



# 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 2770th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 23 January 2024, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

## Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Lithuania*

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

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

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Lithuania (CRC/C/LTU/5-6; CRC/C/LTU/Q/5-6; CRC/C/LTU/RQ/5-6)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Lithuania joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Augienė** (Lithuania), introducing her country's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports (CRC/C/LTU/5-6), said that children's rights represented one of the country's main priorities as a member of the Human Rights Council. In 2022, Lithuania had ratified the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. All forms of violence against children were completely prohibited in the country, including corporal punishment in family and other settings. Children were permanent members of the Child Welfare Council, through which they had met with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and expressed their views on mental health and education. The Government hoped to further increase their participation in decision-making.
3. Lithuania had strived to create a unified child- and family-oriented system for the protection of children's rights. The system ensured that there was a response, 24 hours a day, to all possible violations of children's rights, regardless of the children's status in Lithuania. Support mechanisms for children and families in crisis, and activities to promote non-violent methods of raising children, including free counselling and positive parenting training, were also part of the system. Children and adults could contact a hotline for information on children's rights or to report possible rights violations.
4. The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service received increased funding each year, and there was continuous training for child protection specialists, who were authorized to investigate possible violations of children's rights. The case management system ensured efficient cross-sector coordination and enabled close monitoring of the situation of children and their families. As the public grew less tolerant of violence against children, the active reporting of such violence became more frequent.
5. Changes to legislation had made it faster and easier to appoint representatives for unaccompanied minors. A procedure had been developed to ensure that children arriving in the country were provided with a safe environment, comprehensive care and necessary assistance.
6. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, more than 83,000 Ukrainian refugees had been registered, of whom 26,615 were children. Of those children, 553 were separated from their parents and 70 were unaccompanied. Seven of the unaccompanied minors were being cared for by Lithuanian families. There were currently 11,805 Ukrainian children registered in Lithuanian educational institutions, and the authorities had identified cases involving more than 30 refugee children from Ukraine who were being illegally taken for adoption to a third country. The authorities sought to take care of all unaccompanied minors and migrant children who arrived in the country, and the best interests of the child were always a primary consideration in decisions affecting children.
7. There was a need to strengthen measures to prevent violence against children and increase the availability of support for children affected by violence, children with disabilities, children with complex behavioural problems and children who suffered from addiction or experimented with psychoactive substances. The Government also envisaged further support for families in the first days of a child's life. Although there was a renewed cooperation agreement between State institutions working to combat sexual violence against children, there were challenges in identifying cases, a lack of recognition of risk factors and insufficient long-term support for child victims.
8. Great progress had been made towards deinstitutionalization. Nearly 80 per cent of children in the foster-care system were currently accommodated in a family environment, and another 17 per cent were in community care. Foster-care centres had been established in all municipalities, providing services and support to foster parents, adoptive parents and the children growing up in their families. The professional foster-care model had been further developed, and updates had been made to training for foster and adoptive parents.

9. The value of all basic social benefits had risen 42 per cent between 2018 and 2023. The universal child benefit had significantly reduced child poverty in Lithuania, bringing it to the European Union average.
10. Psychological and other mental health services were provided in all municipalities, and over the past five years funding for child and adolescent mental health services had increased considerably. However, concerns remained regarding access to those services and in relation to bullying, including cyberbullying.
11. Lithuania ensured effective maternal and child health care, including early diagnosis and prevention of childhood diseases and assistance to families expecting and raising children. Consensus had been reached on a continuously operating network of health-care institutions, the services of which would be accessible to all Lithuanian residents.
12. The Government's education reform plan prioritized the quality and accessibility of education. More than €150 million was to be set aside for efforts to strengthen schools and make inclusive education more widely available. Roma children had begun attending integrated pre-primary and general education schools in greater numbers.
13. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Coordinator, Country Task Force), welcoming the relevant amendments that Lithuania had made to its legislation, said that he wished to know what the challenges to the implementation of the amended legislation were and what measures were in place to raise awareness of the new legislation. He wondered what the results of the Child Welfare Programme for 2013–2018 and the related action plan had been and how they were being taken into account. He also wondered what entity was responsible for the coordination of State policy on children. It would be useful to hear how the law on social services was being implemented and how differences in access to services in rural areas were being addressed.
14. He wished to know how the authorities identified the need for and evaluated the effectiveness of budget allocations for children's issues and how budgets were prepared. He also wished to know whether there were any plans to help the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights with resourcing issues and thus enable it to fulfil its mandate. In addition, he wondered why there were still no data on the ethnicity of children and out-of-school children, particularly for the 16–18 age group.
15. The Committee would be grateful to hear what action was being taken to provide children with clear, comprehensive and age-appropriate information on children's rights. It would be helpful to hear about the steps taken to ensure that the children born to asylum-seekers had their births registered. It would also be useful to know what alternatives were envisaged to the use of baby boxes for abandoned babies and what measures were in place to address the underlying causes of abandonment of newborns.
16. He would like to know how the authorities were tackling the excessive use of technology by children and whether any plans had been made to raise awareness among parents, children and educators of the right to privacy, the use of technology and exposure to screens. He would also like to know about measures to prevent cyberbullying and the support mechanisms and resources available to victims.
17. **Ms. Alassane Moulaye** (Country Task Force) said that she would welcome a comment on the methods used to determine the age of a person when his or her exact date of birth was unknown. She would also like to know whether measures were being taken to make the minimum age for marriage 18, without any exceptions, and to prevent early pregnancy.
18. She wondered what percentage of the discrimination cases received by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson involved child victims, what action was taken to ensure that all child victims of discrimination had access to the Ombudsperson and what was being done to ensure that non-discrimination was the rule in all situations involving children, in particular children with disabilities, Roma children, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, children in poverty, children in alternative care and children in conflict with the law. It would be helpful to know, too, what was being done to prevent discrimination against children from minority backgrounds in access to education.

19. She would be interested to hear how the authorities ensured that, in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child were, in practice, a primary consideration. In view of the high suicide rate in Lithuania, she would like to know what measures were being taken to address the lack of access to quality psychological services. She would also like to know whether there had been any studies of the underlying causes of the anonymous abandonment of children. In addition, she wondered how the Ministry of Health was improving awareness of and access to contraceptive methods for all women, whether abortion was legal in Lithuania and, if so, in what circumstances.

20. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Country Task Force) said that he would like to know to what extent children could participate in the Child Welfare Programme. He would welcome further information on the Government's collaboration with and funding of civil society. In particular, he wondered whether there were any plans for more sustainable core or long-term funding of civil society.

21. He would be interested to know whether the national mechanism for the prevention of torture was well suited to dealing with children. The delegation might explain what kind of training the mechanism's personnel received and whether it followed guidelines on and was responsible for visiting all places where children were deprived of liberty, including for migration-related reasons.

22. It would be helpful to know whether, as the statistics provided by the State party appeared to show, there was a growing incidence of corporal punishment or whether those statistics simply reflected increased reporting. It would also be helpful to know how the authorities had ensured broad awareness of the prohibition of corporal punishment and whether any improvement had been observed in attitudes towards its use. The delegation might likewise explain how implementation of the relevant legislation and progress on the issue were being assessed and what indicators were used in that process.

23. He would welcome a comment on the work of the support centres for sexually abused children and the extent to which they had improved the treatment of child victims. He wondered how the authorities planned to ensure that the services offered by the centres were accessible throughout the country. It would be useful to know whether there had been an evaluation of the child-friendly interrogation rooms, how they worked and to what extent they had improved the relationship between children and the justice system. In addition, he would like to know how effective the artificial intelligence search tool for detecting illegal and harmful content online was and whether it might be an example for other countries to follow.

24. He would be interested to know what services were provided under the law on State-guaranteed legal aid, whether such aid was made available to children at no charge and, if so, how they were informed that they could avail themselves of it. He wondered whether the lawyers providing such aid were specialized in children's rights.

25. **Ms. Al Barwani** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know how the State party intended to reduce the disparity between inhabitants of major cities and more rural and remote populations in access to financial support systems for children and families. She wondered whether the State party planned to give greater emphasis to family dynamics and the emotional well-being of children and families in the context of its accredited services for children and what tools were used to evaluate the quality of services in different municipalities. It would be useful to learn how the State party ensured that municipal resources were distributed equitably.

26. She also wished to know what efforts the State party was making to motivate families to foster children with severe disabilities, children who exhibited delinquent behaviour and children over the age of 10. She wondered how the State party intended to equip specialists in community-based children's homes with the tools and expertise that they needed. The delegation might comment on measures to ensure that children growing up in detention facilities with their mothers received proper health care, high-quality education and opportunities for recreation.

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

27. **A representative of Lithuania** said that, since 2020, her Government had set aside more than €400,000 for diverse initiatives to raise public awareness about violence. Over the last four years, children's constitutions had been distributed to preschool and first-grade children. Posters about children's rights and responsibilities had been prepared, and teachers had received training in talking to children about those topics. Awareness campaigns on the subject of teenagers and violence were organized every year, and the month of November was dedicated to raising public awareness of violence against children. More than 100 meetings devoted to talking to children about their rights and responsibilities and different forms of violence had been organized in schools and kindergartens in 2023. A free children's rights hotline that offered consultations to children, teachers, doctors and other adults had been set up in 2022. It received approximately 50 calls a day; letters were also received, and in all between 10 and 15 possible violations of children's rights were registered on a daily basis. In 2023, her Government had signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Youth Council, which brought together some 65 children's and youth organizations throughout Lithuania.

28. **A representative of Lithuania** said that measures to promote and protect children's rights were coordinated at an interministerial level. Data on the number of children reached by the previous Child Welfare Action Plan had been collected, and information from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the challenges faced by children had been evaluated. The new Action Plan included measures intended to respond to those challenges.

29. **Ms. Augienė** (Lithuania) said that an amended version of the law on social services that would come into effect in July 2024 included measures to expand and improve the quality of social services and to permit natural persons to provide them. Municipalities received equal funding for social services from the national budget. The introduction of a basic package of social services, which included health-care and education services, was being monitored to ensure that all municipalities benefited equally.

30. **A representative of Lithuania** said that funding for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights had increased from €500,000 in 2019 to more than €750,000 in 2023. Amid existing economic challenges, her Government was prioritizing direct funding for children and families.

31. Legislation on statistics about children had recently been amended to include new indicators – for example, on potential violations of children's rights and on children who had fallen victim to trafficking in persons – and to make them clearer. The range of data collected for each indicator had been expanded to include information on age group, disability, living environment and other characteristics. The number of institutions responsible for data collection, which now included such authorities as the Lithuanian Prison Service and the Migration Department, had also grown.

32. **A representative of Lithuania** said that growing numbers of children were making use of the children's rights hotline and taking action to protect their personal data. Her Government had concluded an agreement with the Lithuanian national broadcaster to create a television programme that would provide information about children's rights in a child-friendly form. Children and young people had been consulted in connection with a decision to mark World Children's Day on 20 November – in alignment with other democratic countries – rather than on 1 June. Recordings of discussions with young people on such topics as growing up with social networks and the boundaries between children's independence and parental control were made available on social media.

33. **A representative of Lithuania** said that a child-friendly version of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee System, a system intended to combat child poverty and social exclusion, had been developed. Children would be consulted on how easy it was to understand, and it would be published in Lithuanian and in languages of the country's national minorities.

34. **A representative of Lithuania** said that education-related decisions that concerned children were communicated to them directly. Education fairs were used to inform children in simple language about matters such as changes in how exams were marked and to answer any questions they might have.

35. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the citizenship law had been amended in 2021 to ensure that children born in Lithuania to stateless parents – or whose only known parent was stateless – immediately acquired Lithuanian nationality and had their birth registered. A special procedure had ultimately been developed to register the children of unknown parents who, deliberately misled by officials from unfriendly countries, had entered Lithuania in 2021. Amendments had been made to the regulations on civil registration in consultation with the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights. As a result, the number of stateless children in Lithuania had fallen from 10 in 2021 to none in 2022.

36. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the number of individual care workers available to combat child abandonment was set to rise from approximately 100 in 2022 to approximately 230 in 2024 and that related funding would be increased from €1.1 million to €4.8 million. Under a pilot project that had been conducted in 16 municipalities, pregnant women and women with children under 2 years of age had received at least 60 visits from health-care professionals. Although the original source of the project’s funding could no longer be drawn on, the project would continue to be funded in the pilot municipalities. It would be extended to all municipalities of Lithuania as of 1 May 2025.

37. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Health had drafted an action plan to prevent the abandonment of children; the plan, which focused on crisis pregnancies, included measures to build positive public attitudes towards parenthood and raise awareness of such pregnancies and available assistance. Plans had been made to introduce a number of legislative amendments intended to increase the availability of health-care specialists and social workers, train them to better recognize the signs of crisis pregnancies and enable them to provide appropriate assistance.

38. **Ms. Augienė** (Lithuania) said that, although baby boxes were still being used, consideration was also being given to allowing mothers to give babies up confidentially.

39. **A representative of Lithuania** said that steps taken to address excessive use of screens and the Internet by Lithuanian children included public communication campaigns on the negative effects of such behaviour on children and other matters relating to mental health literacy. There was an annual budget of €600,000 for those efforts. The Ministry of Health had analysed the problem and drafted recommendations to parents and specialists. A scale for measuring compulsive Internet use had been developed for specialists, a response plan for schools was being prepared and parents, teachers and specialists would receive training on the issue. A website that provided information and advice about mental health issues, including dependence on screens, the Internet and gaming, had been visited by more than 70,000 Internet users over the previous six months.

40. Children and other young people had access to hotlines and messaging services that provided them with support and advice. Bullying, including cyberbullying, was the topic most frequently touched on.

41. **A representative of Lithuania** said that a community officer position had been established in the police service to undertake prevention efforts in relation to safety online. In 2023, those officers had organized 1,431 meetings and engaged with 41,000 people. A specialized training course on Internet culture and the prevention of online bullying had been developed and delivered.

42. **A representative of Lithuania** said that a life skills programme for children, which would cover issues related to social and emotional development, psychoactive substance abuse, bullying, sex education, health, the use of technology, first aid and safety, would be launched in 2024. The aim was to prepare children to recognize and overcome life challenges. An inability to face challenges could lead to negative outcomes, and a lack of health and safety knowledge could lead to poor decision-making. Education on family planning and healthy relationships was also provided. The life skills programme would be rolled out to all schoolchildren as of 2025. There were nine additional programmes targeting specific issues including bullying, violence, psychoactive substance abuse, suicide and parenting skills. Those programmes would be assessed on the basis of newly developed quality indicators. Children could anonymously report incidents of bullying through an online portal known as a letter box. Schools were obliged to take steps in follow-up to such reports and, if necessary, contact law enforcement.

43. **A representative of Lithuania** said that, by law, any person under the age of 18 was a child. If a person's age was in doubt, he or she was considered a child until shown otherwise. X-ray imaging was used for age determination only in exceptional cases. There were plans to change the age determination process to bring it into line with the recommendations of the European Union Agency for Asylum. Amendments to the legislation on the process were envisaged, and the issue was being discussed with experts. Efforts would be made to ensure good living conditions for unaccompanied minors and their placement in foster care. There were plans to establish search procedures for unaccompanied minors who absconded.

44. **A representative of Lithuania** said that, under the Civil Code, the minimum age for marriage was 18. It was nonetheless possible to ask the courts to approve the marriages of children over the age of 16. In such cases, the courts considered whether the girl involved was pregnant, the opinions of parents or caregivers, the financial situation and psychological condition of the couple and the best interests of the child. The courts had received 11 requests to authorize the marriage of a child in 2023.

45. **A representative of Lithuania** said that health-care services for children were free of charge. Medication for contraceptive purposes was available free of charge upon prescription for women and girls aged 15 to 20. In 2022, the Ministry of Health had issued an ordinance on the provision of abortion defining the services to be provided. Consultations with women before the abortion procedure had been introduced, and aftercare was provided. Requirements had been established for the health personnel and institutions involved. Medical abortion had been legalized. The number of abortions had fallen.

46. **A representative of Lithuania** said that education was compulsory for all children aged from 6 to 16, regardless of disability or migration status. Children who exhibited delinquent behaviour were educated in socialization centres. Teachers visited detention centres to give lessons following the national curriculum to children held there. Migrant and refugee children must start attending an educational institution within three months of being registered in Lithuania. If the parents did not contact the authorities within that period, the authorities would conduct a home visit to ensure the child's education. If a child was unable to attend school, home schooling could be arranged. Children with health problems received education in health establishments.

47. The Roma population in Lithuania was highly diverse. Specialists and social workers engaged with families in areas where there were large Roma communities to ensure that children remained in compulsory education.

48. **A representative of Lithuania** said that all children had the right to mediation to ensure that their best interests were a primary consideration in the resolution of conflicts with their parents. Significant efforts were made, including by NGOs, to ensure that children were aware of mediation.

49. **A representative of Lithuania** said that, in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child were, by law, a primary consideration. In November 2023, a conference on the best interests of the child had been held for all professionals working with children or on children's rights issues, including doctors, teachers and judges. A handbook on the determination of the best interests of the child, which was based on United Nations recommendations and national and international case law, had been drafted. That handbook would be distributed to professionals working with children and presented to the public. A survey had shown that 75 per cent of the public understood the concept of the best interests of the child.

50. **Ms. Augienė** (Lithuania) said that practical training and discussions were organized for professionals, especially those who worked with children who had experienced trauma, with a view to helping them improve their understanding and application of the principle of the best interests of the child.

51. **A representative of Lithuania** said that significant progress had been made in suicide prevention. The number of suicides among persons under 19 had decreased from 28 in 2013 and 2014 to 10 in 2021 and 2022. Nevertheless, efforts were being made to further improve the situation, and, starting in 2021, suicide prevention training courses had been offered

throughout the country for persons over the age of 16. The rules for assisting persons at risk of suicide had been updated in 2022 to include an indication of the responsibilities of the different institutions involved.

52. Funding for the assessment of suicide risk and follow-up assistance had been increased. In 2023, there had been almost 1,200 such assessments, up from some 400 in 2022. Follow-up support consisting of six consultations over a period of six weeks had been provided to 600 people who were at risk of suicide. Mobile crisis intervention services were provided by psychologists in the event of a crisis affecting more than two people. The online suicide prevention portal for young people had more than 50,000 visitors a year.

53. Funding for primary mental health care had also been increased, and by late 2022 there were 337 clinical psychologists working in that field. Psychological counselling services had been made more accessible, and the number of consultations for children had grown. In 2022, more than 5,700 people had benefited from psychological support services, including children aged 11 to 17.

54. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the funding model for NGOs had been updated with a view to strengthening civil society. A fund that made grants to NGOs had been established in 2020. The fund's board identified the strategic areas to which funding would be allocated and reviewed the situation in the NGO sector. The fund's budget had increased from €1.4 million in 2021 to €2.9 million in 2022. Total State funding for NGOs had increased from €29 million in 2021 to almost €33 million in 2022.

55. NGOs were taking on an increasing number of responsibilities under the law, which enabled them to benefit from continuous funding. They had been key partners in the response to crises related to migration and the war in Ukraine. NGOs, which were involved in decision-making processes through the Child Welfare Council, were consulted on the development of measures for the benefit of children. For the Government, which worked in close partnership with the NGO sector, securing funding for NGOs was a priority.

56. **A representative of Lithuania** said that Lithuania had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2014. Under the amended legislation that had made the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office the national preventive mechanism, prisons, psychiatric wards, remand institutions and registration centres for foreigners were considered places of detention. Nevertheless, any location under the jurisdiction of Lithuania in which a person's freedom could be restricted could be considered such a place.

57. **A representative of Lithuania** said that corporal punishment had been banned in all settings. Under the Law on Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child, authorities and organizations working in areas such as health were made mandatory reporters of any suspected cases of violence against children, including corporal punishment. Members of the public were under a similar obligation. The introduction of those obligations had led to the recent rise in reports. A failure to fulfil the obligations would result in legal liability.

58. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service informed the public of how to recognize signs of corporal punishment and other types of violence through discussions, conferences and the dozens of media articles that it published annually. The Service had been contacted 333 times in 2022 in relation to cases of violence against children and 820 times in 2023. Forty-five per cent of persons responding to a survey in 2023 had indicated a willingness to use corporal punishment in certain circumstances, down from 50 per cent in 2021. Thirty-five per cent of respondents in 2023 had been willing to punish children's failures to do their homework or clean their rooms by twisting their ears, down from 47 per cent in 2021. The number of people who believed that childhood violence resulted in significant trauma had risen. The number of suspected children's rights violations reported by the public had increased from 40,000 in 2021 to around 57,000 in 2023. Persons making the reports must, where required, provide emergency assistance to the child and family.

59. **Ms. Augienė** (Lithuania) said that the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour were closely involved in preventing and investigating cases of sexual exploitation and providing assistance to victims. Measures were being taken to ensure



that the child protection authorities were represented at the country's One Stop Centres. Mobile teams were used to provide help to children, and the Ministry of Health ensured that services could be provided promptly to victims in all towns and cities.

60. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the Lithuanian police investigated roughly a fifth of the notifications regarding online sexual content potentially involving minors that they received from the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, of which there had been some 7,000 in 2023. The police patrolled social media virtually and recorded and investigated suspected instances of hate speech or sexual offences against minors.

61. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the 2023 amendments to the Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid, which had gone into effect on 1 January 2024, ensured that legal aid was provided prior to the initiation of pretrial investigations, allowed the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to request the appointment of a lawyer if a report was received of a suspected offence against a minor and encouraged lawyers providing legal aid to specialize in areas such as the representation of minors. Training had begun in January 2024 for lawyers specializing in the defence of children in conflict with the law or in the representation of child victims. Lawyers trained in an area of specialization would receive much higher pay.

62. **A representative of Lithuania** said that the percentage of children at risk of poverty in Lithuania was lower than the European Union average. The Government allocated almost 10 per cent of its European Social Fund Plus resources to efforts to combat child poverty, almost twice the amount required.

63. All community care workers had gone through a specific training and counselling programme that covered sensitive topics such as how to address traumas experienced by children. Specialists working at the Foster Care Centres had been trained in Trust-based Relational Intervention. Under the amended Law on Social Services, professional providers of foster care would take care of children, such as children with disabilities, who were at higher risk of being placed in institutional care.

64. Specialists with the mobile services of the Multidimensional Family Therapy Programme assisted families in their homes. The Family Conference Programme helped family members strengthen their relationships. The Incredible Years Programme adopted an evidence-based approach to positive parenting. At the One Stop Centres, parents learned methods based on relational dynamics to help them through difficult periods in their relationships with their children.

65. Lithuanian law provided for temporary care, which gave parents time to resolve their problems and increase their chances of being able to raise their children themselves. Each municipality had a case manager for children in temporary care who helped the families involved. Taking a child from a family was a measure of last resort.

66. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** said that he would welcome information on the number and purpose of each of the hotlines available to children in the State party. He wished to know how the State party planned to ensure that the programme to promote inclusive education that it would launch in September 2024 would be implemented effectively.

67. He wished to find out, too, what steps the State party was taking to increase the availability of medicines, vaccines and specialists, including psychologists, psychiatrists and paediatricians, whether demand for children's mental health services had risen as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and, if so, how the State party was meeting it. He would like to know in what grades health and sex education were taught, what kind of material was used to teach them and whether they were mandatory subjects.

68. He wondered whether children could make decisions about their health autonomously and seek health-care services without their parents' consent. It would be helpful to know whether a comprehensive mental health strategy, including a suicide prevention programme, had been adopted and whether the State party planned to take a primarily health-based or punitive approach to the increasing use of drugs by children.

69. He would be grateful for information on any measures that the State party had taken to ensure that national legislation, policies and programmes addressed environmental protection, including climate change, and on the role, if any, played by children in designing and implementing the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee System. Information on the coordination mechanisms under the Plan would also be welcome.

70. **Ms. Alassane Moulaye** said that she wished to know whether the State party planned to stop detaining asylum-seeking children and their families, what assistance it provided to them, whether alternatives to imprisonment were available for children and how the State party ensured that unaccompanied or separated children, including children evacuated from Ukrainian care homes, fully enjoyed their basic rights. She would like to find out whether a juvenile justice system, with juvenile courts with specially trained staff, and a policy for the protection of juveniles in the justice system had been put in place. She would appreciate information on the legal assistance provided to children in conflict with the law and on the support provided to them when they had behavioural or psychological problems.

71. **Ms. Al Barwani** said that she would appreciate information on the results of the studies into the causes of the high dropout rates, the outcome of the Plan for Non-Discrimination Promotion and any additional measures the State party planned to take to ensure that all children had access to a high-quality education. She wondered whether human rights were addressed in school curricula and at what age children learned about their rights. She would appreciate further information on the all-day school model that had been introduced in the State party, including whether its impact had been assessed and what challenges had arisen in its implementation. She would like to know to what extent the views of the child members of the Child Welfare Council were taken into account, particularly on matters relating to education.

72. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he wished to know whether any corporate responsibility frameworks in place in the State party addressed children's rights or environmental protection and, if so, whether children played any role within them. He would appreciate information on recent measures to implement the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, any mechanisms for the identification of refugee, asylum-seeking or migrant children from conflict zones who had potentially been used in hostilities, the support provided to such children and the training provided to public servants who worked with them. He wondered whether the State party had taken steps to make the acts listed in article 3 (1) of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography offences under domestic law that were subject to no statute of limitations. He also wondered whether it had taken steps to implement the provisions of the Optional Protocol relating to extradition and to ensure that victims of offences under the Optional Protocol were not punished or prosecuted.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*