displacement events were recorded in Colombia between 2018 and 2024, with at least 413,451 victims, 58.79% belonging to ethnic communities such as Afro-Colombians (34.96%) and indigenous (23.82%). 76.33% of victims hail from Planning Zones with Territorial Focus, mirroring the persistence of the armed conflict and the structural violence in areas prioritised for peace. These events are chiefly caused by illegal armed groups, but 40% of them lack any data on perpetrators.

Colombia used to hold 2,810,358 Venezuelan migrants, 69.07% of whom had Temporary Protection Permits and over 870,000 remained in irregular circumstances. Migratory transit via high-risk routes such as Darién and San Andrés continued throughout 2024 and January 2025 out of US migratory policies being hardened and expelling factors persisting in Venezuela. The situation is exacerbated by cuts in international funding, particularly by the United States, endangering the sustainability of assistance programmes.

### Recommendations:

(38) Adopting urgent measures to streamline land restitution and collective reparation processes for ethnic communities in the country as well as those guaranteeing safe and sustainable returns for individuals, families and communities to their lands, including actions leading up to advocacy for collective rights and material equality in ESCENR access.

(39) Reinforcing and streamlining regularisation and documentation procedures for migrants, refugees and repatriates as well as adopting public policies and programmes focused on humanitarian assistance, prevention of xenophobia and stigmatisation, promoting pacific coexistence, inclusion in welcoming communities and income generation.

## 7. Residents of Rural Areas

Despite the recent acknowledgement of rural residents for special constitutional protection (Legislative Act N° 1 issued in 2023), no minimum or essential guarantees for their rights have been enforced. Food insecurity affects over a third (34.2%) of the countryside population<sup>17</sup>. Informal labour is generalised (86.3%) between rural workers<sup>18</sup> (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025a) within a context of very low salaries, minimal social protection and special impairment for women. In terms of education, illiteracy (10.36%) is 3.5 larger than in urban centres (Ministry of National Education, 2024a) with less than 20% of rural schools offering full secondary education and only 1.8% of the rural population holding a university degree (Economy of Education Lab, 2024). Regarding healthcare, 633 municipalities (57.3% of the total) lack any healthcare centre whatsoever (Ministry of Health, 2024).

<sup>17</sup> Food insecurity in rural areas rose from 32.5% in 2022 to 34.2% in 2024, whereas in urban centres it fell from 26.8% to 23%. Rural areas in La Guajira (66.6%) and Atlántico (66.1%) almost doubled (National Administrative Department of Statistics, 2025d).

<sup>18</sup> Rural informality doubles that of the 13 largest cities (41.9 %).



### **Recommendation:**

(40) Adopting urgent and sustainable measures to guarantee minimum essential rights for rural residents, especially regarding food safety, healthcare, education, dignified labour and social protection, observing Legislative Act N° 1 issued in 2023. Said measures ought to have territorial and gender foci and they must guarantee effective rural participation in their design and execution.

## **8. Individuals Deprived of Their Liberty**

Over 103,000 individuals are deprived of their liberty in Colombia, with generalised overcrowding and precariousness across national penitentiaries. In 2024, 51% did not receive adequate nourishment and 84% of the prisons did not guarantee food preservation. Only 29% of inmates have had access to work or education, and less than 5% have enrolled in undergraduate tertiary education. 9,191 of them received mental healthcare between March and June 2024, decreasing to 7,374 the next trimester. These conditions reflect systematic ESCR deprivation.

### **Recommendations:**

(41) The Committee ought to advise Colombia to adopt urgent measures to enhance inmate conditions, prioritising decongestion mechanisms substituting preventive imprisonment by humanitarian amnesties and releases, modernising custodial infrastructure, especially water and sanitation networks, and ensuring basic public services in new constructions.

(42) The Committee ought to, likewise, advocate for adequate conditions within penitentiaries via compulsory food quality and conservation standards with independent audits and non-compliance penalties. It must also ensure integral healthcare encompassing physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health, as well as access to education and dignified work as part of social reintegration procedures.

## **9. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Communities**

During the period analysed, the State has not yet generated conditions for ethnic communities to exercise their full right to autonomy, nor has it adopted measures guaranteeing protection and restitution of territorial rights or developed coherent policies for progressive ESCENR fulfilment guaranteeing the principle of non-discrimination and overcoming the inequality affecting ethnic and radicalised populations differentially.

### **Recommendations:**

(43) Respecting, protecting and guaranteeing local governments for ethnic communities in Colombia, especially in the Pacific region, advocating for their autonomy via strengthening their own authorities, allocating resources to formulate and/or update and implement life, safeguarding and development plans, and integrally enforcing Development Plans with Territorial Focus as well as Action Plans for Regional Transformation.

(44) Implementing effective measures to implement the ethnic component of the Peace Agreement and advocating for community suggestions for humanitarian relief put together by ethnic communities across the national territory, implementing territorial transformation as



required in order to guarantee dignified living conditions for ethnic communities and promoting the rule of law in more populated territories.

#### References:

- Así Vamos en Salud. (2025). *Análisis financiero y de cartera de las EPS. Primer trimestre de 2025 y resultados de la Circular Conjunta No. 30 de 2013*, <https://n9.cl/olviub>.
- Casa de la Mujer. (2025, 29<sup>th</sup> of July). *El 2024 fue el año con más casos de trata de personas en toda la historia de Colombia*, <https://n9.cl/xzrfq>.
- Castro, Y., Riaño, M., Palencia, F., Acosta, M. y Benavides, F. (2025). *Perfil de la seguridad y salud en el trabajo, Colombia 2025*, <https://n9.cl/j0plfo>.
- Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos [CIDH]. (2023, 27<sup>th</sup> of January). *Visita de trabajo a Colombia. Observaciones y recomendaciones*, <https://n9.cl/ro1jt>
- Comité de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales. (1990), *Observación general 3. La índole de las obligaciones de los Estados Partes*, doc. E/1991/23, <https://n9.cl/4pkn2>.
- Consejo de Derechos Humanos, *Visita a Colombia. Informe del Grupo de Trabajo sobre la cuestión de los derechos humanos y las empresas transnacionales y otras empresas, 59<sup>o</sup> período de sesiones*, doc. A/HRC/59/53/Add.1, 25 de abril de 2025, <https://n9.cl/2g7mw>.
- Corte Constitucional. (2025). *Estadísticas. Derechos demandados*, <https://n9.cl/ftsce>.
- Defensoría del Pueblo. (2024, 10<sup>th</sup> of December). *Diagnóstico de derechos humanos en Colombia*, <https://n9.cl/wdxod>.
- Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [DANE]. (2025a, 31<sup>st</sup> of January). *Mercado laboral. Enero a diciembre de 2024* [presentación], <https://n9.cl/aqplz>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025b, 12<sup>th</sup> of February). *Población fuera de la fuerza de trabajo. Trimestre octubre - diciembre 2024*, <https://n9.cl/9cftq>
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025c, 26<sup>th</sup> of March). *Estadísticas Vitales. Nacimientos y defunciones no fetales. Año 2024<sup>pr</sup>*,
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025c, 24<sup>th</sup> of April). *Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida 2024*, <https://n9.cl/1fv2c>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025d, 22<sup>nd</sup> of May). *Inseguridad alimentaria a partir de la escala FIES. Información 2024*, <https://n9.cl/v5y56>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025e, 24<sup>th</sup> of July). *Pobreza monetaria y desigualdad 2014* [anexo nacional], <https://n9.cl/hijav>.
- DANE, Ministerio de Igualdad y Equidad y ONU Mujeres. (2024). *Mujeres y hombres: brechas de género en Colombia* (3<sup>a</sup> edición), <https://n9.cl/fjynf>.



- FAO, FIDA, OPS, PMA y UNICEF. (2025). *América Latina y el Caribe. Panorama regional de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición 2024*, <https://n9.cl/u66hoa>.
- Global Witness. (2024, 10<sup>th</sup> of September). *Voces silenciadas. La violencia contra las personas defensoras de la tierra y el medioambiente*, <https://n9.cl/sa3tu>.
- Hernández, J. (2023, 10<sup>th</sup> of November). La Supersalud envió a los medios datos inexactos y engañosos de los incumplimientos de las EPS, diario *El País*, <https://n9.cl/z4g2v>.
- Instituto Kroc. (2025, 11<sup>th</sup> of June). *Navegando las aguas de la paz: avances, retos y oportunidades en el octavo año de implementación (diciembre 2023 a noviembre 2024)*, <https://n9.cl/3noaa>.
- Instituto Nacional de Salud. (2023). *Informe de mortalidad materna, Colombia, 2022*, <https://n9.cl/tfkx3>.
- Laboratorio de Economía de la Educación de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. (2024, 9<sup>th</sup> of July). *Calidad educativa en zonas rurales de Colombia: un camino por recorrer* [informe 98], <https://n9.cl/njda8>.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2023). Observatorio de Trayectorias Educativas [MEN], Tasa de deserción interanual, 30 de noviembre de 2023 (última actualización).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2024a). *Ficha nacional*, <https://n9.cl/nh3zv>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2024b, 30 de septiembre). *Resumen de indicadores, 2015-2023*, <https://n9.cl/g4gvz4>.
- Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social. (2024). *Hacia un sistema de salud garantista, universal, eficiente y solidario que privilegie la vida. Proyecto de ley por medio del cual se transforma el sistema de salud en Colombia y se dictan otras disposiciones*, <https://n9.cl/ivxy1>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2025). *Sistema de afiliación transaccional de riesgos laborales*, <https://n9.cl/m3l3ap>.
- Observatorio Colombiano de Femicidios. (2025). Reportes de femicidios, 2017-2025 [base de datos], <https://n9.cl/pioiqo>.
- Observatorio Fiscal de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. (2025). *Informe sobre la ejecución del Presupuesto General de la Nación 2024*, <https://n9.cl/lj51k>
- Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo. (2017). *IV informe alterno de la sociedad civil al Comité del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales*, doc. INT\_CESCR\_CSS\_COL\_28732\_S, <https://n9.cl/uzwi7>.
- Superintendencia Nacional de Salud (2023, 9<sup>th</sup> of November). *20 EPS acumulan \$12.4 billones en pasivos sin respaldar: Supersalud* [comunicado de prensa 165], <https://n9.cl/mh692c>.