



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 2769th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 23 January 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Skelton

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties *(continued)*

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation (continued)
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1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Russian Federation joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that, for the previous three or four years, a support programme, directly subsidized from the federal budget, had covered the training of staff and the equipping of the rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities that existed in 79 constituent entities of the Russian Federation. As a matter of principle, all children with disabilities could access all the resources of the centres, including through the wide use of information technology. The Government intended to continue the programme until at least 2026. Annual federal subsidies, which were topped up by local authority subsidies, currently amounted to 545 million roubles, but the intention was to increase them in the next budget cycle, for example to cover any modernization of the centres that might be needed. Children who, after medical assessment, were registered in the 123 residential centres for children with special needs were prescribed the appropriate medical treatment, including drug therapy. The centres were staffed by paediatricians, psychologists, neurologists, stomatologists, ear, nose and throat specialists, physical therapists and various other specialists. Some 75 per cent of the positions in those centres were filled.
3. One way to prevent or reduce the stigmatization of children with disabilities was to avoid their placement in an institution. An early assistance and rehabilitation programme existed for precisely that purpose. New laws on comprehensive rehabilitation had led to the introduction of a set of measures to enable children to remain at home, or to make it possible for teenagers to live independently in normal apartments, under the supervision of social pedagogues. Such assisted living fostered social rehabilitation through contacts with the community and helped to break down barriers.
4. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the prescription and administration of psychotropic substances was strictly regulated by law. They could be prescribed only by a doctor. The Federal Service for Supervision of Health Care was responsible for ensuring drug safety. Anyone who violated the law on psychotropic substances incurred administrative or criminal responsibility.
5. The number of HIV-positive children under the age of 17 had halved between 2016 and 2021. The number children in the same age group who had died from HIV-related causes had fallen by two thirds over the same period. The key parameters for preventing the perinatal transmission of HIV/AIDS had improved. The percentage of pregnant HIV-positive women receiving treatment to prevent transmission to their unborn child had risen from 80 per cent in 2011 to 95 per cent in 2022. Over the same period, drug therapy coverage for expectant mothers who were HIV-positive had increased from 87.5 per cent to over 97 per cent. Almost all babies born to HIV-infected mothers received preventive HIV therapy. There had also been a substantial drop in the number of confirmed cases of HIV infection in newborn babies. A strategy had been adopted to eliminate the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS by 2030.
6. The law did not restrict access to free legal abortion, which was carried out only with the agreement of the woman concerned. All Russian women of childbearing age could obtain free family planning advice, and expectant mothers could receive psychological, social and legal assistance. Contraceptives were widely available.
7. A strategy for the development of health care for the period up to 2025 included a section on measures to improve access to medical treatment and health care for numerically small Indigenous Peoples living in remote rural areas. Since 2021, great efforts had been made to expand and modernize the network of primary health-care centres in those areas. Over 500 billion roubles had been allocated to that programme in the federal budget for the period 2021–2025. Another programme had been launched to provide training and higher wages to make the job of a rural doctor more attractive. Teams from mobile medical units

could supply a full range of primary health-care services, as well as targeted medical care for patients with rare diseases. Telemedicine was also used in remote and rural areas to ensure access to essential health care. In 2022 and 2023, over 3,000 children from remote and rural areas each year had been taken to hospital by the air ambulance service, which was funded from the federal and regional authorities' budgets.

8. A presidential decree had approved the fundamental principles of mitigating climate change. The measures adopted by State authorities to that end were consonant with international agreements. They included sectoral and regional plans tailored to deal with the different long-term consequences for society and the economy in various parts of the country. Measures adopted by the Ministry of Health took account of the impact of climate change on children. Approximately 97 per cent of children received annual preventive health check-ups. Research was being conducted into the factors related to climate change that affected public health.

9. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that article 38 of the Education Act dealt with the clothes that schoolchildren could wear. The Act did not prohibit schoolgirls from wearing the hijab, but there might be some isolated examples of schools which did so.

10. Under the Constitution, foreign children were guaranteed the same access to free schooling anywhere in the country as Russian children. Foreign children had to be registered with the Federal Migration Service at their place of residence only in order that they might be guaranteed a place in a school there.

11. In order to ensure safety in schools, every school had a security service and the premises were under video surveillance. The Ministry of Education had introduced regular training for teaching and security staff and pupils on the action that should be taken in the event of threats or actual attacks using arms or explosives, or of hostage-taking.

12. Psychological services had been set up and expanded in the education sector with a view to reducing bullying. Over the previous five years, the number of school psychologists had been increased by over 6,700, to stand at more than 51,700; they were present in almost every school. The Ministry of Education had produced guidelines on the prevention of aggressive and antisocial behaviour for school psychologists and head teachers. A teacher training module also specifically concerned ways of reducing bullying.

13. Article 48 of the Education Act made it clear that teachers were not allowed to engage in political indoctrination. That provision was respected. The purpose of the apolitical extracurricular activity called "Conversations about important things" was to enable pupils to acquire an appreciation of the history, natural world and culture of Russia. In January 2024, the conversations had concerned the liberation of Leningrad from the fascist blockade during the Second World War, tax literacy and Ivan Fedorov's literacy primer, which had been published in 1574. Those lessons were free of any political bias. The purpose of the "hero desks" project was to inform children about the life of former pupils of their school who had played a heroic role in the country's history. There was a constitutional requirement that the State should create conditions that fostered patriotism, a sense of civic duty and respect for their elders in children. The Movement of the First had been set up to support the education of young people, offer them professional and vocational guidance, and provide them with opportunities for leisure and personal development. The Government believed that giving young people the opportunity to gather together and attend events was beneficial for their education and personal development.

14. In September 2024, the school subject "Basics of life safety" would be replaced with a new course entitled "Basics of security and defence of the motherland". Children studying the subject would not be taught to use military weapons. Rather, they would be introduced to the basic principles of national defence by learning about the organizational structure and purpose of the armed forces and the different types of military service. Children with a particular interest in national defence could also choose to study at a cadet school where, in addition to receiving a general education, they were taught the basics of military service. Enrolment in cadet schools was entirely voluntary. They were attended mainly by children who wished to perform military service or join the armed forces later in life, or whose parents worked in the national defence sector.

15. In recent years, there had been a rise in the number of foreign children enrolled in State education, many of whom did not have a sufficient knowledge of the Russian language to follow the school curriculum. As a result of a series of measures taken in the previous 12 months, the teaching of Russian as a foreign language had therefore been incorporated into the federal education programme as an additional school subject for foreign students.

16. In the Republic of Crimea, Ukrainian was an official language on an equal footing with Russian and the Crimean Tatar language. There were 92 schools in the Republic of Crimea that held classes on Ukrainian as a native language and Ukrainian literature. Classes in the Russian language had been established in Sevastopol, and there were also two schools in Bashkortostan where the Ukrainian language was taught, while the entire curriculum was taught in Ukrainian in two schools in the Republic of Crimea. In general, the Government paid attention to the evolving educational requirements of society. For example, given that children and their parents were increasingly interested in foreign languages, it was considering adding more modern language subjects to school curricula.

17. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, in the context of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, the Government had adopted a federal action plan to uphold linguistic diversity across the country. Over 300 languages were used in the Russian Federation, of which 155 were languages of the peoples of Russia; the remainder were foreign, rare or literary languages. A total of 74 languages of the peoples of Russia were taught as academic subjects within the State education system and were currently studied by over 3 million people.

18. In 2023, the Government had decided to open a centre for the study of the native languages of the peoples of Russia. The new centre served as a space where non-commercial organizations, civil society organizations, language academies, linguistic experts and representative associations of Indigenous Peoples could discuss priority areas and the allocation of resources. The centre had launched a native language dictation project for Indigenous Peoples of the North that had received State funding from the federal budget.

19. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Comprehensive Child Safety Strategy of the Russian Federation had been adopted by presidential decree in May 2023. The Strategy included a number of measures designed to prevent direct or indirect threats to the lives or health of children and to protect children in all areas of life. The main goals of the Strategy included preventing the violation of children's rights, reducing crime among adolescents, eliminating crimes against the sexual integrity of children, and ensuring the rehabilitation of victims. An action plan to implement the Strategy in the period up to 2030 had been approved by the Government in November 2023.

20. The concepts of trafficking in children and exploitation of children, as well as the sanctions for offenders, were set out in national legislation. The constituent entities of the Russian Federation had the power to take measures at the local level to prevent those crimes and support victims and their parents. National legislation also established the legal, administrative and criminal liability of anyone responsible for acts of cruelty to children. Physical and sexual violence against children were punishable under criminal law, while article 127.1 of the Criminal Code established trafficking in persons as a uniquely serious offence, punishable by more severe penalties.

21. There were special provisions in national legislation governing the participation of child suspects and victims in criminal proceedings. Child victims were offered special protection and were granted additional privileges in respect of their involvement in legal proceedings. Criminal legislation provided for less severe penalties for child offenders, and the main focus of the authorities was to ensure their rehabilitation, to reintegrate them into society and to prevent reoffending. Under article 108 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, remand in custody could be applied as a preventive measure in respect of minors accused of committing a serious or especially serious offence and, only in exceptional cases, an ordinary offence. The seriousness of the offence in question was determined in court.

22. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that people regularly moved from one constituent entity of the Russian Federation to another; there was nothing unusual or reprehensible about the movement of children from the Republic of Crimea to other constituent entities. Since February 2022, the Russian Federation had not engaged in

deportation of citizens of Ukraine. Over the same period, approximately 4.8 million inhabitants of Ukraine, many of them children, had arrived in the Russian Federation. Most of the children had arrived with their families and had been placed in temporary accommodation centres, had found shelter with relatives or had rented housing. The evacuees had also included roughly 2,000 children who had been permanent residents of orphanages or boarding homes in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, whose legal representatives were directors or employees of those institutions. The Ukrainian authorities had not been concerned about the fate of those children and had reported a possible violation by the Russian Federation of various international norms only after the possibility of placing those children in Russia had been raised.

23. The Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation had helped 43 children – 8 Russian citizens and 35 Ukrainian citizens – to return to their relatives. A total of 48 children from 35 families had also been reunited with their relatives living in Ukraine and other States, with the direct involvement of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. The office of the Presidential Commissioner was in the process of investigating the cases of a further 5,000 children who needed to be reunited with relatives. When a new case was reported to the Presidential Commissioner, her office worked with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the commissioners for children's rights in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation to verify all the relevant information on the child in question. The Presidential Commissioner then contacted the Ukrainian authorities to confirm the parentage or guardianship authority of the child and provided free-of-charge assistance to reunite the child with his or her relatives.

24. Under federal legislation, all citizens were able to submit complaints to the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights. Children therefore had the right to submit their own complaints without the involvement of an adult. The Presidential Commissioner had received around 100 complaints from children in 2022 and roughly 120 complaints from children in 2023. She had also created a federal council for children, which organized various meetings, workshops and other events.

25. Children were involved in parliaments in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and participated in making decisions on issues that concerned them; the proposals submitted by young people also had a substantive impact on the work of the Federal Assembly. By law, neither the Presidential Commissioner nor the commissioners for children's rights in the constituent entities could intervene in legal proceedings. They were nonetheless permitted to publish their own conclusions in respect of specific cases, once they had been resolved.

26. Federal legislation adopted in 2018 laid down the legal status and powers of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and the commissioners for children's rights in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and established the procedure that each constituent entity must follow to appoint a commissioner. The Presidential Commissioner and regional commissioners attended regular conventions on children's rights. At those conventions, the commissioners discussed individual cases being handled in different constituent entities, and representatives of the Government were invited to report on matters concerning the violation of children's rights.

27. Lastly, there had been some confusion regarding the term "adoption". In the Russian Federation, there were two concepts: adoption, a process ordered by a court, which entailed the full transferral of parental rights to the adoptive parents; and placement under the temporary guardianship or custody of a family. The latter arrangement should therefore not be referred to "adoption"; it could more accurately be described as "placement in foster care". There had been no cases of adoption of Ukrainian children.

28. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate an answer to his question about whether draft law no. 157281, providing for amendment of the Family Code, had been adopted. He wished to know more about the role of the Investigative Committee in child abuse cases, amid concerns that a lack of collaboration between the child protection, health and legal sectors might affect the revictimization of children. He wondered whether the State Party planned to address issues of revictimization, particularly in the light of the European Court of Human Rights case *B v. Russia*.

29. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate receiving an answer to his questions as to whether the State Party planned to resist reported pressure from the Orthodox Church to reduce access to abortion, and whether investigations had been conducted into reports of psychological abuse of children with disabilities.

30. He was keen to know whether the State Party had considered that the presidential decree of 2024, providing for a simplified procedure allowing the transfer of Russian citizenship to Ukrainian children, conflicted with the Convention and international humanitarian law; and that Russian orphanage directors' ability to request and process such citizenship constituted a conflict of interest.

31. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that she would appreciate clarification of the number of children transferred from the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk and Donetsk to the Russian Federation and the alleged 4,000 Ukrainian children transferred to children's homes in that country. She would like further information on the policy of granting Russian citizenship to Ukrainian children.

32. While she welcomed the investment of millions of dollars in children's patriotic education, she wished to know whether education was also directed to the development of respect for human rights, as specified in article 29 (1) (b) of the Convention, and preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship among all peoples, as laid down in article 29 (1) (d).

33. **Ms. Aho** said that she wished to know how AIDS cases among 0–17-year-olds had halved; what the national seroprevalence rate for AIDS was; what provisions were being made to ensure that women could access relevant information; whether the programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS was available throughout the country, including in the most remote areas; and what measures were in place to help AIDS orphans. She would welcome information on disease control strategies for pregnant women, and their implementation. She was keen to know whether any measures were being taken by the State Party regarding tuberculosis, a national public health issue.

34. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** said that the Committee had received reports that children in detention facilities were sometimes placed in extremely small, underground solitary confinement cells as a punishment for bad behaviour. He would like to know whether the State Party planned to address that issue or stop the practice, considering the high impact that solitary confinement had on mental health.

35. He wondered whether the State Party planned to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. He wished to know who was responsible for monitoring the rights of children deprived of their liberty, and whether there was any independent monitoring body with a mandate to visit facilities where children might be detained. He was keen to know whether there was a child-friendly complaints mechanism available for such children, and whether any programmes supported those who were under the minimum age of criminal responsibility but had committed an offence.

36. He would like to know how there were fewer orphans in the Russian Federation and whether that was due to increased numbers of adoptions or placements in foster care. Did that figure include children whose fathers had died in the war in Ukraine, and how many children had been orphaned to date because of the war? He was keen to know whether a support programme existed for children who had lost family members in the war. He wondered whether the State Party was considering the restoration of peace as an option for ending the war in Ukraine.

37. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that she wished to know why the number of parents deprived of their parental authority had decreased. She wondered how the best interests of a child victim were respected when the child, or his or her legal representative, wanted the child and the perpetrator of the crime to confront each other in court.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.00 p.m.

38. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that, while it was not possible to identify the number of children who had died or been injured as a result of the war in Ukraine, the

Government could work with the Committee towards ascertaining the facts. The war had undoubtedly had consequences on Russian children, but no statistics were available concerning the number of children who had lost their fathers in the war.

39. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Investigative Committee was a system of bodies that, following a detailed investigation into a reported crime, would open a criminal case if there was sufficient justification to do so. While the Government discouraged face-to-face meetings between child victims and perpetrators, particularly in cases of alleged violence, requests for such confrontations could be made with the assent of the investigator on the case. Investigators were instructed to conduct questioning of children in the shortest possible time; violations in that regard were punished. In cases where the position of the legal guardian or representative was different from that of the child, the investigator must be guided by the wishes of the child. All necessary measures were taken to protect the rights of child victims; guilt was established on the basis not only of witness testimony but also of other evidence collected.

40. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that 83 per cent of children with disabilities who lived in residential institutions received a general education. More than three quarters of those children did not have to leave the institution for their education, since teachers would either travel to them or would already work there; the latter were also responsible for providing care services. Teachers were specialists in the subjects that they taught, such as occupational therapy, music, physical education and psychology, and were qualified to work with children.

41. Every case of psychological violence against children with disabilities in care institutions was subject to scrupulous investigation. Additional staff training was aimed at preventing such cases. In 2022, new rules regarding the services provided in such institutions has been approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, specifying inter alia what authority could be exercised by teachers and how much space should be allocated to each child. Nonetheless, the main objective was to accommodate most of those children in family homes.

42. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that there was no information to suggest that the Orthodox Church was exerting pressure on teenagers against abortion. Abortions were legally available for all teenagers, with no age restriction: those under 15 simply needed consent from a parent or legal guardian. The Government was continuing to create a network of centres providing medical and psychological support for pregnant women, including teenagers and their parents, before and after abortion. More than 600 women's outpatient clinics and nearly 90 adolescent reproductive health centres had already been built.

43. The number of infants diagnosed with HIV infection had fallen from around 1,700 in 2016 to 619 in 2022, and the number of deaths among that group had fallen from 56 in 2016 to 19 in 2022. The number of infants with HIV receiving outpatient care had decreased by 3 per cent over a two-year period, to 10,267 in 2022. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS had improved in recent years, with transmission prevented in 11,173 cases in 2022 compared with 9,516 cases in 2011. In 2011, 10,236 infants with HIV had received chemotherapy, rising to 11,735 infants in 2022, representing an increase in coverage from 87.5 per cent to nearly 100 per cent. The number of infants born with confirmed diagnoses of HIV had fallen from 606 cases in 2011 to 129 cases in 2022. Data from 2023 were yet to be verified but could be submitted to the Committee when available.

44. The State Strategy to Combat the Spread of HIV in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 and beyond covered all aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention and provided for the implementation of information and awareness-raising campaigns for the general public, including women, on preventing HIV transmission. Around 95 million people, or some 65 per cent of the country's population, had been reached through those activities. The strategy also envisaged activities aimed at reducing the stigma experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS, including in access to social services.

45. Tuberculosis rates had improved dramatically. In 2021, the Russian Federation had transitioned out of the list of high tuberculosis burden countries as a result of systematic efforts to improve early diagnosis and provide timely treatment to tuberculosis patients.

Between 2013 and 2021, thanks to the inclusion of tuberculosis vaccination in the national immunization schedule and the administration of vaccines in maternity wards, tuberculosis rates had fallen by a factor of 2.1 among children aged 0 to 4 years and by a factor of 2.5 among teenagers. Despite the significant reduction in tuberculosis morbidity and mortality in recent years, the tuberculosis infrastructure had been maintained, so that existing health care facilities and resources could be used to monitor and treat children in inpatient and outpatient care.

46. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, following the adoption of federal legislation on the new constituent entities of the Russian Federation, individuals living in those areas had the right to apply for citizenship through a simplified procedure. Children aged 14 and over could file an application on their own behalf, whereas children under 14 must have their applications filed by their legal guardians, foster parents or legal representatives. Between April 2021 and November 2023, 49,081 applications for minors had been filed. Children were not required to apply for citizenship if they did not wish to do so.

47. **Ms. Correa** said that the Committee had received reports suggesting that children had been abused in orphanages and that the response to that abuse had been limited to prevention and training activities. She therefore wished to receive statistics on cases of abuse in orphanages, particularly in the light of concerns reported by the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights that such cases had increased by 428.6 per cent over five years. She would appreciate information on any processes in place to ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice and on the outcomes of such processes, including punishments handed down. She would also like to know whether the indication that training had been provided to staff at orphanages implied that some perpetrators continued to work within the system. Lastly, she asked whether the State party had a comprehensive strategy to address child abuse in the care system, and what measures had been taken to support children who had suffered at the hands of adults responsible for their protection.

48. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that he would verify the figure mentioned by Ms. Correa with the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights and would provide the Committee with the relevant information when possible.

49. Since the entry of the Republic of Crimea into the Russian Federation, the Government had stopped collecting separate statistics on the region and therefore did not possess figures referring to the number of children from the region who had been adopted and moved to other parts of the country. There had been no changes to the figures referring to children who had been moved between the Russian Federation and Ukraine since the submission of the Government's replies to the Committee's list of issues.

50. **The Chair** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights had been granted additional capacity to address the increase in complaints arising from the movement of children from Ukraine to the Russian Federation; whether such complaints were addressed by a single centralized entity, given that the children involved might be dispersed across the country; and whether the Office was responsible for family tracing activities.

51. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that he could not say for sure whether there was a single entity within the Office of the Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights tasked with addressing the movement of children from Ukraine. The number of staff at the Office had not been increased in connection with any rise in demand. Responsibility for custody and fostering rested with the regional authorities, and as such the Ministry of Education possessed a limited amount of centralized data in that respect. The delegation could request additional information from the Commissioner in that regard if needed.

52. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that children in detention could be placed in a punishment cell for up to 7 days, in comparison with 15 days for adults. Unlike adults, children were able to receive visitors during that period. In addition, they were permitted to have textbooks in their cells, enabling them to continue their studies, and were allowed up to two hours of physical activity each day. Children could receive authorization to leave a punishment cell early for educational or health reasons.

53. Enjoyment of the rights and freedoms of persons deprived of liberty was monitored by various entities, including the Office of the Procurator General and public oversight commissions, which constituted an independent mechanism for monitoring places of detention. That mechanism was able to visit all places where people were detained as punishment for criminal offences, including temporary detention facilities managed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, detention centres for migrants and stateless persons, and young offenders' institutions. The list of places of detention that could be visited by the independent mechanism was being expanded and, in 2022, the law had been changed to allow it to monitor correctional labour institutions.

54. **A representative of the Russian Federation** said that, while draft law No. 157281 had not been rejected, there was currently a lack of consensus on its contents. The legislature would hold consultations on the text with a view to its approval.

55. With regard to the question on article 29 of the Convention, children were taught in primary school about the Constitution and human rights, including children's rights. Secondary school children learned about human rights in greater detail, as well as the freedoms guaranteed by international and national instruments and upheld by human rights protection mechanisms.

56. The Government had managed to reduce the numbers of abandoned children and parents deprived of parental rights through the implementation of a programme to prevent child abandonment and by working closely with families in vulnerable situations, including by providing psychological support.

57. Children under the age of criminal responsibility who committed offences deemed harmful to society could be placed by court order in special institutions within the education system, where they would receive specialist education and support services. That system had been the subject of consideration by a number of international organizations, none of which had raised any issues in that respect.

58. **Mr. Gudbrandsson** said that he had appreciated the opportunity to engage in an interesting and informative dialogue with the delegation. It was his hope that the Committee's concluding observations would provide useful guidance to assist the State party in strengthening children's rights over the coming years. He urged the State party to cease its military operation in Ukraine without delay in order to avoid further devastating consequences for children in that country, in the State party and around the world.

59. **Mr. Vovchenko** (Russian Federation) said that he wished to thank the Committee for its detailed questions, which would allow the Government to build on its intersectoral efforts to protect children's rights. The involvement of high-level representatives from several ministries and agencies testified to the importance placed by the Government on children's rights and on its implementation of the Convention. The Government would continue its efforts to improve legislation and practices in order to protect and expand the enjoyment of children's rights in the Russian Federation, and it would heed the Committee's recommendations and comments in that regard. However, it would not be obliged to fulfil recommendations made on the basis of political grounds with the aim of interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, especially those concerning the country's territorial integrity and constitutional order. His Government continued to view the United Nations as a bulwark and a beacon, guiding it in its efforts to build a fair society in which the rights and freedoms of all, including children, were upheld.

60. **The Chair** said that she wondered how many children in the Russian Federation were aware that the Committee had been discussing their rights over the previous two days. The State party might wish to offer schoolchildren classes dedicated to the Convention and the Committee's recommendations in the near future.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.