



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Eighty-first session

### Summary record of the 2386th meeting\*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 22 May 2019, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Pedernera Reyna

## Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

*Second periodic report of Cabo Verde*

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\* No summary record was issued for the 2385th meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

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

*Second periodic report of Cabo Verde* (CRC/C/CPV/2; CRC/C/CPV/Q/2 and CRC/C/CPV/Q/2/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Cabo Verde took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde), introducing her country's second periodic report, said that, since the opening of the ninth legislature in 2016, the Government had adopted the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development 2017–2021 to serve as an all-embracing guide for future policy development. A main aim of the Plan was to help the country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. For that reason, 74 per cent of the Plan's impact indicators replicated the Agenda 2030 indicators.
3. The Government was firmly committed to meeting the Agenda 2030 targets in all areas. In education, for example, it was striving to further increase overall school attendance rates, having already reversed the downward trend evidenced between 2001 and 2016. Universal access to preschool had been achieved in the 2017/18 academic year, when school attendance allowances had enabled more than 5,000 children from vulnerable families to join the education system. In addition, as of 2018, school fees had been abolished for all children up to the eighth grade. As of 2020, fees would also be abolished up to the twelfth grade and the free school meals programme would be extended to all years up to the eighth grade.
4. A series of measures had been introduced to guarantee access to health care, education and vocational training for children with disabilities, who were thenceforth exempted from the payment of fees from preschool through to higher education. In addition, Government funding for civil society bodies working with persons with disabilities had been increased by 30 per cent. The launch of the Integrated Management System in 2018, meanwhile, had facilitated the identification and enrolment of children from migrant families and had resulted in the conclusion of agreements to develop specific inclusion programmes with migrant associations.
5. Children were also benefiting from various poverty-reduction measures. Since 2017, a direct cash transfer called the Social Inclusion Allowance had been distributed to highly disadvantaged families with children under the age of 15 years old. By 2020, it would be extended to around 5,000 families. Families receiving this allowance were also eligible for support under the Productive Inclusion Programme, designed to help parents to develop income-generating activities. In addition, the recently introduced National Care Plan and the "Recreo" Leisure Programme would make it easier for women to enter paid employment, thereby contributing to gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Together, the two schemes would ensure access to day care for preschool children and access to recreational and educational activities for school-age children after school during term time and throughout the day during school holidays.
6. Work was under way to incorporate a gender equality module into the formal school curriculum and vocational training courses. Sex education was being incorporated in a cross-cutting manner, with a view to building on the slight reduction in the teen pregnancy rate achieved between 2005 and 2016. In many cases, teen pregnancy was the result of abuse within the family environment; accordingly, with that and other factors in mind, the authorities planned to run awareness-raising campaigns calling for zero tolerance of child sex abuse, ill-treatment and child labour during the 2019/20 school year.
7. A group of government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had been working together to rescue children living and/or working on the street and, in the past year, their joint efforts had helped a total of 34 children. Of that number, 23 had since been returned to family environments and the remaining 11 had been provided with access to shelter and rehabilitation services.
8. The Government was also making structural and administrative changes with a view to improving its child-related services. Public servants working with children now had the

opportunity to undertake more specialist training following a change in the staff rules of the Institute for Children and Adolescents, while the establishment of four new regional offices should allow the Institute to be more responsive in the field. Decentralization was a key aspect of capacity-building in general; local authorities had an increasingly important role in the provision of protection and support services, and municipal committees for the defence and protection of children were now operating in 21 of the country's 22 municipalities.

9. **The Chair** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee welcomed the adoption of the Child and Adolescent Statute but had been concerned to note that the sexual and reproductive health services covered in article 43 were not freely accessible to adolescents of all ages. He would like to know of any plans to remove the restrictions. The delegation should also indicate why implementation of a comprehensive policy and strategy for children had been delayed and explain the specific reasons why the Child and Adolescent Observatory provided for in article 73 of the Statute had yet to be established.

10. Given that the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship reported to the Ministry of Justice and was, therefore, not fully independent, he wished to know what measures the Government would take to bring the Commission into line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and how it intended to incorporate a children's rights perspective within the Commission's mandate. It would be useful to know, in that connection, what the State party was doing to develop a child rights-focused budget, and what measures it was taking to monitor and evaluate the impact of budget allocations and expenditure in line with the Committee's general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights (art. 4). Clarification as to whether responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Convention at the national, regional and local levels lay with the Commission or with the Institute for Children and Adolescents would likewise be useful, as would information about the resources assigned for that purpose.

11. He wished to know what measures the Government would take to raise children's awareness of the principles of the Convention in a systematic, ongoing and child-friendly manner. He would also appreciate information about its efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination with civil society and the measures being used to ensure that children's rights were not compromised by business activities, particularly in the tourism sector and extractive industries.

12. He wondered whether the Government was considering amending the Child and Adolescent Statute to remove legal exceptions that prevented children from fully enjoying their rights under the Convention, including, for example, the exceptions that permitted adolescents aged 16 and 17 years old to marry. He also wished to know what measures were being taken to guarantee equality and to combat the gender stereotypes that were particularly harmful to girls.

13. The Child and Adolescent Statute's express recognition of the principle of the best interests of the child was a welcome advance, but it was unclear how respect for the principle was guaranteed in practice. He invited the delegation to explain how exactly the Government planned to ensure that the best interests of children were central to policymaking and that their opinions were taken into account. Given that the Child and Adolescent Statute did not, on the other hand, expressly guarantee children's right to privacy, he wondered what the Government was doing to address and prevent violations of that right, in particular in the media. Similarly, he wished to know what steps the State party was taking to guarantee the rights to information enshrined in article 53 of the Statute, especially in respect of media content and Internet use and access.

14. He also wished to know whether the Government had any record of the police abuse and ill-treatment of children that had been reported, including by the Committee against Torture. He would welcome any information on the steps being taken to prevent similar incidents, notably through police training on children's rights and torture prevention, and to investigate and punish the perpetrators.

15. **Ms. Aho Assouma** (Country Task Force) said that she would be interested to hear about any tangible outcomes of efforts to promote timely birth registration. It was unclear

whether the birth registration process in Cabo Verde always required the father's involvement, or whether the mother alone could register the birth of her child, in her own name. Could the delegation confirm whether a court decision was necessary in order for children to take their father's name, and whether there were indeed thousands of children awaiting such decisions, some of them after many years, as had been reported? In such cases, how were children able to graduate from school without a birth certificate? It would be useful to know how that system affected children who had been conceived as a result of rape or incest, in which case the father was unlikely to acknowledge paternity; if the father were to come forward, would he not be prosecuted and punished? It would also be interesting to know how awareness-raising programmes had been received by men, who often might not want to accept parental responsibilities. Clarification as to the situation of children conceived as a result of adultery on the part of their mother, who might consequently refuse contact with the father, would also be welcome.

16. It was unclear whether police officers were held to account for acts of violence committed against children, especially children living and/or working on the streets; if they were, figures would be helpful. She failed to understand why corporal punishment was prohibited in schools but not at home. She would welcome more information on measures taken to combat gender-based violence, especially against girls. Highlighting the references to "beating" made in paragraph 66 of the report (CRC/C/CPV/2), she suggested that it would be better to avoid using terms of that kind when considering discipline-related issues.

17. It would be useful to know the specific causes of sexual violence against children in Cabo Verde and to have information on the policies and strategies developed in response. The delegation should explain why the level of recurrent sexual abuse was so high and provide details of any studies conducted to explore the issues at the root of such behaviour. It should also indicate whether the toll-free hotline for reporting violence and abuse could be used by children; why there were so few investigations into cases of sexual abuse; whether such cases were ever brought before the courts; and why the Government did not tackle the cultural taboos that sustained the general reluctance to report perpetrators of abuse. In that context, it would be helpful to hear about any cases of child abuse committed by members of the clergy, and also about any cases of child abuse and exploitation on the remote island of Sal. It would also be useful to know whether there were any specialist-run rehabilitation and re-integration centres offering support for victims and, if so, whether assistance of that kind was available in remote regions.

18. Lastly, she asked what policies and measures were in place to combat child marriage, which, the Government had stated, had accounted for 18 per cent of all marriages in Cabo Verde in 2017. How did the Government plan to respond to reports that many pregnant girls under the age of 15 years old were already in cohabiting relationships and that at least 3 per cent of girls under 15 years of age were already married?

*The meeting was suspended at 3.45 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.*

19. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that the Child and Adolescent Statute was currently being reviewed by a national committee composed of representatives of all relevant institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. An initial draft of the revisions had been produced, but the committee had subsequently decided to consult institutions not represented among its members before proceeding. A new draft was expected by the end of the year. Many of the provisions of the Statute deemed not to be in the best interests of the child were subject to review.

20. A new approach to planning would ensure that plans made by the Government in areas relating to health, education, social inclusion and the family were carried out in timely fashion. The promotion and protection of the rights of the child and gender equality were central themes in all planning and policy development in those areas. Gender-responsive budgeting had been introduced.

21. The State funds earmarked for the Institute for Children and Adolescents had increased by 46 per cent since 2016. Efforts to improve the country's schools and foster social inclusion were funded generously by the State, which used the term "social investment" rather than "social spending". The entry into force of the Institute's new

charter in late 2017 had led to a number of changes. Some of the Institute's supervisory functions, for instance, had been transferred to the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship. Discussions on making the Commission a fully independent institution were under way.

22. Campaigns to raise awareness of the Child and Adolescent Statute had been conducted in 2014, following its adoption at the end of 2013. Outreach efforts, including close cooperation with the education sector, the publication of explanatory brochures and the selection of a yearly theme, had continued since. The theme chosen for 2019 was the protection and promotion of the rights of children and adolescents. Boys and girls had themselves contributed to the design of the campaign, which was designed to empower them to protect themselves against abuse, ill-treatment and other violations of their rights. *Aldeias Infantis SOS*, the *Associação de Crianças Desfavorecidas* and other NGOs worked closely with the Government to promote and protect children's rights, as did the local committees that had been set up in 21 of the country's 22 municipalities.

23. Apart from small-scale sand mining, which was typically carried out by women, there was little extractive activity in Cabo Verde. Tourism, however, was a growing industry and in the coming months there would be a major conference on the island of Boa Vista at which the effect of tourism on children and their rights would be discussed. A similar conference, also bringing together the social welfare authorities and tourism entrepreneurs, would be held on Sal. There was much to learn with regard to the intersection of tourism and children's rights.

24. Gender equality was a cross-cutting issue in the country's schools. In other words, it could be discussed in mathematics, Portuguese or other classes. A handbook to help teachers to approach the issue, which had had been produced with the assistance of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and other international partners, would be published shortly.

25. Restrictions on school attendance by pregnant girls and teen mothers had been repealed in 2014, when the Child and Adolescent Statute had taken effect, but in practice the restrictions had remained in place. As a result, in 2017 a law had been adopted to ensure that such girls were not forced to drop out of school. Campaigns were being conducted in a bid to prevent teen pregnancy, and efforts were made to ensure that boys and girls were aware of the opportunity costs of pregnancy.

26. The best interests of the child were a primary consideration in adoption proceedings conducted in the country's courts. Priority was given to ensuring that proceedings involving children, who were assisted by a social worker and a psychologist, were expeditious.

27. Children's right to privacy had been one of the main subjects of a course for journalists recently organized by the Institute for Children and Adolescents. A list of terms to be avoided by journalists producing stories about minors had been drawn up. The process of protecting children's privacy had won considerable support.

28. Cabo Verde had a fully functional criminal justice system. When complaints were filed, an investigation was conducted and, when there were sufficient grounds, the alleged perpetrators were tried and sometimes convicted, including if they were police officers. To the best of her knowledge, no allegations of police abuse, particularly abuse involving girls, had ever been ignored. Moreover, the national police were active partners in national and municipal efforts to promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents.

29. A municipal committee for the protection of children had not yet been set up in São Vicente, an island where, according to a survey, about 35 children had been in street situations in November 2017. A multipronged effort to reintegrate those children had begun shortly thereafter. *Irmãos Unidos*, a local NGO, had set up a home where the 11 children still living in the street could eat, sleep and bathe. Training and capacity-building were planned for the local offices of the Institute for Children and Adolescents and relevant NGOs, as the 11 minors receiving assistance in São Vicente were all older children who had acquired habits that would prevent their easy reintegration. The police, as she had suggested, had been allies of those children, not enemies.

30. It was no longer necessary for the father to be present for the registration of a child's birth. Newborn children were not released from hospital until after their births had been registered, and in Cabo Verde 97 per cent of all children were born in hospitals. In addition, outreach campaigns encouraged parents to register the births of any children not born in hospital. In the past, births had gone unregistered for a number of reasons, including the country's long history as a slave society. Slaves could not form families, and, as a result, fathers had been marginalized. The judicial principle of free birth, whereby children born to an enslaved woman could not be enslaved themselves, had contributed to that marginalization. Cabo Verdean society was in ferment, however, and attitudes and practices were changing quickly. Laço Branco, an organization of young men, was working with other young men to encourage them to see women and girls as equals and to be responsible fathers.

31. With regard to early marriage, the figure of 18 per cent mentioned by Ms. Aho Assouma was incorrect; the true figure was 1.8 per cent. The National Statistics Institute had been asked to make the necessary change. The issue was nonetheless a matter for concern, not least because the law still allowed minors to marry at 16 years old with their father's permission. However, in general, concerns were centred not so much on marriages as on de facto unions involving girls aged between 15 and 18 years old. The whole area was in any case under review.

32. Gender-based violence and child sexual abuse had not figured on the public agenda, and had therefore not been reported, until the early 2000s and, in particular, following the adoption of the Child and Adolescent Statute in 2013 and the creation of an anonymous hotline. There was now a high rate of reporting, which showed that the message was getting through; perpetrators could now be punished. In addition, the new law on the implementation of criminal policy, which was currently pending before parliament, would make child abuse, gender-based crime, crime based on sexual orientation and crimes against vulnerable groups high priorities for preventive and punitive action.

33. Corporal punishment was prohibited by law and its use as a disciplinary measure in schools could lead to the dismissal of the teacher responsible. Ill-treatment of that kind occurred mainly in the domestic sphere, and would be a major topic on the Government agenda for the coming year.

34. **The Chair** said that he would like to know whether the school curriculum covered children's rights and what training was provided to teachers and other persons working with children.

35. **Ms. Aho Assouma** asked whether the police received specific training in children's rights. In addition, she said that she was still awaiting details of the action being taken to provide birth certificates to the more than 6,000 children who had not yet received them and whose cases were still pending before the courts, as well as clarification as to the obstacles, if any, to registration of the birth of children born as a result of an adulterous relationship. She would also appreciate more information on the children's hotline: what was the number to call; how many children had used it to make complaints; and what action had been taken in response?

36. She welcomed the fact that corporal punishment was prohibited in schools but she would like to know what action was taken to curb such behaviour in the home. Pending the passage of the new criminal legislation that would prioritize gender-based violence and child abuse, she would like to know how cases arising in the meantime would be handled.

37. **Mr. Gubrandsson** said that he would like to hear more about the structural changes being introduced in Cabo Verde, including, in particular, the role of the municipalities in child protection. With 35 local authorities and 7 or 8 police districts, dealing with child sex abuse was a complicated matter. Moreover, it was not only a judicial issue, involving the punishment of perpetrators, but also a social one, requiring support for child victims: he would like to know how such support was managed and whether the Institute for Children and Adolescents had competence in that area.

38. More generally, he wondered whether there were other centres of competence capable of dealing with the complex issues around child abuse. Very specialized knowledge

was required, notably in the areas of forensic interviewing, investigation, medical evaluation and trauma-focused therapy. He welcomed the new awareness of the issues in the State party and he would like to know whether there was any mandatory reporting requirement. Were reports referred to the local social services or to the police?

39. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that, while it was important to have a complaints mechanism, she would like to know what preventive measures were in place to forestall violence and sexual abuse against children. She wondered what was being done to warn children about the dangers, how confidential the reporting procedure was and how children were shielded from reprisals. She would also like to know what psychological support was available and whether, in cases of intra-family abuse, it was the child victim or the alleged perpetrator who was required to leave the home.

40. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that the Child and Adolescent Observatory was being set up under the aegis of the National Commission for Human Rights and Citizenship, with support from the Government. Children's rights were now a cross-cutting theme in the school curriculum, and that component was being strengthened as part of curriculum changes currently under way. Gender equality and children's and adolescents' rights were included in both teacher training curricula and police training programmes.

41. Experience of children's parliaments was still limited: three had taken place and the next was planned for November 2019. In each municipality the children drew up lists of possible agenda items and the outcome of the parliament was a document expressing children's concerns that was submitted to the National Assembly and thence to the Government.

42. As to the allegations of police brutality against juveniles, as mentioned in the Committee against Torture's concluding observations from 2016, there was no system for follow-up to such cases but her delegation would try to obtain the relevant information.

43. With regard to birth registration, she said that the cases still pending before the courts were largely paternity claims. The recent introduction of DNA testing in the judicial system would help to expedite those proceedings. As to children born as a result of adulterous relationships, the mother could register the birth herself in her own name; the father was not required to be present or give his name.

44. The complaints hotline was available round-the-clock. It was free of charge and was managed by the Institute for Children and Adolescents. On receipt of a complaint, the Institute took appropriate steps to protect the complainant, whether child or adult, and launched a process of verification.

45. **The Chair** said that the Committee's concern regarding registration of the birth of a child born as a result of adultery was whether the child could exercise the right to know his or her biological origins even when the father refused to put his name on the birth certificate. He would like to know how that right was guaranteed.

46. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that the mother could register the birth in either her own or the father's name.

47. **Ms. Todorova** said that, under the Convention, children had the right to know and have contact with both their parents, regardless of the status of the parents' union. She was confident that the State party's legislation contained adequate mechanisms for establishing paternity and guaranteeing children their rights in that regard.

48. **Ms. Khazova** said that she would appreciate clarification regarding the procedure for naming the parents on the birth certificate of a child resulting from an adulterous relationship. If there was no legal father, did that mean that the space on the certificate for the father's name was left blank? She would also like to know what specific circumstances governed the inclusion or omission of the father's name. She wondered whether, should the alleged biological father refuse to be named on the certificate, the mother could bring legal proceedings to establish paternity.

49. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wondered whether there was a tradition that allowed a married woman to have an extramarital relationship, bear a child as a result and

then register it in whatever manner she chose. She found the situation as described somewhat remarkable and wondered whether it would not create problems in the home.

50. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that it was important to understand the cultural and historical context. For many years Cabo Verde had been a country of emigrants, the majority of them men. Women had been left behind, often with no news of their husbands for many years, but were still legally married. Many of them had children with other men and could choose to register the child in their own name alone, giving no father's name, or in their own and their husband's name, even though the husband was not the child's biological father. However, by law, all children had the right to know their biological origins, and if the father was not named, or refused to acknowledge the child, the mother could bring legal proceedings herself. All such cases were automatically forwarded to the courts through the Public Prosecutor's Office. That was the background to the 6,000 cases still pending in the judicial system.

51. Corporal punishment was prohibited by law. Reports of ill-treatment could be submitted by children or adults, and all complaints were immediately pursued. All individuals found guilty of having subjected a child to corporal punishment were punished. As she had mentioned in her opening statement, the Government was developing a campaign to raise awareness about the problem in collaboration with civil society and the education authorities.

52. The Government was in the process of decentralizing social security services to the municipalities, and had allocated to them the financial resources necessary to develop their local-level services. It had recently introduced a centralized social registry system for managing social services and had received international support to help enhance its care system and strengthen municipal-level capacities.

53. The Institute for Children and Adolescents had established three new municipal care centres with the support of the Ministry of Health, at which numerous psychologists and social workers were employed. However, as a recent evaluation had identified a need for greater specialist training for professionals at those centres, the Government was currently working to develop more targeted training programmes, designed in particular to improve confidentiality practices and levels of care.

54. **Mr. Jaffé** said that he wished to know whether cases in which a child's father was not identified on the birth certificate were handled via a criminal procedure.

55. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that such cases were referred to the Public Prosecutor's Office for investigation. Some 6,000 cases were currently being assessed. DNA testing was an important tool in such investigations.

56. **Ms. Khazova** asked whether, in such cases, criminal penalties were ever imposed on the biological father once he had been legally recognized.

57. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know what the number of the helpline was and whether any measures had been taken to follow up on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage.

58. **Ms. Rosabal Peña** (Cabo Verde) said that recognition of a child's biological father was a civil procedure, the legal consequences of which were the need to register as the father and the obligation to pay child support.

59. Although sexual violence was not a widespread phenomenon, it had been identified as a serious social problem and a priority area for action, both in the enforcement of the law and in awareness-raising activities. The topic had been discussed in various forums, including in parliament. In addition to running extensive public awareness campaigns, the Government was actively implementing the 2017–2019 National Plan to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents.

60. The helpline number was (+238) 800 10 20. It was advertised in a wide range of public spaces and publications. Victims could also call the police at any time.



61. Although few cases of child marriage had been recorded in Cabo Verde, the Government was working in schools and communities to develop sex education programmes to combat the practice.

62. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she wished to know why so many children had been placed in care; what was being done to prevent the abandonment of children; what the criteria for foster families were; whether single-parent families received support; whether childcare centres were adequately staffed and provided sufficient care; whether the situation of children in care was regularly reviewed; and whether adoption was a realistic option for those children.

63. With regard to children with disabilities, she asked what mechanisms were in place to support the early detection of disability; whether specialized health care was available and accessible to such children; and whether sufficient training on disabilities was provided in rural areas.

64. In the area of health, she wondered whether there were any specialist health-care programmes for children, in particular to combat common childhood diseases such as chronic anaemia; what was being done to combat child mortality; whether any measures had been taken to combat goitre; and, if so, whether they were implemented across the entire archipelago. She also asked whether caesarean kits were provided through the African Union campaign for the accelerated reduction of maternal mortality in Africa; whether they included blood packs; and whether they were free of charge. Information about action being taken to protect against dengue fever, malaria and Zika virus and to ensure that the whole country had access to drinking water and electricity would likewise be useful. In addition, she would like to know whether use of the Human Milk Bank posed an infection risk.

65. With regard to adolescent health, she asked whether any services were available to support teenage mothers and their children; whether there was a comprehensive sex education programme; whether women had access to medical and/or non-medical abortion; whether mental health services were available to prevent suicide among children and young people; and whether there were any programmes to combat drug, alcohol and tobacco consumption.

66. She would appreciate details of any programmes running in rural areas to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and any measures taken to combat poverty, and especially the male-female and urban-rural disparities. She wondered whether the social security system applied to the entire territory; whether there was a system for the payment of child support; and whether State financial support was available for families, in particular single-parent families.

67. With regard to climate change, she asked whether the Government had considered, or was considering, what action would be needed to guarantee the country's supply of drinking water.

68. On the topic of education, it would be useful to know whether children with disabilities had access to education; how long the period of compulsory education was; what measures had been taken to prevent dropouts and encourage teenage girls who fell pregnant to return to education; what the pupil-to-teacher ratio was; whether teachers received sufficient training; whether adequate educational materials were available; whether human rights were covered on the curriculum; whether private schools were regulated; and whether crèches were available for young children, including in rural areas.

69. **The Chair** said that he would like to know what measures had been taken to help migrant children, in particular with regard to birth registration, access to nationality, education, health care and vulnerability reduction. He also wished to know what was being done to reduce the number of children engaged in hazardous work, to prohibit the exploitation of children between the ages of 16 and 18 years old in prostitution and pornography and to support child victims of forced labour. He would appreciate details of the measures taken to protect children in street situations against exploitation, violence and drug abuse and; the mechanisms, if any, in place for identifying child victims of trafficking. He wondered whether any data on the number of persons investigated and prosecuted for

child trafficking was available. Noting the recent disappearance of four children, he asked whether the missing children were thought to have fallen victim to trafficking and whether the State required international assistance to investigate their cases.

70. He would appreciate a clarification as to why socio-educational measures could be applied to child offenders aged between 12 and 16 years old, even though the age of criminal responsibility had been raised to 16 years. He asked what was being done to provide alternatives to deprivation of liberty for child offenders, ensure that children and adults were not detained in the same facilities and offer adequate protection for child victims and witnesses.

71. **Mr. Mezmur** said that, while he welcomed the progress made in improving the birth registration rate, he wished to know whether the Government had considered developing a statelessness determination process; whether any progress had been made towards ratifying the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; and whether any steps had been taken to expand the safeguards against statelessness to cover foundling children up to the age of 7 or 8 years, in line with those in place in other countries in the region.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*