



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Ninety-fifth session

### Summary record of the 2768th meeting\*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 22 January 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

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Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

*Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation*

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\* No summary record was issued for the 2767th meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports of States parties** (*continued*)

*Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation*  
([CRC/C/RUS/6-7](#); [CRC/C/RUS/Q/6-7](#); [CRC/C/RUS/RQ/6-7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation), introducing his country's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports ([CRC/C/RUS/6-7](#)), said that a number of major State programme documents had been introduced over the preceding decade, including the road map for a State family policy, two plans relating to the Decade of Childhood that covered the period up to 2027, and the Strategy for the Comprehensive Safety of Children for the period up to 2030. Amendments made to the Constitution since 2020 had introduced guarantees protecting the family, motherhood, fatherhood and children. Strategic planning documents were in place to, among other goals, enable children, including children with disabilities, to participate actively in society.
3. Against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government had increased the consolidated children's budget, introduced new measures to support families with children, and developed social services and infrastructure in the interests of families with children. The number of low-income households with children continued to decline. Support had been provided to 400,000 pregnant women and the parents of over 10 million children under the single benefit for pregnant women and low-income families with children under 17.
4. The Government emphasized the protection of the institution of the family and the prevention of child abandonment. The holiday of Father's Day had been introduced, and the honorary title of "Heroine Mother" had been restored for women who gave birth to or raised 10 or more children. The President had declared 2024 the Year of the Family. The continued implementation of federal and regional inter-agency plans of action for the prevention of child abandonment had led to a 2.2 per cent reduction in the number of cases of deprivation of parental rights and a 12.6 per cent reduction in the number of separations of children from their parents because of a threat to the children's life or health. Over the previous decade, the number of orphans had decreased by 24 per cent, to 375,700, and the number of orphans in institutions had decreased by 66 per cent. The Government had drafted a bill that would improve the system for selecting and preparing people who wished to adopt orphans, including close relatives, and bolster the obligation of custody and guardianship agencies and families to protect orphaned children. The Government was improving mechanisms for providing social services to families in difficult situations, and their number had decreased by 300,000 between 2020 and 2022. Fifty-five multifunctional family centres had been opened in the previous two years to serve as so-called one-stop shops where families with children could obtain assistance on various issues.
5. The Government had introduced mass screening of newborns for congenital and inherited diseases. Ten regional screening centres had opened in 2022 and could provide early diagnoses of more than 40 such diseases; 99 per cent of all neonates underwent such screening, while 94 per cent of children underwent annual preventive examinations. A set of child suicide prevention measures, including a nationwide hotline, had been introduced and would run through 2025. To increase access to high-quality health care, the Government was training specialists, opening new children's hospitals and taking steps to ensure that waiting times to see a specialist did not exceed two weeks. The Circle of Goodness Foundation, created in 2021, had assisted more than 23,000 children with severe life-threatening and chronic diseases.
6. In 2022, 6.8 million children had attended preschool and almost all children between the ages of 3 and 7 had access to a preschool education. Over the previous five years, almost 789,000 new school places had been created, as well as 265,500 additional preschool places and more than 1,500 new kindergartens, while 18,600 places had been made available in non-State preschools. In 2023, more than 33,000 school mediation and reconciliation services had been in operation. The number of children in inclusive education had increased by

7.5 per cent, to 542,000, between 2021 and 2022. The framework for children's information security, the aims of which included boosting children's digital literacy skills, protecting their personal data and ensuring tolerance and respect for traditional values among children, had been updated in 2023. Legislation was being systematically developed with the aim of ensuring child-friendly judicial procedures. A draft federal law had been developed on not applying detention to children for minor crimes or those not involving violence. To better protect children from crime, the punishments for forcing children to engage in sex acts or covering up such offences had been strengthened, with the punishment for violent acts of a sexual nature committed against children aged 14 or above increased to life imprisonment.

7. The Government sought to meet international standards for children's rights in a manner that was consistent with the country's Constitution, as exemplified by the efforts that he had described. His delegation looked forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations.

8. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that, although the Committee's dialogue with the State party would focus on potential areas of weakness, the Committee was aware of the progress that the State party had made in many areas. It would be helpful to know whether, under the Constitution, the Convention took precedence over domestic legislation and whether there had been any changes with regard to the legal standing of the Convention in recent years; what role, if any, children played in the law-making process; and whether a child rights impact assessment procedure had been introduced for national laws and policies relevant to children.

9. He would be grateful for information on any human rights mechanisms introduced with the aim of replacing the legal protection that Russian children had previously enjoyed and which was embodied in the instruments of the Council of Europe, including the European Court of Human Rights, and on any measures to enhance child-friendly judicial procedures or children's legal capacity to pursue judicial or administrative remedies.

10. It would be helpful to have further information on the regional plans for the implementation of the Decade of Childhood and on any indicators being used to assess the progress made under them. He would like to find out whether there was a single federal body responsible for all child rights-related matters, how federal, regional and local authorities coordinated their efforts, and whether regional and local bodies also oversaw implementation of the Convention.

11. He wished to know whether children could file complaints with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, whether government bodies were bound by the Office's findings, what specific measures the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights had taken to promote children's rights, and whether the Presidential Commissioner acted in accordance with the Paris Principles. He would also like to know whether the reports were true that regional child rights commissioners often had no experience in protecting children's rights and were appointed under procedures lacking transparency.

12. He wondered how the State party had justified the expansion of the term "foreign agent" – initially used in a 2012 law that the Committee had, in its previous concluding observations, recommended should be repealed – in December 2022 to cover individuals as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It would be helpful to know whether the State party had established a clear regulatory framework and legal accountability for industries operating in or managed from the Russian Federation, to ensure that their activities did not negatively affect human rights or endanger environmental, health, labour or other standards.

13. He wished to know what steps the State party had taken to prevent the ill-treatment of children by police officers and professionals working with children, how it investigated allegations of such ill-treatment, and whether mechanisms were in place for the reporting of cases of torture or ill-treatment of children and for the collection of data on such cases. He would like to find out whether the State party planned to adopt a national strategy on violence against children; why the use of corporal punishment in all settings, including the home, had not yet been explicitly prohibited; and whether the draft amendments to the Family Code, which would prioritize parents' rights over child rights, remove requirements to report abuse

and leave child protection authorities powerless to remove children from their homes in emergencies, had been adopted.

14. In the light of the 17 January 2023 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *B v. Russia*, he wished to know whether the State party had taken steps to implement a child-friendly multi-agency protocol for investigating cases of child sexual abuse and whether it planned to introduce legislation to prevent the revictimization of children by, for example, ensuring that they would not come face to face with perpetrators. He would appreciate information on the mental health services available to child victims of abuse in each region. He would like to know how the State party responded to reports of institutionalized suppression of violence against women and girls in the State party, including with respect to “honour killings” and “bride kidnappings” in the North Caucasus.

15. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee had received reports and studies showing that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children were bullied at school and were reluctant to report hate crimes against them to law enforcement authorities for fear of being subjected to abuse by officers. In addition, *A.B. v. Finland*, a communication submitted to the Committee by a Russian child who had been bullied at his school in the Russian Federation because of the make-up of his family, had revealed the discriminatory treatment of children of parents who were lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. She wished to know whether the State party’s law on so-called propaganda regarding non-traditional sexual relationships had been evidence-based; whether the authorities had considered the harmful effects that that law and the Supreme Court’s November 2023 ruling that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists were extremists could have on children’s rights; whether the State party planned to introduce sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for hate crimes; and whether the State party considered it healthy for children to live in a polarized society that was hostile to certain groups of people.

16. She would appreciate data on the availability of community-based social services since 2018. It would be helpful to know how the State party monitored the quality of social services, how many children were without parental care, how many parents had had their parental rights removed or restricted, and what services were provided to prevent unnecessary separations. More detailed information on the 55 recently established multifunctional family centres would also be welcome. She wished to know what training and resources on positive parenting were available to parents, and what support parents, extended families, legal guardians and community members received in learning how to provide guidance to children on their rights.

17. She wondered what steps the federal authorities were taking to ensure that divorced or widowed mothers in Chechnya could effectively fulfil their responsibilities as parents. She wished to learn about the outcomes of the deinstitutionalization process, particularly for Roma and Indigenous children and children with disabilities. She asked what impact the Family Code provision whereby parents and guardians could temporarily place their children in institutions for orphans, and the authorities’ seeming preference for institutional over family-based care, had on the deinstitutionalization policy. She wished to know what steps were taken to avoid conflicts of interests when directors of institutions who were also guardians of some of the institutionalized children were asked to respond to cases of child abuse; how placements were monitored; what channels were available to children for reporting abuse; and what services were available to institutionalized children with mental health, behavioural or drug addiction problems.

18. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) said that he would be grateful if the delegation could indicate whether children from the Roma community and refugee and asylum-seeking children born in the territory of the State were registered at birth and had access to a birth registration certificate. He wondered whether the authorities were aware that changes to passports, which no longer displayed indigenous or other ethnic origin, were depriving Indigenous persons of their right under Russian law to indicate their indigenous status, and if so, how they planned to resolve that issue.

19. It would be helpful if the delegation could indicate the numbers of children and family members who had been detained, charged or convicted under the law passed in March 2022 introducing administrative and criminal liability for “discrediting the Russian army” and

provide information on their procedural or administrative status. He would like to know whether there was any protocol to ensure that the use of force was not the police's first resort for suppressing demonstrations involving minors.

20. He would be interested to hear how the authorities ensured that children's right to privacy was protected in the digital environment, particularly in light of ongoing security breaches on learning platforms that were reportedly exploited by some teachers to monitor social media activity, leading to the children facing reprisals. As facial recognition technology was used during protests, it would be useful to know how the authorities ensured that children's right to privacy was protected in that context. He wondered whether the State guaranteed access to alternative sources of information, so that children could form their own judgements, and how the State allowed children to interact in a digital environment, given the restrictions on social media in the country.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.10 p.m.*

21. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the country had indeed withdrawn from the Council of Europe on 15 March 2023, meaning that it was not bound by any European Court of Human Rights rulings that had entered into force after that date. However, all earlier rulings had been duly implemented and any related compensation had been paid out under the supervision of the Office of the Procurator General. The withdrawal from the Council of Europe had not adversely impacted the human rights situation in the country, and the Russian Federation remained committed to its international obligations under the various United Nations human rights treaties to which it was a party. The Russian Federation had a specific law on the rights of the child that covered all of the provisions of the Convention, and mechanisms existed for individual complaints to be made under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

22. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that article 15 of the Constitution established the principle of the supremacy of international treaties over national legislation. However, it was up to the country's Constitutional Court to resolve any issues where the interpretation of such instruments appeared to contradict the Constitution.

23. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that there was a federal inter-agency plan for the Decade of Childhood, implemented by the relevant ministries, which included measures to establish the preconditions for the physical, educational, material and spiritual well-being of children and their families across the country. Regional plans were also drawn up in each of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Children could participate in shaping the regional plans through an Internet portal established for public input that was open to all citizens. The regional plans set out the statistical targets and parameters to be met.

24. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that there was no single federal body that was fully responsible for the rights of the child and the implementation of the Convention, as that responsibility was distributed across various ministries and agencies at the federal level, including the ministries responsible for education, labour, social protection and health care. The federal law on the protection of the rights of the child stipulated the remit of each ministry in relation to children's rights, in addition to setting out the responsibilities of authorities in the constituent entities of the Federation, which could adopt their own laws.

25. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, in introducing "foreign agent" status, the State aimed to protect its own sovereignty by preventing foreign interference in domestic affairs, primarily in the political sphere. In 2014, when the legislation on foreign agents had been introduced, it had mainly concerned non-commercial organizations and NGOs. However, the legislation had later been expanded to include additional entities, such as individuals, with essentially the same consequences for all entities, and the concept of "an agent of foreign interference" had emerged. Foreign agents promoted a foreign agenda through funding, the provision of scientific and technical assistance, persuasion and other forms of influence. Foreign agents also conducted activities in areas of strategic importance for Russian society and State sovereignty, including, for example, the collection of information on the military activities of the Russian Federation, political activity, the distribution of materials and the financing such activities.

26. The assignment of foreign agent status did not infringe the rights of an individual, as the Constitutional Court had stated that the term had no negative connotations. It was not intended to negatively affect the reputation of or undermine the credibility of or trust in a person, nor did it entail a ban on any activities. Where organizations previously deemed to be foreign agents had been closed down, it was on account of numerous gross violations of the legislation of the Russian Federation. As was the case with harmful products, the authorities had a duty to inform the public of entities having such a status. The status was not permanent, and there were procedures and conditions for lifting that status and delisting entities. Some 53 NGOs had been removed from the foreign agent list at their request when they had ceased to perform certain functions, such as providing funding, and they were able to continue performing other activities. Tens of thousands of NGOs existed in the country and only some 200 – less than 1 per cent – were categorized as foreign agents, of which only two were active in the field of protecting children’s rights, demonstrating that there were no restrictions on civil society in that area.

27. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, according to article 21 of the Constitution, no one could be subjected to torture, violence or other severe or humiliating treatment or punishment. Criminal law in the Russian Federation provided mechanisms for ensuring the prevention of harm to health. For example, chapter 16 of the Criminal Code stipulated punishments for crimes against health and life, including those committed against minors. The Code also stipulated that crimes committed against minors or vulnerable persons were to be considered as aggravating circumstances, leading to more severe punishments. There were also more severe punishments for offences against the sexual integrity of children. Chapter 20 of the Code covered crimes against the family and children, including the use of violence or threats to involve children in crime or antisocial actions and involving children in activities that were dangerous to life. Article 156 of the Code covered failures to discharge the duty of bringing up a minor that were associated with cruel treatment of the child. The Ministry of the Interior had launched measures for the protection of children, including those for identifying and reporting people who were in contravention of article 156, as well as other adults living in those families who committed crimes against the child.

28. Those provisions constituted the basis for responding to crimes against children and ensuring the security of children, including through police activities, the psychological support system and reporting mechanisms – which included a 24-hour emergency hotline and an anonymous reporting hotline for children. As a result of those measures, the number of crimes against the lives and health of children had fallen from roughly 11,000 in 2018 to the current figure of approximately 8,000. As a further preventive measure, a register of perpetrators of crimes against children was maintained, which also listed persons who had been released from penitentiaries following the offences.

29. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation investigated and verified reports of crimes committed by and against minors, particularly serious crimes. To ensure that the rights of child victims were protected and to avoid unlawful pressure on children during investigations, it was mandatory for investigations to be carried out with the participation of a psychologist and the child victim, especially for crimes against sexual integrity. In such cases, psychological support could be provided to child victims beyond the boundaries of the criminal case, and the child’s representative could ask for support and representation to be paid for out of the State budget. Investigations of other crimes involving children also required the participation of a psychologist or educator. When child victims were involved, the duration of proceedings was limited, depending on the psychological state of the victim. Minors and persons who were unable to protect their own rights owing to their physical or psychological state must have a legal representative. However, investigators could remove representatives if there were reasons to believe that their actions were harmful to the interests of the child, for example, in cases where the crime was committed by the minor’s relatives. There was mandatory video recording of investigations involving child victims, except where the child or his or her representative objected to it. Investigations into cruel treatment of children were carried out in the presence of a psychologist, and child victims and their families could be provided with psychological support on an ongoing basis if needed. Investigating authorities had specially equipped premises for working with child victims. Since 2014, the Investigative Committee had employed child psychologists in order to minimize the psychological trauma of child

victims. Only experienced investigators who were trained to work with children could work with child victims, and they were required to minimize the psychological impact on victims when acquiring information. All circumstances were considered in handling cases relating to minors, including family circumstances and living conditions.

30. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, investigators were able to cross-examine minor victims or witnesses only with their agreement or with that of their legal representatives.

31. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the activities of the Office of the Procurator General were regulated by a special order of the Procurator General, which specified time frames for the provision to the Office of information on crimes and incidents involving minors, as well as the procedure for monitoring the progress of inquiries and the investigation of criminal cases. Information on incidents involving children throughout the country was analysed by the Office on a daily basis, and particular attention was paid to the commission of acts of sexual violence. The full registration of crime reports was ensured through monitoring, both interdepartmentally and by the Office of the Procurator General. Data on sexual violence against children in crime reports were systematically cross-checked with information from the education and health-care authorities and social services. Criminal cases related to sexual violence against children could be brought without a complaint being made by the child concerned or by his or her legal representative. Where the actions of a legal representative were deemed to be an obstacle to protecting the rights of a child, that person could be removed from participation in criminal proceedings, in which case the child's interests were protected and represented by social services and other competent bodies. Rapid decisions were taken as to whether persons accused of sexual offences against children should be placed in pretrial custody, to prevent them from coming into contact with victims. The Strategy for the Comprehensive Safety of Children in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 included measures for the rehabilitation of child victims of such offences. In December 2021, the Government had increased the severity of punishments for sexual abuse of children to include life imprisonment, and in March 2022 it had adopted a law on criminal liability for concealing serious crimes against minors and increased liability for coercing children into sexual acts. An effective mechanism was in place for registering complaints about the actions or inaction of officials at all levels, which could be used by all citizens, including minors. There were no obstacles in the Russian Federation to exercising the right of recourse.

32. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the equal rights enjoyed by the more than 190 ethnic groups in the Russian Federation included the right to preserve their identity. Indigenous Peoples and Roma were granted additional rights on the basis of social justice. Particular attention was paid to preservation and development of the languages of numerically small Indigenous Peoples and other languages of the Russian Federation, in the context of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages; significant funds were also allocated annually by the Government to support regional programmes in that regard.

33. Under Federal Act No. 219 of 13 June 2023, which would come into force on 1 March 2024, Indigenous Peoples were to be provided with preschool and school education in the places of their traditional residence. A system of nomadic schools, comprising more than 40 facilities in the majority of the areas inhabited by the Indigenous Peoples, provided education to approximately 6,500 children of nomadic families, of whom some 2,000 were of preschool age, in settings that would enable them to remain with their parents. A programme to provide funds to help Indigenous families buy homes or improve their housing situation had been used to assist 247 families in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area, and plans were in place to assist more than 90 such families in the future. The fertility rate among Indigenous Peoples in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Area – Ugra, which was higher than among the general population, served to demonstrate the effectiveness of such efforts.

34. The majority of Roma parents obtained birth certificates for their children, and available statistics indicated that they did so on equal terms with the other peoples of the Russian Federation. The Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Socioeconomic and Ethnocultural Development of the Roma in the Russian Federation had been revised in 2022. Agencies at the federal and regional levels were accountable for implementation of the plan, which covered education, welfare and health care and had been developed with the

participation of the Federal Autonomous Ethnic Cultural Organization of Russian Roma and its regional groupings. Some 90 per cent of Roma children in Stavropol territory, where the majority of Roma lived, were currently being educated in school as a result of such efforts.

35. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that measures taken by the Government had resulted in a consistent reduction in cases of child abandonment and family dysfunction. More than 3 million families at risk had received assistance in 2022, which had included consultative, financial and material support. The number of such families had fallen from 3.9 million in 2020 to 3.6 million in 2022.

36. More than 2,000 social service organizations were in operation throughout the Russian Federation; they included educational, social rehabilitation and crisis centres for children and adolescents, women and families. Some 55 multifunctional family service centres, introduced since 2022, provided a range of services related to education, health care and the exercising of civic and other rights.

37. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, since 2023, the Government had been implementing a plan to prevent the abandonment of children up to the age of 4 years by providing assistance to families in difficult situations. As a result, the total number of children without parental care had fallen by 11 per cent since 2019, while the number of children whose parents had been deprived of their parental rights had fallen by 8.5 per cent. The number of organizations for children without parental care had fallen by 17 per cent since 2019, and the number of children in such organizations had fallen by 15 per cent. Civil society organizations, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and other bodies were legally entitled to visit such organizations and make proposals regarding arrangements for children to meet their relatives and prepare for life ahead. Volunteers were welcome at such institutions, and mentoring programmes – which had continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with additional safety measures in place – were supported by the Government. The law provided for severe punishment for perpetrators of violence in such institutions, and all such cases were fully investigated by law enforcement bodies.

38. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that a number of amendments to legislation had been made in recent years to improve access to and the quality of mental health care, ensure the full enjoyment of rights in institutions providing such care, and destigmatize complaints related to mental illness, with emphasis on protecting the rights of children. Since 2023, an extensive network of psychologists had been established who saw patients in public clinics rather than in specialist institutions. Health-care bodies worked closely with those responsible for education, social services and law enforcement to promote an interdisciplinary approach to children's health care, which also took into account the need for parental involvement. A system of preventive screening was in place in order to diagnose problems related to drug abuse in children at an early stage, with their consent, and a full range of treatments was provided to those in need of them. As a result, cases of drug abuse among minors had fallen by nearly 25 per cent over the previous 10 years, while the number of children and adolescents under follow-up observation had fallen by 30 per cent.

39. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that births were registered and birth certificates were issued on the basis of a document confirming the birth produced by the relevant medical institution, but that process could be delayed in cases where mothers lacked a document confirming their identity. Documents accepted for that purpose under the law included not only Russian passports but also foreign citizens' passports, temporary residence permits and temporary identification documents. Any person with the legal status of a refugee, asylum-seeker or stateless person was entitled to declare the birth of a child and obtain a birth certificate. If the parents of a child were unable to declare a birth themselves, such a declaration could be made by a relative of one of the parents, an authorized representative or an official of the medical institution where the birth took place, where the mother had been present during labour or where the child was located. In such cases, information on the mother was included in the medical document confirming the birth.

40. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that certificates were issued for all newborn children, regardless of the status of their parents. The Government was not aware of any cases of children whose family members had been accused of discrediting the Russian armed forces.



41. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that law enforcement officers were entitled to demand that persons desisted from actions or speech that appeared to violate the legislation of the Russian Federation, and that if such demands were not complied with, they were entitled to use special devices, such as handcuffs, tear gas and water cannons, in the event that participants in public meetings appeared to present a threat to the safety or security of each other or of persons nearby. Law enforcement officers took into account the rights of the child when interacting with minors involved in such events. Cases of detention of minors in unsanctioned public events had fallen from 194 in 2022 to 126 in 2023.

42. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the right to freedom of thought and speech and freedom to receive and transmit information, in line with the law, was protected under the Constitution. Access to data could only be restricted by federal law. The protection of information was governed by federal law, and information could be censored only if it was banned for all citizens of the Russian Federation.

43. Parents shouldered most of the responsibility for ensuring their children's safety online. However, in 2023, the Government had provided information security tools and advice to the public, including software for mobile phones, which would be updated annually. An alliance on information security for children had been established in 2021, under which 12,000 organizations had signed a charter on ethical principles for child protection. Educational materials had been distributed, a festival on information security had been held, and workshops and events had been organized for parents and teachers. Those efforts came under the 2015 framework for children's information security, which had been updated in 2023 and included federal and regional measures, such as education on protecting personal data, to be implemented on an ongoing basis.

44. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he would like further details regarding the measures being taken to adapt the centres for children with disabilities to their needs. He would welcome information on the training of personnel and the budget for those adaptation efforts. He wondered how the State party was reducing stigma and discrimination and promoting a positive image of children with disabilities. The delegation was requested to comment on reports of negligence and abuse of children with disabilities in government institutions. He would like to know whether investigations had been carried out, whether the perpetrators had been punished, and whether the children involved had received psychological support.

45. He asked what measures were being taken to prevent suicide among children and improve their mental health. He would like the delegation to comment on reports of the misuse of psychiatric diagnoses and treatments with a view to medicating children. Information on the training of mental health professionals would be welcome.

46. In the light of reports of pressure from the Church to reduce access to abortion, he would like to know how the State party was ensuring such access and the continuation of its policies on adolescent, sexual and reproductive health. He wondered if there were any plans to include comprehensive sex education in the curriculum and ensure access to the related information for all children, including those in rural areas.

47. It would be useful to learn what measures were being taken to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS for all people in the country, regardless of their immigration status. With regard to standards of living, he wished to know whether the State party had envisaged any measures to improve access to services and housing for Roma children.

48. Given the position taken by the State party at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference regarding greenhouse gases, he would be interested to know how the authorities were monitoring the environment and its impact on children, assessing climate change risks and managing environmental disasters. What measures were being taken to mitigate the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, and how were children being prepared to face the effects of climate change?

49. **The Chair** (Country Task Force) said that she would be interested to learn whether the State party had reached its goal of ensuring access to preschool education for all children aged 18 months to 3 years by 2021. She wished to know what percentage of preschool education was private, and how safety and the quality of education were ensured in all

preschools. She would like to understand more about the State party's policy regarding the wearing of religious symbols in schools, particularly the hijab.

50. The delegation was invited to comment on reports of obstacles to migrant children's access to education, owing to difficulties in obtaining proof of address, and to indicate any steps taken to facilitate that process. She wondered what action was being taken to eradicate bullying and what models were used to promote safer schools.

51. She wished to know more about the so-called hero's desks that had been introduced in schools, as well as the purpose of the Movement of the First youth organization. She would be grateful if the delegation could confirm reports that, in 2023, a large budget would be allocated to patriotic education, supporting government school movements and organizing militaristic events, and explain the purpose and content of the new school course called "Conversations about important things". Was the content of that course determined by the Government, and was it mandatory? She would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on reports that a new Russian history textbook had been introduced, setting out an ideological account of the twentieth century that was contrary to federal law. She asked whether compulsory basic military training would be reintroduced to schools in the State party in 2024, and whether weapons would be used. Given reports of an expansion of special paramilitary cadet education in the State party, she would like to know the official policy in that respect.

52. She wished to know when the new legislation on granting asylum might be adopted. Information would be welcome on any family tracing measures in place for unaccompanied and separated migrant children in the State party. She wondered what was the average length of migration detention involving families with children, and where unaccompanied children awaiting deportation were held. The delegation was invited to outline Government policy on non-refoulement. She would appreciate receiving information on migrant children, disaggregated by gender and country of origin. Given reports of difficulties in official registration among migrants, she wondered whether the number of children indicated on the migration register might not reflect the situation on the ground. She would like to learn more about any integration measures for refugee or asylum-seeking children who did not speak Russian, especially with regard to education.

53. She asked how the State party was protecting and preserving Indigenous languages in schools. She wondered whether alternatives to sending Indigenous children to boarding schools were being considered, with a view to them remaining in their communities. She wondered what steps were being taken to provide basic health services to Indigenous communities and to meet the needs of Indigenous children whose families followed traditional ways of life, for instance in relation to access to fishing.

54. It would be useful to gain a better understanding of the State party's position in relation to child trafficking.

55. She would like to know how the pretrial detention of children was being reduced. She would welcome clarification regarding the criminal liability of 16- and 17-year-olds. It would be interesting to learn whether diversion programmes were available at the pretrial stage, whether there were any non-custodial sentencing options, and whether the bill restricting pretrial detention was still under consideration.

56. She would like to know whether the 2022 legislation increasing penalties for recruiting and training any mercenary who was under the age of 18 applied only to non-State groups. She would like the delegation to indicate whether reports of teenage boys being taken to the front lines of the conflict in the Donetsk Province of Ukraine had been investigated and whether action was being taken.

57. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** said that he would like to know whether there was a national strategy or action plan to coordinate efforts by different sectors and levels of Government to tackle the sale and sexual exploitation of children in the State party.

58. The State party's attack on Ukraine had led to the death of hundreds of children and the injury of hundreds more, as verified by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. He wondered how the State party could justify that military action in the light of its obligations under the Convention. He would welcome information on the

consequences of the conflict on Russian children, including how many had lost their fathers. He wished to know whether the State party was aware of reports of sexual violence against children perpetrated during the State party's occupation of Ukraine, and whether any measures had been taken to prevent such violence. The delegation was requested to comment on reports of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture of children by the authorities of the Russian Federation in the occupied Ukrainian territory, and to indicate whether any investigative or preventive measures had been taken in that regard. The State party's military operations in Ukraine had devastated medical facilities, hospitals, schools and kindergartens; he wondered how that concurred with its obligations under the Convention. Given reports that, under 2023 legislation on education, the curriculum of the Russian Federation and military training were being enforced in schools in the Ukrainian territories occupied by the State party, he would like to know how that legislation could be justified in the light of Convention obligations related to freedom of expression and education.

59. **Ms. Todorova** said that she wished to know about any measures taken to prevent the silencing of children in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation from 2014 onwards, in line with article 38 (1) of the Convention. It would be useful to learn whether any measures had been taken to restore access to education in Ukrainian in that area since the introduction of the education system of the Russian Federation. She wished to know how many requests for peaceful assemblies and protests had been approved in the State party. She would appreciate clarification regarding the policy of simplifying naturalization procedures for Ukrainian children that had begun in 2014, and how it complied with the Convention and other international human rights instruments.

60. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he would like further details of the State party's safe return policy for Ukrainian children, either to Ukraine or to a third country where they had family. He would like to learn more about the interdepartmental group for reuniting minors with their families. The delegation was invited to outline the process to take into account the wishes and best interests of children who did not wish to return to Ukraine. It would be interesting to learn how the State party was handling the situation of Ukrainian children who had been transferred to institutions in the State party or placed in temporary care, especially in terms of maintaining their cultural and family ties. He would like the delegation to explain why it considered the word "adoption" to be negative, and why it considered that Ukrainian children were being evacuated rather than adopted. It would be useful to know what measures the State party was taking to investigate reports of illegal deportations and forced transfers of Ukrainian children, and to hold the perpetrators accountable. Would the State party cooperate with the International Criminal Court's investigations into alleged war crimes committed by President Putin and the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, Ms. Lvova-Belova?

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*