



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 November 2020

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

List of issues prior to submission of the seventh periodic report of Sweden*

1. The State party is requested to submit in writing the information requested below (21,200 words maximum) by 29 October 2021. The State party's replies to the list of issues prior to reporting will constitute its seventh periodic report under article 16 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

A. Issues of particular relevance

2. Please indicate the framework policy on poverty reduction and the definitions of poverty upon which the policy or plans of the State party are based. Please also provide information on:

(a) Any steps taken to ensure that the poverty reduction measures cover all individuals living in poverty, including those who are not registered with the social security system such as homeless people, asylum seekers and migrant workers and their families, particularly those in an irregular situation;

(b) The situation of poverty in Sweden, including relevant disaggregated statistical data, and the measures taken, and the effectiveness of such measures, to reduce the incidence of poverty, particularly among persons with an immigration background, single-parent families, persons with long-term illnesses and women pensioners;

(c) The situation of in-work poverty in Sweden, and the main determinants of in-work poverty and the measures taken to address them.

3. Please provide information on the additional social security programmes established to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly by disadvantaged and marginalized individuals, and specify the scope and level of benefits, target groups and uptake rates of such programmes. Please also provide information on the analysis conducted by the Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social services provided in individual and family care and on the follow-up measures taken. Furthermore, please indicate the measures taken to ensure access, without any form of direct or indirect discrimination, to all such benefits and assistance by disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups, including stateless persons and migrants in an irregular situation.

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group at its sixty-seventh session (19–23 October 2020).



B. Ongoing implementation of the Covenant

4. Please provide information on the progress made in incorporating the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights into domestic law and in improving the understanding of the provisions of the Covenant and their justiciability, particularly among judges, lawyers and law enforcement officials. Please also provide information on the cases in which provisions of the Covenant were applied by or invoked before domestic courts, including examples of such cases. Furthermore, please indicate the efforts made to enhance the awareness of public authorities at all levels, particularly the county and municipal levels, of their obligations under the Covenant, and any mechanisms put in place to coordinate and monitor the implementation of those obligations by local authorities.

5. In light of the information provided by the State party to the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/SWE/CO/22-23/Add.1, para. 3), please provide updated information on the progress made in establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Please also indicate any steps taken to ensure that the envisaged institution has a mandate of protecting and promoting the rights enshrined in the Covenant.

6. Please provide information on the implementation of the action plan on business and human rights, including the achievements made and challenges faced so far. In particular, please specify the measures taken to ensure that business entities apply human rights due diligence throughout their operations, including when operating overseas, and the extent to which they have applied it. Please also provide information on the measures taken to provide victims of human rights abuses committed by business entities with effective remedies, and please give examples of such cases. In addition, please indicate any legislative or policy gaps identified through court cases, including the case of *Arica Victims KB v. Boliden Mineral AB*, in providing effective remedies to victims, and any steps taken to address such gaps.

7. Please specify any efforts made in incorporating human rights due diligence in the policies and guidelines for State-owned companies, including Swedfund International AB and the Swedish Export Credit Corporation, and provide information on any reporting mechanisms on human rights due diligence by State-owned companies and any examples of such reports. Please also provide information on the implementation of due diligence required by the Swedish Export Credits Guarantee Board for business transactions, as indicated in the action plan on business and human rights (p. 24); and on the transactions that have been disapproved as a result of due diligence, in particular those relating to arms exports. Furthermore, please provide information on the procedures put in place to assess human rights impact in the context of development assistance by the State party and of its negotiation of trade agreements.

8. Please provide information on the implementation of the Climate Act and on the key measures included in the climate policy action plan adopted in 2019. Please also provide information on the progress achieved to date in meeting its net zero atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions target by 2045 at the latest. Furthermore, please indicate the measures taken to mitigate the impact of climate change on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights both in the country, in particular with regard to the Sami people, and abroad, through international cooperation. In addition, please provide information on the contributions to which the State party has committed and that it has made to the Green Climate Fund.

9. Please provide information on any steps taken to strengthen the power and functions of the Sami parliament to make its own decisions on internal issues and priorities of the Sami people and to influence relevant decisions on matters affecting them. Please also specify the status of the establishment of the Sami truth commission and of the adoption of the Nordic Saami Convention. Furthermore, please indicate any efforts made to ensure that the enjoyment of Covenant rights by the Sami people is monitored and analysed in a systematic manner, on the basis of reliable statistical data, and provide information on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the Sami people, in particular the rights to work, an adequate standard of living, health and education.

10. Please indicate the status of the draft act on consultation and the efforts made to ensure that the principle of free, prior and informed consent is fully incorporated in the draft. Please also specify how the principle has been applied, in practice, particularly in relation to the use of land for extractive and infrastructure projects, and provide information on any steps taken to institutionalize the participation of and consultation with the Sami people in the process of developing and implementing any development projects that affect them. Furthermore, please provide information on the legislative review, pursuant to the Supreme Court decision of 23 January 2020 in case No. T 853-18, on the right of the Sami people to hunting small game and fishing, including the outcome of the review.

11. In order for the Committee to assess whether the State party is using the maximum available resources to realize the rights recognized in the Covenant, please provide information on the evolution over the past 10 years of:

(a) The proportion of the population below the poverty line as defined at the national level and the levels of inequality, defined as the ratio of the total income accruing to the richest decile of the population and the total income of the poorest 40 per cent of the population;

(b) The proportion of public revenue that is financed through taxes;

(c) Tax rates levied on corporate profits and on personal income, value-added tax (exclusive of value-added tax on luxury items, tobacco, alcohol, sugary drinks and snacks, and petrol and diesel) and the percentage of total revenue from personal income taxes that is collected from the richest decile of the population;

(d) Public expenses as a percentage of gross domestic product and, within total public expenses, the proportion of the public budget that is dedicated to social priorities, including employment, education, food, health, water and sanitation, social security, housing and culture;

(e) Inflation-adjusted absolute levels of social spending.

12. Please specify any progress made in revising the Discrimination Act, as recommended by the Committee (E/C.12/SWE/CO/6, para. 18), and any steps taken to review the existing anti-discrimination legislation to the same effect. Please also provide information on:

(a) Complaints of discrimination brought before the Equality Ombudsman, including main areas and grounds;

(b) Any systemic discrimination raised by the Ombudsman;

(c) Key recommendations made by the Ombudsman and the responses of relevant authorities thereto.

13. Please provide information on the measures taken, and the effectiveness of such measures, to address the high incidence of long-term unemployment and the disproportionately high incidence of unemployment among persons with an immigration background. Please also provide information on the extent of employment in the informal economy ("undeclared employment"), of non-traditional forms of employment, and of workers in underemployment; and on the measures taken to provide workers in precarious employment situations with decent job opportunities. In this context, please specify the effectiveness of the amendments to the Employment Protection Act of 2016.

14. Please provide information on the steps taken to enhance the capacity of the Work Environment Authority and its cooperation with other relevant agencies. Please also provide information on the legislative and policy framework to protect the rights of migrant workers, particularly those in an irregular situation, and on the mechanisms put in place for them to seek remedies in case of violation of their rights. Furthermore, please provide information on the complaints brought to and inspections carried out by the Work Environment Authority, including main issues of concern and the steps taken to address them, and also include annual statistical data, disaggregated by sector, on the inspections carried out during the reporting period.

15. Please provide information on the measures taken, and the effectiveness of those measures, to prevent occupational accidents and diseases. Please also provide information on

the incidence of occupational accidents, including the number of injuries and deaths incurred, and of occupational diseases. Furthermore, please provide information on work injury insurance and sickness benefits, including the coverage provided and the eligibility criteria; on the scope, level and duration of the benefits; and on any steps taken to reform these schemes.

16. Please provide information on the findings of the inquiry to review the exercise of the right to strike, following the labour conflict in the port of Gothenburg in 2016 and on the steps taken to address the inquiry's outcome. Please also clarify the status of a bill drafted by the social partners to address the issues relating to the right to strike and provide information on its content.

17. In light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (E/C.12/SWE/CO/6, paras. 31–32), please specify how the right to family reunification is guaranteed in the Act on temporary restrictions on the possibility of being granted a residence permit in Sweden, which entered into force on 20 July 2016, and how the terms "family members" and "economic dependency" are defined in the Act. Please also provide information on the implementation of the Act, including statistical data on the number of applications for family reunification received and the number of applications granted.

18. Please provide information on the measures taken to address the shortage of housing and the high costs of housing, and on the provision of social housing, including the eligibility criteria for social housing and the number of social housing units provided. Please also provide information on the measures taken to address high household indebtedness due to housing mortgages. Furthermore, please provide information on the definition of homelessness and on protection for persons experiencing homelessness, as provided for in legislation, and on the measures taken to tackle the root causes of homelessness. Please also provide statistical data, disaggregated by age, sex, region (urban and rural) and ethnicity, on the extent of homelessness.

19. Please provide information on the main obstacles faced by Afro-Swedes, Muslims and Roma in accessing the housing market and the measures taken to remove the obstacles. Please also provide information on the situation of informal settlements in Sweden, in terms of their locations; the size and ethnic composition of the population living there; and the extent of basic services provided therein. Furthermore, please provide information on the legislative measures taken to strengthen protection against forced eviction and to establish appropriate procedures to be followed prior to an eviction. In addition, please provide information on the evictions carried out during the reporting period, including the number of evictions and of persons evicted, and the alternative accommodation or compensation provided to them.

20. Please provide information on the steps taken to address the regional disparities in accessing health-care services, including as regards the scope of those services, waiting times and out-of-pocket payment. Please also provide information on the extent of health-care services provided to asylum seekers and migrants, including those in an irregular situation, and on the efforts made to expand the scope of health-care services provided to them. Furthermore, please provide information on the implementation of a national mental health strategy for the period 2016–2020, including the progress achieved and challenges faced, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of measures taken within the strategy to improve mental health conditions, especially among young people.

21. Please provide information on the challenges faced in the health sector in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to address them.

22. Please indicate any steps taken to review legislation criminalizing personal drug use and any studies carried out to analyse the impact of such legislation on access to health-care services by drug users. Please also provide information on the legislative and policy measures taken to expand the harm reduction programmes, and on the extent to which drug users have benefited from those programmes. Furthermore, please provide information on the measures taken, and the effectiveness of those measures, to tackle the high incidence of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C among people who inject drugs, and on the high number of deaths by overdose.

23. Please provide statistical data, disaggregated by ethnic and national origin, age, sex and socioeconomic status, on school enrolment and completion rates at primary, secondary

and tertiary levels of education. Please also provide information on the measures taken to ensure equal access to inclusive education by children with disabilities and children of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons.

24. Please provide information on the steps taken to enhance the education of Sami children and children belonging to ethnic minority groups in their mother tongues, including steps taken to secure a sufficient number of teachers who can provide instruction in Sami and minority languages. Please also indicate any efforts made to broaden access to bilingual education in areas populated by the Sami people and persons belonging to ethnic minority groups. Furthermore, please provide information on any steps taken to improve education on cultural diversity, including Sami culture and history.

25. Please provide information on the legislative and institutional measures taken or envisaged in relation to the repatriation of indigenous cultural objects and on the extent of such repatriation.

26. Please provide information on any efforts made during the reporting period to ensure access, without discrimination, to the benefits of scientific progress and its applications.

C. Good practices

27. Please provide information on good practices in policy formulation and implementation that have been developed by the State party during the reporting period and that have effectively contributed to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular for marginalized and disadvantaged individuals and groups. Please indicate how the Committee's previous concluding observations (E/C.12/SWE/CO/6) have been taken into account in developing such practices.
