



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child Seventy-fifth session

Summary record of the 2214th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 30 May 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties *(continued)*

Combined third to fifth periodic reports of Cameroon (CRC/C/CMR/3-5; CRC/C/CMR/Q/3-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Cameroon took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that the actions described in her country's combined third to fifth periodic reports (CRC/C/CMR/3-5) had taken place against a particular backdrop. That backdrop had involved a continued effort to strengthen the rule of law, counter-terrorism campaigns, the reinforcement of measures to mount a humanitarian response to the situation affecting the country's internally displaced people and refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria and the pursuit of efforts to build peace and stability in the country's Northwest and Southwest Regions.
3. Since it had last appeared before the Committee, Cameroon had continued to make efforts to implement the Convention. The promotion and protection of the rights of the child were national priorities. Key policies addressed such issues concerning children as birth registration, violence, child marriage, economic exploitation and the education of children with disabilities.
4. The recent legislative and regulatory measures that had been taken to address those and other issues included the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the adoption of a law criminalizing female genital mutilation, breast ironing and other practices harmful to children and an extension of the time period for the registration of births from 30 days to 90. The country's courts, for their part, had handed down sentences in a number of cases involving defendants accused of crimes against children. Administrative developments included an increase in the number of Civil Status Centres, the establishment of a national committee to combat child labour, the development of an action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights and the drafting of a multifaceted national policy on the protection of the child.
5. In addition to those developments, birth registration had intensified, greater efforts to combat child trafficking had been made and a number of programmes designed to provide support to children from vulnerable sectors of the population had been designed or implemented. Law enforcement officers had received training on how to protect children from violence.
6. New hospitals had been built; immunization rates for children less than 5 years of age, including newborn children, had increased and community-based treatment of less severe cases of malaria had been introduced. Children under the age of 5 with severe cases of malaria were treated free of charge. Measures to combat parasitic worms and blood flukes had led to the elimination of parasites in more than 7.5 million children. Other measures to promote children's health included the distribution of free insecticidal bed nets, the promotion of breastfeeding and successful efforts to reduce the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. A number of steps, including the establishment of attractive facilities designed to encourage adolescents to visit health centres, had been taken specifically to improve adolescent health outcomes.
7. In the area of education, new schools had been opened; roughly a thousand new teachers had been hired and efforts had been made to address unrest in the English-speaking regions of the country, which could have led to lengthy school closures. Support and supervision had been provided for the return to their families of some one hundred children who had been victims of violence and ill-treatment in Qur'anic schools in the Extreme North Region. Teachers had been redeployed to ensure that child refugees and internally displaced children had access to education.
8. Despite security concerns and a difficult economic environment, the children of Cameroon were currently in a better position to exercise their rights than they had been in the past. The authorities, with the welcome support of civil society organizations and

development partners, intended to pursue their efforts to ensure the well-being of all the country's children.

9. **The Chair** said that it would be interesting to discuss not only the developments specifically referred to in the State party's report but also any relevant developments since the submission of the report in December 2015.

10. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** (Country Task Force), commending Cameroon on the progress it had made since its previous appearance before the Committee, said that he nonetheless wished to touch on a number of issues of concern. For instance, Cameroon had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in 2013 but had not yet submitted its initial report. He asked whether the Government had any plans to launch the process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which Cameroon had signed in 2001. It would also be interesting to know whether any plans had been made to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

11. Regarding the domestic legal framework, he said that he would welcome information about the status of the bill amending the Civil Code. It would be interesting to know whether earlier bills on child protection had been incorporated into the proposed amendments to the Civil Code and whether the amendments had brought the Code into line with the Convention. The delegation should also indicate whether the minimum age of marriage would be raised to 18 under the amended Code and whether provisions under which a married girl of 15 or 16 was deemed an adult would be repealed. In addition, he wondered what the authorities were doing — in consultation with religious or social authorities, for instance — to combat the idea of child marriage more generally.

12. Turning to the issue of violence, he said that the Committee had received reports that children who were suspected of involvement with such terrorist organizations as Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (Boko Haram) were investigated by the State party's Armed Forces instead of being dealt with as victims. He therefore wondered whether the authorities had considered turning such children over to the United Nations or other international organizations so that they could be properly rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. In addition, he asked what steps had been taken in response to allegations that the police subjected young demonstrators to torture and ill-treatment. Were there any plans — and the necessary resources — to reopen a hotline that children could call to report violations of their rights?

13. **Ms. Aldoseri** (Country Task Force) said that although the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was a positive development, it would be interesting to know whether the State party was considering adopting a national action plan for children covering all areas of the Convention, as the Committee had recommended in its concluding observations on the second periodic report of Cameroon (CRC/C/CMR/CO/2, para. 14). If so, the authorities should keep in mind that the bodies responsible for the implementation of such a plan would require trained personnel, budgetary allocations and a sufficiently broad mandate.

14. She asked what mechanism was being put in place to coordinate the full range of efforts made to implement the Convention, whether there was a specific budget for the practical implementation of the rights recognized in the Convention and what progress had been made towards the establishment of a database that would lay the groundwork for the planning, execution and evaluation of programmes and services for children. The State party's efforts to ensure that children learned about their rights in school, which included the production of a child-friendly copy of the Convention, were commendable, but it would be interesting to know whether such efforts were made throughout the country and in all the country's many languages.

15. She would welcome an indication of how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on children operated in the State party. It would be interesting to know, for instance, how closely they worked with the State, how the authorities evaluated their work, whether they had been involved in drafting the State party's report and whether they

received public funds. A description of the process of creating and registering an NGO would also be welcome.

16. **Ms. Aho Assouma** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) welcomed the creation of additional civil status centres and the establishment of the National Civil Status Bureau (BUNEC). The Committee had been informed, however, that persons who failed to pay maternity fees were denied access to birth certificates and registration services. She asked whether measures were being taken to address that issue. As the Committee had been informed that about 60 per cent of birth certificates fell short of the required quality, she asked whether the staff of civil status centres were trained to maintain accurate registration data and to ensure that the documents issued were of high quality. She enquired about the cost and possible duration of procedures for registration after the time limit of 90 days for birth registration had expired. Was there some form of support for parents who were unaware of the registration process or who were unable to pay the requisite fees? The problem might be resolved if newborn babies could be registered free of charge. She enquired about the effectiveness of the mobile court hearings for the establishment of birth certificates in remote communities. Noting that parents of Cameroonians who were born abroad were granted a brief period for transcription of the relevant documents, she enquired about the cost of transcription. She also enquired about the provisions for granting citizenship to stateless children born in Cameroon.

17. She asked whether there was a special office to register refugee children from Nigeria and the Central African Republic, whether fees were payable for such services and whether a time limit was imposed.

18. The new Criminal Code adopted in July 2016 contained no explicit prohibition of corporal punishment of children. It was prohibited in schools but was apparently still legal in the family and in childcare facilities.

19. Action had been taken regarding an educational centre in Maroua and legal proceedings had been instituted against an imam in 2004, but the case had apparently been shelved. She asked whether the religious leader, who used to bind children with chains, had been punished.

20. She asked whether training courses were provided for social workers tasked with looking after child victims of abuse and violence, whether records of such cases were maintained, and whether effective structures and services were in place, including child psychiatrists and psychologists. The Committee had been informed that sexual abuse was widespread, and that the victims were not just girls, but also an increasing numbers of boys. The girl victims were at risk of becoming pregnant and both girls and boys were at risk of being infected by HIV/AIDS. She requested statistical data concerning cases in which the offenders had been prosecuted.

21. The Criminal Code referred to the offence of preventing the development of an organ. The terminology was vague and seemed to refer to female genital mutilation, but there was no mention of breast ironing. She asked whether the general public had been alerted to the fact that the practice had been criminalized. With regard to female genital mutilation, she enquired about the results of the action taken to persuade excision practitioners to halt such practices.

22. She also enquired about the results of the campaign against child marriage, and what action the State party was taking, especially in remote areas, to change attitudes to twins and albino children, who were occasionally subjected to ritual crimes or even murdered.

23. **Ms. Sandberg** said that large-scale industries, such as the logging and mining, posed a threat to the Pygmy and Mbororo communities and to other groups. She asked whether the State party applied any laws or regulations to such business activities and, if so, whether offending businesses were held accountable for violations of children's rights.

24. **Mr. Kotrane** welcomed the administrative and judicial measures taken to protect the best interests of the child, such as the establishment of social welfare services in police stations, courts, prison institutions and village communities. However, the State party's report also expressed regret concerning the inadequate human, financial and material resources allocated for the protection and promotion of children's rights, and the non-

systematic consideration of the best interests of the child in some court decisions concerning children in conflict with the law. He wished to know what measures had been taken or were envisaged to ensure that priority was given to the best interests of the child and that the principle was systematically included in all legislative, administrative and judicial procedures and in policy decisions that had an impact on children. The State party should develop criteria and guidelines for the purpose based on the Committee's general comment No. 14.

25. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** noted that a subcommittee of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms was responsible for vulnerable groups and was composed of child protection professionals. He asked whether the subcommittee could address requests for protection and receive complaints from children. He also asked whether the recommended amendment to the 2004 law establishing the National Commission aimed at increasing its budget had been adopted and, if so, what percentage increase in the budget could be expected.

26. He welcomed the adoption of article 242 on discrimination in the new Criminal Code and the specific action taken to combat discrimination against children with disabilities, albinos and children born out of wedlock. He asked whether further steps had been taken to protect the children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) persons or LGBTI children and adolescents, and to protect refugee, asylum-seeking and internally displaced children, and children suspected of being associated with Boko Haram. Had a comprehensive strategy been developed to protect vulnerable children from all forms of discrimination, and had awareness-raising campaigns targeting children, families, communities and religious leaders been implemented? Lastly, he asked whether adequate funding, staff and technical resources had been provided for the Children's Parliament.

27. **Mr. Gastaud** asked whether children and adolescents could freely access domestic and international sources of information, and enquired about measures taken to prevent them from accessing information on the social media that was inappropriate for their age and level of maturity. He asked whether there were any laws or regulations governing the right to protect children's image, particularly when they were involved in legal proceedings. For instance, were the media entitled to reveal their names or to disseminate photographs or video clips?

28. **Mr. Lumina** said that in 2006 Cameroon had received international debt relief worth US\$ 6.3 billion under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, with the expectation that the resulting savings would be channelled into social investment, including enhancement of access to quality health care and education. He asked how it had been channelled into improving access to quality health care for children. According to a recent report by the International Monetary Fund, the State party's risk of external debt distress had increased from moderate to high. As its ability to mobilize funds for social investment might therefore have been undermined, he enquired about plans to ensure sustained access to health care for children.

29. The State party had lost a great deal of funds through illicit financial outflows stemming from illegal business activities, tax evasion by multinational corporations and corruption. He enquired about the impact on the allocation of domestic resources to health care, education and other programmes for children, and asked what measures the Government was taking to tackle such illicit financial outflows.

The meeting was suspended at 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

30. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that the State of Cameroon was determined to ratify both Optional Protocols to the Convention and had launched the requisite procedures leading to ratification.

31. **Ms. Makentsop Wamba** (Cameroon) said that the State had decided to incorporate all existing legislation applicable to children and the family into the draft Civil Code, which contained a definition of the child that was consistent with the Convention. The age of marriage would be 18 years for both boys and girls. Moreover, article 356 of the recently

adopted Criminal Code prohibited any marriage involving a spouse who was under 18 years of age and provided for the prosecution of those who organized such marriages.

32. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that, according to a study undertaken by the University of Maroua, most child marriages were concluded in the North and Southwest Regions. So-called “money women” in the Southwest Region were in fact young girls who were sold to prospective spouses for small sums of money. Action was being taken to identify vulnerable families and to provide them with income-generating activities, since poverty led to the trading of children. The State also alerted the traditional authorities to the harmful effects of such practices on young girls, including obstetric fistulas. It encouraged the Council of Imams and Muslim Dignitaries of Cameroon to discourage early marriage and to ensure that girls were enrolled in school, and transmitted similar messages through the Association of Traditional Leaders of Cameroon, particularly through the leaders’ wives. A number of girls had been rescued from early marriage and returned to school. A study of the social norms conducive to early marriage had been undertaken with the assistance of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

33. **Ms. Makentsop Wamba** (Cameroon) said that children who had come into contact with the law owing to their involvement in terrorism were considered victims rather than perpetrators. The Government had therefore decided to release all children who had been detained on charges of terrorism. In May 2017, 26 children had been released from Maroua central prison as a result of habeas corpus proceedings and transferred to the Cameroonian Juvenile Institute in Maroua, before being reunited with their families. In future, cases of child involvement in terrorism would be dealt with outside the judicial system, with a focus on rehabilitation; to that end, efforts had been made to address the structural and material challenges faced by the Cameroonian Juvenile Institute in Maroua.

34. Law enforcement officers received continuous training on torture prevention and perpetrators of acts of torture were punished. In 2014, for example, disciplinary and criminal sanctions had been imposed on 15 gendarmes for violations of physical integrity.

35. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked how the Government ascertained the age of children who had been recruited by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in cases where those children had not been registered with the civil registry office.

36. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that, in such cases, a child’s age could be determined by medical professionals, using radiology, for example. There was a radiology service in each regional capital. Steps were being taken to set up a national hotline for child victims of violence, with support from UNICEF, Plan International and various private organizations.

37. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what progress had been made on the project to set up a pan-African hotline for victims of violence.

38. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that her country would play a key role in the pan-African project that was being developed. The Ministry of Communications was currently working to improve telephone access in the region and the subregion.

39. **Mr. Soh** (Cameroon) said that a system of social reintegration had been established to ensure that children who had been involved in terrorism were protected from further indoctrination, were placed in foster care if necessary and received appropriate support from trained professionals such as social workers and psychiatrists. Children held in police custody or prisons were separated from adult detainees and treated in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure.

40. Children were elected to the Children’s Parliament by their peers for a term of one year. All categories of children were represented, including street children and children with albinism. Members of the Children’s Parliament voiced their concerns to the Government, which endeavoured to respond. The budget for the Children’s Parliament had tripled in recent years and the Government hoped to raise it further.

41. A new committee on child protection had been established, with support from UNICEF, and was drafting a national policy on child protection, as well as an action plan. Steps were being taken to estimate the medium-term budget that should be allocated to

child protection in the various sectors concerned. A national platform for child protection, including in emergency situations, had been set up in 2015 with assistance from UNICEF.

42. **Ms. Adyang** (Cameroon) said that, since 2016, specific training on child-related issues, including child protection, had been provided by the social affairs section of the National School of Administration and Magistracy. The course had been developed in liaison with all the relevant government departments.

43. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that, in addition to the State-funded course that was run by the National School of Administration and Magistracy, training in social work was provided by a range of private institutions. Students who had obtained a qualification in social work from a private institution were required to pass a recruitment examination in order to work in the public sector.

44. With regard to Internet safety, in June 2016, the Ministry of Communications had decided to establish a committee charged with drawing up a national charter for the protection of children online.

45. **Ms. Makentsop Wamba** (Cameroon) said that, pursuant to a memorandum issued by the Ministry of Public Health in 2011, all births in State and private hospitals were automatically registered with the civil registry office, regardless of whether the hospital fees had been paid.

46. Ordinance No. 81/02 of 29 June 1981 on civil status had been amended in 2011 to extend the initial deadline for registration from 30 to 90 days. Beyond that deadline, parents could file a birth registration request with the public prosecutor within six months of the birth. Parents who failed to take action within six months could bring proceedings before a customary court or a court of first instance, requesting that the court instruct the civil registry office to issue a birth certificate; legal proceedings of that kind were free of charge.

47. The amendments to Ordinance No. 81/02 had also provided for the establishment of a national civil registry office; since 2015, that office had trained 4,100 registrars and provided them with the necessary equipment, including registers. The registration of children under the age of 5 years was free of charge. Pursuant to Ordinance No. 81/02, adoptions were recorded as an addendum to an existing certificate. All children born on national territory, including those born to refugees, were entitled to a birth certificate.

48. **Ms. Koukreo Wespa Maipa** (Cameroon) said that a platform, bringing together government departments, civil society organizations and development partners, had been established to combat underage marriage. Steps had been taken to draw up a four-year action plan, covering measures such as lobbying of traditional leaders and studies of social customs in particular regions. In the light of those studies, a strategic communications plan on underage marriage would be developed.

49. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that the Government had recently held an awareness-raising workshop for the local authorities of Bakassi on the importance of birth registration. Many parents in that area were reluctant to register their children in either Cameroon or Nigeria.

50. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked what had happened to the children that had been arrested during street demonstrations in early 2017. With regard to birth registration, she enquired what measures were being taken to inform the general public about the procedure and the fact that it was free of charge; why so many parents failed to register their children; and whether children without birth certificates were able to obtain school diplomas.

51. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that the low rates of birth registration were simply due to parents' negligence. Birth registration had previously been automatic, even in the most remote villages. Children without birth certificates could attend primary school but were unable to obtain their primary school leaving certificate and enter secondary education. The Government was conducting awareness campaigns to inform parents about the procedure and to emphasize the importance of registering all children, including those born at home.

52. **Ms. Makentsop Wamba** (Cameroon) said that the children who had been arrested in connection with the demonstrations in December 2016 and January 2017 had been

released, as the cases concerning them had been dismissed by the courts. They had not been brought before military courts because such courts were not competent to hear cases involving children.

53. **Ms. Adyang** (Cameroon) said that there were specific offices, within the regional branches of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, charged with handling complaints lodged by children or adults about violations of child rights. Details of the Commission's budget could be found in paragraph 28 of her country's report.

54. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** asked whether members of the public were aware that they could lodge complaints with the offices mentioned.

55. **Ms. Adyang** (Cameroon) said that efforts had been made to raise awareness of the existence of those offices and, in particular, to encourage children to report violations of their rights. It was important to show children that their complaints would be taken seriously.

56. **Mr. Soh** (Cameroon) said that children with albinism were not subject to discrimination or victims of criminal offences. However, prejudice against persons with albinism was a problem that needed to be addressed. Every year, in cooperation with the Association Mondiale pour la Défense des Intérêts et la Solidarité des Albinos, the Government held a week of events dedicated to albinism, with the aim of raising public awareness and combating prejudice. As far as twins were concerned, although they were involved in various traditional rituals, they were not subject to discrimination.

57. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know what measures were being taken at grassroots level to change the mentality of people living in rural communities towards twins and children with albinism, in view of a case where a girl with albinism had been killed for her organs. She also asked what action the State was taking to protect children with albinism from diseases such as cancer, and whether any statistics were available in that regard.

58. **Ms. Aldoseri** said that she would welcome a description of the procedure for lodging a complaint with the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, in light of the delegation's remark that approaching the commission could be intimidating for children.

59. **Ms. Abena Ondo** (Cameroon) said that the murder of the girl with albinism was an example of a ritual crime and an isolated incident. There was a high level of awareness regarding persons with albinism; there had been a beauty contest for those people for many years. Awareness-raising measures had been taken to ensure that children with albinism wore hats and long clothing so as not to be exposed to the sun. Free medical check-ups, including cancer screenings and eye examinations, were provided to persons with albinism. Children with albinism and twins no longer faced discrimination; there were a number of graduate doctors with albinism, and parents with twins were now highly respected, whereas a generation before they had been considered cursed. Associations for twins and persons with albinism were encouraged by the Government.

60. **Ms. Adyang** (Cameroon) said that when a child approached the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, they were brought before professionals who dealt with children's rights issues, including social workers, lawyers or nurses. The professional would listen to and reassure the child, identify him or her and locate the child's place of residence. If considered appropriate by the official dealing with the case, the official could go to the child's place of residence to determine the facts. If the child's claims were found to be true, then the Commission itself would bring a case before the courts.

61. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know whether there was a system for the early detection of disabilities, and how children were cared for by the health system. Were there subsidies available? She also asked whether there were specialist orthopaedic practitioners, since children with disabilities were often used in begging.

62. She would appreciate information on the technical capacity and infrastructure available for health care in place, particularly in rural areas. How were such facilities

equipped and staffed? She would also like to know how the Government was ensuring that care was being given to newborn infants in remote areas. She would also welcome information on the measures currently being taken to tackle corruption in the health-care system.

63. She commended the efforts that had been made in reducing child mortality; nevertheless, the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 remained high. She would thus like to know what action was being taken to reduce the rate. There was also a high rate of mortality due to malaria, in spite of programmes to distribute mosquito nets. She enquired what was being done to ensure that the nets were used and she suggested that further information should be made available to the general public. Many people were not aware that malaria treatment was free in the country and there were reported cases of health workers demanding payment before administering the treatment; she wondered what measures were being taken to address those issues. Regarding maternal mortality, she asked whether mobile units for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS had also been deployed in remote areas. Furthermore, she would like to know whether there were programmes to repair obstetric fistula.

64. Noting that only 28 per cent of mothers breastfed their babies in 2014, she would appreciate information on the current situation and the measures being taken to encourage breastfeeding. She would also like to know whether there were baby-friendly hospitals with properly trained midwives. There was a problem with pharmacies taking payment to advertise and promote breast-milk substitutes, and she asked what action was being taken to combat that type of corruption. She would also welcome information on the health education given to adolescents to help them tackle issues such as teenage pregnancy, child suicide and abortion.

65. She would appreciate information on HIV/AIDS orphans. What was the relationship between the foundation established by the first lady of Cameroon and the Ministry of Health with regard to such children?

66. The school dropout rate was high, particularly among girls, and she wondered why that was the case and what measures were being taken to respond to the issue. She would also like to know how much of the budget was allocated to the social ministries. The teacher to pupil ratio was low; on occasion there was one teacher for 150 pupils, or one member of staff teaching four different year groups. What was being done to increase the number of teachers? What measures were being taken to address unequal access to education between rural and urban areas, especially since many teachers did not want to work in remote parts of the country? She would like to know how the National Preschool Policy worked and whether it had sufficient staff. She asked the delegation to state any problems concerning that policy. She asked what part leisure and cultural activities played in children's lives.

67. She would like the delegation to provide statistics on street children in Yaoundé. What studies had been carried out in that regard? What measures had been taken to tackle the issue? Children living on the streets were often exposed to drugs such as tramadol. She would thus like to know what measures were being carried out combat the use of such drugs and what treatment was available to users. What was the budget for drug and alcohol prevention programmes?

68. Child labour continued to exist despite having been abolished by law in 2011; 27 per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 reportedly worked, often in the worst forms of labour. Was that the case, and what was the Government doing to address the issue? Had the existing strategies and policies been reviewed to combat the persisting problem of child trafficking?

69. Lastly, she wished to know whether there were any programmes to combat the sexual exploitation of children, particularly with regard to sex tourism. She would also like to know what measures were in place to support child victims of sexual offences. Did they receive counselling and help to reintegrate into society?

70. **Mr. Mezmur** said that he would like to know whether the advocacy action to increase spending in the social sector, as mentioned in the State party report, included the

possibility of increasing the workforce within the sector. Furthermore, he also wished to know what progress had been made in providing legal and social assistance to poor mothers in terms of collecting maintenance allowances. He commended the steps taken towards creating a national policy on social protection, and would like the delegation to specify the current status of the policy. Had it been finalized and validated? What resources would be allocated to implement the policy? There had been a strategic plan for orphans and vulnerable children covering the period up to 2015. He asked whether there was a new plan, and whether it built on the previous plan.

71. There were concerns over the lack of clear standards regarding alternative care and the suitability of foster families. He would therefore appreciate information on any action that was being taken to address that challenge. He also asked whether any progress had been made towards ratifying the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. Lastly, with regard to children with incarcerated parents, he enquired as to what alternatives to imprisoning children with their parents were available.

72. **Mr. Kotrane** said that the Committee acknowledged the difficulties concerning the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. He thus wished to know what measures the State party was taking to make the refugee eligibility commission more effective, to ensure that the commission properly applied the pre-selection and registration procedures for children, and to safeguard the best interests of children in all decisions and agreements concerning the transfer of child asylum seekers and refugees. What was done to ensure that any returns were voluntary and the principle of non-refoulement was respected? What measures were in place to prevent the arbitrary arrest of displaced children and child refugees?

73. In view of the large number of children who continued to be exploited, he wished to know what measures had been taken to give effect to the conclusions and recommendations of the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference, and what resources had been allocated to setting up the National Committee for combating child labour and officially adopting and implementing the national action plan for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. He would also like the delegation to specify what steps had been taken to ensure the prompt adoption of implementing legislation for the new Labour Code, as required by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). He asked what action had been taken to protect child domestic workers and what procedures were in place to remove children and reintegrate them into society. Furthermore, he wished to know what was being done to raise public awareness of the worst forms of labour and its disadvantages and risks. Noting that the State party had not ratified the ILO Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), which posed problems in terms of carrying out effective inspections and removing children working in the worst forms of labour, he would appreciate an outline of the measures taken to improve the functioning of the labour inspectorate services in that area.

74. The information held by the Committee raised doubts as to whether children suspected of being involved in terrorist acts were in fact detained separately from adults, as stated in the reply to the list of issues (CRC/C/CMR/Q/3-5/Add.1). The Committee was concerned about the low age of criminal responsibility, the placement of children into police custody before trial, and the lack of juvenile courts. He thus asked what measures had been taken to establish juvenile courts, with specially trained staff and judges who were on hand at all stages of the proceedings until enforcement of the judgment. What steps were being taken to increase the provision of legal aid with a view to encouraging the application of alternative penalties to imprisonment for children?

75. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that, in the light of the shortcomings, from a rights perspective, of the 2010 Law on the protection of persons with disabilities, which did not consider refusal of reasonable accommodation as discrimination, he would like to know whether the Government intended to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and why it had not done so already. He would also appreciate an explanation as to why, at many points in the reply to the list of questions, the delegation had simply stated that information was not available. He also sought clarification as to whether the delegation

had been referring to “special” or “inclusive” schools, since it was unclear whether children with disabilities were placed in one type of school or the other.

76. He understood that according to the law social workers were provided to assist child victims of crime, but he wished to know what happened in practice, especially in rural areas. Were such children given proper care? What measures were in place to prevent victims from coming into contact with and having to be in the same room as perpetrators? What steps were taken to rehabilitate and reintroduce child victims into society?

77. **The Chair** said that she wished to know whether there were legislative provisions ensuring that children who were suspected of terrorism offences were tried by juvenile courts rather than military courts.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.