



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General  
12 September 2023

Original: English

---

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

### Summary record of the 2730th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 4 September 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

## Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Albania*

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



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

### **Consideration of reports of States parties**

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

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Albania joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of Albania to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **A representative of Albania**, introducing her country's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports (CRC/C/ALB/5-6; CRC/C/ALB/RQ/5-6), said that the Government of Albania considered its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to be both a legislative task and a moral duty. The reports had been drafted by the Interministerial Working Group following consultations with a number of stakeholders, including the United Nations Children's Fund office in Albania. Two events during the reporting period had had particularly severe consequences for people living in Albania, namely the earthquake in 2019 and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Throughout those crises, one of the Government's main objectives had been to continue providing support for vulnerable groups, including children.
4. Many policy initiatives and pieces of legislation concerning children's rights had been adopted during the reporting period, including Law No. 18/2017 on the Rights and Protection of the Child. A total of 18 by-laws had been passed to ensure the implementation of that law through the establishment of an effective, cross-cutting system of child protection. A series of new policies had also been adopted under the National Agenda for Child Rights and Protection 2021–2026 and the Social Protection Strategy 2015–2023. Formulated by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the State Agency for Children's Rights and Protection, the aims of the National Agenda included establishing a healthy and safe environment for children, promoting the social inclusion and active participation of children in all aspects of life affecting them, and ensuring that progress in the main public policy domains affecting children was effectively measured and assessed. Work on 80 per cent of the activities foreseen under the National Agenda was ongoing.
5. Considerable progress had been made in decentralizing the provision of social services for children. Social care plans had been established in all 61 municipalities, and 23 new services specifically intended for children had been launched by local government units thanks to grants received from the Government's Social Fund. A number of specialized services had also been set up at the regional level, including services for autistic children, a service for child victims of trafficking, an alternative care service for children without parental care, and support services aimed at preventing institutionalization. As part of wider deinstitutionalization efforts, two residential care centres for children under the age of 6 had been transformed into community-based care facilities. At the national level, the number of centres providing social services for vulnerable persons had risen by 16 per cent since 2021. Nearly half of the 36,642 beneficiaries of those services were children under the age of 16. Around 22 per cent of the services provided were specifically intended for children with disabilities, while 8 per cent were for children in residential care facilities. The birth rate had increased in recent years, in part thanks to the implementation of the baby bonus policy, under which over 42,000 new mothers had received cash transfers. The education and health care of around 80,000 children were supported under the Government's economic assistance scheme, and mothers with three children no longer had to pay health insurance and social protection contributions. Twenty children had also received support under a policy designed to give special protection to young people whose parents had lost their lives in the service of the country.
6. A number of national health-care programmes had been established for children. Over 150,000 children had benefited from the vision care programme, around 235,000 children had benefited from the dental care programme, and all children received vaccinations under the comprehensive immunization programme. Works had been undertaken to improve the facilities at 400 health-care centres and hospitals for children. The services of a psychologist were available to pupils at every school in the country, and school staff received training on

children's mental health issues. Two centres offering emergency services for child victims of sexual abuse and other serious forms of violence had been opened, and there were currently 241 child protection workers operating throughout the country.

7. A series of mechanisms had been put in place with the aim of ensuring the inclusion of marginalized children in preschool and mainstream education. Around 85 per cent of children currently attended a year of preschool before starting their school education. During the 2021–2022 academic year, 4,748 children with disabilities had been enrolled at public and private preschool centres and schools. Moreover, the school dropout rate in basic education had dropped to 0.62 per cent and 280,000 pupils, including Roma and Egyptian children, had received free textbooks. Some 290 schools, predominantly attended by members of the Roma and Egyptian communities, had introduced special afterschool classes.

8. During the reporting period, the Government had adopted the National Justice for Children Strategy 2022–2026. Its aim was to address the issues encountered by children involved in committing criminal offences, including by prioritizing alternative sentences, strengthening the provision of restorative justice programmes and mediation services, and reducing the involvement of children in criminal processes and court proceedings. Children involved in crimes who did not have the support of their parents or a legal representative could be taken into care, where emphasis was placed on their rehabilitation and preparation for reintegration into society and their families. Lastly, the Computer Crime Investigation Strategy had been adopted in 2020 to protect children from online sexual abuse and exploitation.

9. **Ms. Seferi** (Albania), speaking via video link, said that she wished to reiterate her country's unwavering commitment to implementing the Convention and its optional protocols and to ensuring that children played an active role in formulating all measures taken to that effect.

10. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he wished to congratulate the State party on the legislative progress that it had made during the reporting period, in particular the adoption of Law No. 18/2017 on the Rights and Protection of the Child. The series of laws and policies that the Government had developed in recent years reflected the importance that it evidently attached to children's rights. It was nonetheless unclear to the Committee how the implementation of all those laws and policies would be funded. He therefore wished to know what steps were taken to calculate the level of funding required for each initiative and to ensure that resources were allocated accordingly. On a related matter, the Government should consider establishing a separate line in the public budget for spending on policies specifically intended for children. It would also be useful to know what measures were taken to collect and process data on children's rights and how those data were used to assess the impact of relevant legislation and policies. He would be interested to hear whether representatives of civil society participated in formulating new laws and, more importantly, whether children were consulted about any reforms that might affect them.

11. The Committee would welcome further information regarding the procedure by which children were selected to sit on the National Council on Children's Rights and Protection. The delegation should also explain the precise nature of the role played by those children in the Council's work and confirm whether their views were genuinely taken into account in decision-making processes. He wished to know what mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that the Council's recommendations were acted upon and taken into consideration during the implementation of policies. The Committee would also appreciate further details concerning the organization and activities of the State Agency for Children's Rights and Protection. Similarly, it would be helpful to know what powers had been delegated to the Minister of State for Youth and Children, and whether the Minister had been allocated sufficient financial resources to perform his or her mandate. In particular, he wished to know how the Minister's work was coordinated with the work of the Minister of Health and Social Protection.

12. The State party had adopted many strategies aimed at implementing policies related to children's rights. It would be helpful to hear how often the impact of those strategies was assessed and what measures were taken to ensure that such initiatives had a tangible effect

on the lives of children. The budget set aside for children appeared to be somewhat inadequate, given all the ambitious objectives that had been set under those strategies and policies. He wondered whether the Government had any plans to increase that budget and, in particular, to increase spending on education, which had recently been in decline.

13. The Committee would welcome further information on any measures taken, including by the Parliament, to follow up on the recommendations issued by the Ombudsperson. It would also be useful to know to what extent the Ombudsperson fulfilled the criteria of independence set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). At a general level, he would be interested to know whether children in the State party were aware of their rights and felt that those rights were respected, and he wondered whether any awareness-raising campaigns were organized to inform adults and children about their rights. Details about any national policies concerning corporate social responsibility would be of interest. He also wished to know whether children who felt that their rights were not being respected received the support and information they required to seek justice. For example, it would be useful to know whether they had access to lawyers trained in juvenile justice. The delegation should also clarify what the difference was between primary and secondary legal aid.

14. The Committee would welcome more specific information about the State party's poverty reduction policies, particularly those intended to benefit Roma communities. Moreover, it would be helpful to receive more details about the specific goals that had been established under policies to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and to hear what impact those policies had made. He also wondered whether any measures had been taken to tackle hate speech and corruption, both of which were apparently prevalent in the State party. Lastly, he wished to know whether the Government planned to take any action to ensure that children of migrants, particularly those in an irregular situation, could register their nationality and were thereby not left stateless.

15. **Ms. Beloff** (Country Task Force) said that a significant gap remained between the legal recognition of children's rights and the exercise of such rights in practice. Given the large number of laws guaranteeing children's rights, she would like to know how the State party avoided overlap and how the courts had developed their jurisprudence to address any loopholes. Noting that the specific responsibilities of each institution involved in the protection of children's rights were often unclear, she wished to learn how the State party organized its institutional machinery to ensure that all laws adopted had a genuine impact on children.

16. The delegation might comment on how the State party ensured that the security forces were trained to prevent practices that could amount to the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children, and whether it had statistics on how many public officers had been convicted of engaging in such practices. She would like to know which administrative procedures had been put in place or were envisaged to ensure that the perpetrators were held to account and that children could file complaints without fear of reprisals.

17. Noting that the State party's report ([CRC/C/ALB/5-6](#)) focused on domestic violence in general, she wished to learn more about the specific situation of child victims of such violence, and she wondered which ministry or body was responsible for the four emergency centres that had been established for woman and girl victims.

18. It would be useful to know whether centres for adolescent offenders were managed exclusively by the relevant penitentiary authority, how such centres were monitored and how violence within the centres was prevented.

19. She would appreciate information on whether the State party planned to reform the Penal Code to ensure that girls of all ages were protected against sexual violence, thereby bringing it into line with international law. The delegation might comment on whether blood feuds continued to occur in the State party.

20. The Albanian Civil Code provided for the annulment of a marriage in cases where the spouses had not given their consent voluntarily; she would like to know whether the State party planned to simplify the annulment process by making it quicker and free of charge.

Noting that the Committee considered any marriage involving a child to be forced, she wished to learn whether the State party envisaged introducing a legal minimum age of consent for marriage.

21. She would be grateful for information on whether training on the prevention of female genital mutilation had been offered to public officials who might have contact with girls, such as those from displaced populations, asylum-seekers and refugees, considered to be at risk.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.*

22. **A representative of Albania** said that measures taken under the Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child and the National Agenda for Child Rights and Protection were financed through budget lines allocated to the various ministries and institutions responsible for implementing those instruments. The implementation of the measures by the relevant ministries and institutions was subject to a compulsory annual review, which also examined how much of the assigned budget had been spent.

23. Under Albanian law, it was compulsory for all secondary legislation and national strategies to be submitted for public consultation with the relevant stakeholders prior to their adoption. Such stakeholders included individuals belonging to groups affected by the legislation and civil society organizations representing them. The laws and strategies were also published on the website of the relevant institutions, which also offered stakeholders the opportunity to make comments and suggestions.

24. The National Council on Children's Rights and Protection, chaired by the Minister of Health and Social Protection, comprised representatives of nine ministries working on children's rights, the Ombudsperson, the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination and five members of civil society organizations. A number of children had observer status, and their comments were taken into account by the Council when developing policies for the protection of children.

25. **A representative of Albania** said that children were appointed to the Council every two years; five children were selected by school boards and five children were selected by civil society. Some of those chosen belonged to marginalized groups, including children from the Roma and Egyptian communities and children with disabilities.

26. The State Agency for Children's Rights and Protection had been established in 2010 and was responsible for coordinating and monitoring the child protection activities undertaken by various institutions at the central and local levels. The Agency employed 241 child protection workers across the country and provided an annual report on its work, including statistical information, to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the National Council on Children's Rights and Protection. It participated in the Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child and was responsible for fulfilling the country's European Union and United Nations reporting obligations.

27. **A representative of Albania** said that the first Minister of State for Youth and Children had been appointed in 2021 and was tasked with developing and implementing policies to protect young people's rights and ensure their participation in social life, in addition to coordinating work on the protection and education of children. For example, the Minister's office had developed a range of extracurricular programmes to improve the skills, health and well-being of children through activities in areas including arts and crafts, the environment, technology and sport, which it planned to extend to a greater number of schools.

28. The Minister's office had also developed the cross-cutting National Youth Strategy, which was financed through the budget lines of all ministries involved in its implementation and had been prepared based on the needs and wishes expressed by young people. Local youth councils had been established in each of the country's municipalities so that young people could put forward proposals to local mayors. Each council consisted of four to six members aged between 15 and 29.

29. **A representative of Albania** said that the Ministry of Health and Social Protection had recently concluded a report assessing the National Agenda for Child Rights and

Protection for the period 2021–2022. The report had found that 75.3 per cent of the 616 million leks comprising the Agenda's budget for that period had been spent, with around 40 per cent being covered by the State budget and 60 per cent being covered by partners, including international organizations and donors. The percentage expenditure of the allocated budget varied for each of the specific objectives under the Agenda's action plan but stood at over 70 per cent for six of the nine objectives.

30. **A representative of Albania** said that funds allocated to education had increased in absolute terms, and significant efforts had been made to increase the education budget to meet students' needs and fulfil the standards set by the European Union. For example, it was projected that funding per student in the pre-university education system would increase from 105,000 leks in 2022 to 118,000 leks in 2026, a rise of approximately 11.7 per cent.

31. The Ministry of Education and Sports participated in several strategies of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, including national plans promoting the integration of Roma children and children with disabilities. In addition, the Ministry had adopted its own policies to ensure the integration into the education system of, and to improve the quality of teaching for, Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities, children from minorities and children from abroad.

32. Children's rights had been integrated into the curriculum from preschool to upper secondary education level. Teachers were trained in how to educate children about their rights, while awareness-raising meetings were held with parents to ensure that they understood the rights and responsibilities of their children when at school. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was accessible in every school, and teachers, students, staff from psychosocial services and members of civil society came together on the relevant international days of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to promote awareness of children's rights.

33. The number of trained teachers and teaching assistants for children with disabilities and children with special educational needs had been increased to a ratio of one teacher to three children, and the number of psychosocial workers had doubled. A plan was in place to construct some 300 dedicated psychosocial services facilities. Children were involved in decision-making through elected school councils, which enabled them to raise issues of concern as well as to gain experience in electoral and democratic processes. There was also a national youth parliament, which participated in decision-making on issues related to and affecting children's lives, in particular through the Ministry of Education and Sports.

34. **A representative of Albania** said that the Ombudsperson's Office included a section responsible for children's rights protection, as provided for by Law No. 18/2017 on the Rights and Protection of the Child. The Ombudsperson was recognized as a national human rights institution under the Paris Principles, and as such could receive complaints of violations of children's rights brought to its attention by children, their parents or guardians or instituted by the Ombudsperson under his or her own initiative. In 2022, 223 cases involving children's rights had been registered with the Ombudsperson, 92 of which had been brought by children, 52 on their behalf and 79 had been initiated *ex officio* as a result of investigations and inspections. On finding a violation of the rights of the child by a public administration body, the Ombudsperson would report the details and make recommendations for action to the parliamentary directorate responsible for monitoring public institutions, which would take the necessary measures to resolve the situation. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, as the mechanism for investigating cases of discrimination in both public administration and private institutions, also had an important role to play in the protection of children's rights. Children could also be heard through Friends of Children, a parliamentary subcommittee, which worked in consultation with civil society organizations.

35. In school settings, children's rights were widely promoted in an age-appropriate and understandable format, including through illustrations featuring well-known characters from children's television and film. The Convention had been made available in English and other languages for displaced persons, in particular for refugees from Afghanistan, to ensure that they were informed of their rights in a language they could understand. Refugee children and children from marginalized groups were given psychosocial support. Significant efforts were made to prevent discrimination against them. Economic assistance was provided for large

families, with specific grants to ensure that children attended compulsory education. Strategic plans were in place for the specific protection of children from marginalized groups, in particular Roma and Egyptian communities. The Government focused on ensuring that children from those communities had access to the education, health care and social care systems and institutions. A new afterschool education and childcare scheme, “Let’s do homework together”, had been set up with the support of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

36. **A representative of Albania** said that an anti-corruption plan was in place, implemented by all government institutions at the central and local levels, including the Ministry of Education and Sports. Anti-corruption measures were mainstreamed throughout the Ministry’s policies. In that regard, a particularly important role was played by the online services and portals for reporting cases of corruption related to child rights protection. A coordinator in the Ministry of Education and Sports was working to address the reports and complaints received and to ensure the application of an integrity plan, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. Other joint projects were in place with the Ministry of Justice to educate children about the fight against corruption and to raise awareness among teachers on how to communicate with children about corruption.

37. **A representative of Albania** said that the State police oversaw respect for and protection of children’s rights and was the key actor in identifying gender-based violence and child abuse. In line with legislation to tackle domestic violence, a network of institutions had been established to protect victims and eliminate domestic violence, working across various ministries and providing support in relation to shelter, health-related issues, education and culture, coordinated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. A comprehensive referral mechanism for cases of domestic violence was in operation in all municipalities, comprising various committees, a disciplinary body and local coordinators. The police worked in accordance with ministerial orders regulating domestic violence risk assessment and the issuance of immediate protection orders. The child protection unit was present in all interventions, and psychological support was provided for affected children where necessary.

38. With regard to police treatment of minorities, law enforcement officers were legally bound to respect the rights of any person in their custody, including minors, and to communicate respectfully. The rights of minority, marginalized and vulnerable groups were protected by law. A set of standard operating procedures had been instituted for the filing, investigation and resolution of complaints of rights violations in police custody. Local police officers were available to meet the leaders of organizations representing marginalized and vulnerable communities, at their request, to discuss matters relating to their security. The State police worked together with the Ministry of Education and Sports to promote security for young people, such as through awareness-raising campaigns on violence and bullying, including cyberbullying. The State police also participated in regional cooperation activities for police and judiciary in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, to share information and best practices. Information campaigns and training were provided on issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and countering discrimination. The Government worked in cooperation with the Council of Europe to train officials, including high-ranking police officers and members of the judiciary, on the prevention of homophobia, transphobia and hate crimes. An online information-sharing meeting had been held with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee on the subject of hate crimes and discrimination.

39. **A representative of Albania** said that the National Strategy on Justice for Children provided for access to justice for children in criminal and administrative contexts. All governance structures had a duty to involve children in the drafting of laws and in decision-making that affected them. The Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Justice had issued a handbook on legal rights for children, which had been presented in a child-friendly, understandable format, to make children aware of their rights in criminal and administrative proceedings. Audiovisual educational materials had also been produced, involving children in short films and stories about being in conflict with the law. Those materials were available in several languages, and with sign language interpretation. The National Strategy included proposals made by young people, who had been asked to contribute ideas on how to prevent criminality among their peers and how to help their friends and peers who might have been in conflict with the law. There were 159 legal practitioners

licensed to practice law for children and 18 centres providing legal aid; in 2022, free primary legal aid had been provided to 223 children and 96 awareness-raising activities had been organized.

40. New legislation on criminal justice for children had fostered a change in approach from punitive to restorative justice, using deprivation of liberty only as a last resort. Jurisprudence was gathered by the police, judiciary and prosecutors, to be used in case law studies as part of training on justice for children. Children's facilities in adult prisons had been closed, and a dedicated children's detention facility had been established for minors who had committed serious crimes and were considered high risk. The facility ran rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, which were tailor-made to meet the needs of the individual detainees. Schooling was continued in line with the national curriculum, to ensure that children who were detained did not have gaps in their education. Any person convicted and detained under the age of 18 could continue to serve his or her sentence in the children's detention facility up to the age of 21. Lastly, regarding blood feuds and crimes of revenge, only one such case had arisen, as a result of which one child was in detention. A specific rehabilitation programme was under way. Awareness-raising on the prevention of vendetta crimes for children was ongoing.

41. **A representative of Albania** said that child protection units were in place in every municipality, which stepped in to provide protection for any child whose life was threatened, including by blood feuds, in accordance with Law No. 18/2017 on the Rights and Protection of the Child.

42. **A representative of Albania** said that the Ministry of Education and Sports had produced school curricula for children in isolation; no cases of children in families that had been placed in isolation as a result of blood feuds had been reported since 2014.

43. **A representative of Albania** said that registration of the nationality of children whose parents had no documents was conducted in line with a decision of the Constitutional Court, which stipulated that nationality was not required for inclusion in the civil registry in Albania.

44. **A representative of Albania** said that the National Strategy for Cyber Security 2020-2025 specifically provided for child online safety measures. The attendant strategic plan set forth a plethora of training and awareness-raising activities around cyber risk for children; a first round of trainings had been conducted for lower secondary school pupils, teachers, social workers and the police. The State Agency for Children's Rights and Protection was cooperating with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on carrying out a pilot project to create safe digital environments for children. In that context, 37 trainings had been delivered to children, teachers, social workers and parents in 2022, covering 12 regions and 750 participants. In addition, two manuals on online child protection had been developed. Three awareness-raising videos and a series of messages had been produced and published online, reaching 6,000 users thus far. The National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security had created an online portal to facilitate reporting of illegal or harmful content. Any such content on websites hosted in Albania was removed. The current revision of the Criminal Code included the development of more robust provisions on cybercrime and child online safety.

45. **A representative of Albania** said that the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020 and the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016–2020 both included actions to prevent early marriage. The Family Code set the legal age of marriage at 18 years, permitting marriage below that age only on decision of a court and in situations where the failure to do so would have negative repercussions for the girl concerned. Aside from those legal safeguards, relevant government institutions and civil society organizations conducted awareness-raising activities among Roma and Egyptian communities, where early marriage was most prevalent, to eliminate gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination. Extracurricular teaching, including on sexual and reproductive health, had been expanded and support was provided for girls to complete compulsory education. As a result of all those efforts, no girl under 18 had married in 2022.

46. There were no known cases of female genital mutilation in Albania. Legal safeguards against such practice were provided, among other things, in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Council of Europe



Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), which took precedence over domestic legislation. Professionals working in the area of gender-based violence were nevertheless well aware of the risk and trained to respond accordingly.

47. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that the delegation might clarify why expenditure on disability payments had increased, while the number of children benefiting from disability allowance had reportedly decreased between 2013 and 2017. It would be helpful to know whether the mapping of social care services carried out in the 61 municipalities in 2021 had led to an increase in the number and types of services offered to children with disabilities. She wished to know whether the State party planned to increase budget allocations and resources for disability-specific services to bridge the gap between the number of children with disabilities requiring support and the capacity of public services to deliver on those needs. She was interested, in particular, to hear more about the allocation of resources for family- and community-based living in order to prevent institutionalization. Additional information was needed on plans to strengthen access to assistive devices and technology and on any progress made in providing reasonable accommodation in schools, playgrounds and public transport.

48. She was deeply concerned about the reported low spending on health, the high levels of out-of-pocket payments and the unequal access to health care for certain categories of children. It would be useful to know whether health insurance for children under 18 was covered by the parents or the State, what measures had been taken to combat corruption in the health sector, and why child preventive care was not reflected in the health budget. She wondered how the State party would address the health workforce shortage, and she would appreciate additional details concerning the status and funding of so-called “health mediators”. The delegation might explain the reasons for low breastfeeding rates and describe remedial measures.

49. She was curious to know whether access to contraceptives and abortion for adolescents continued to be subject to parental consent and, if so, why. Updated information on the progress made in the implementation of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Action Plan 2022–2030 and details of the specific provisions contained in the plan would also be appreciated.

50. She would be grateful to know how the State party planned to improve access to appropriate, timely and integrated outpatient mental health services, including for children who were unable to pay. It would also be interesting to learn more about the profile and role of so-called “psychosocial staff”.

51. It was unclear how the State party’s stated commitment to child protection could be reconciled with the almost non-existent direct spending on child social services. Clarification was needed about the way in which reported increases in cash transfers correlated with the number of beneficiaries. Given the alarmingly high rates of child poverty, she would appreciate detailed information about the State party’s poverty reduction strategies.

52. It was disconcerting to learn that 80 per cent of social services in the State party were provided by donor-funded non-governmental organizations. She wondered why the State party’s social sector was so drastically underfunded and understaffed, and she would appreciate detailed information on the outcome of the Social Protection Strategy 2015–2023. Additional information was also needed on the training provided to child protection workers. She wondered whether they were sufficient in numbers to meet demand and whether the introduction of the National Electronic Register of Social Care Service had improved social service coverage for children and their families.

53. The delegation might also provide details of the measures taken to address the negative impact of air pollution and climate change on children.

54. **The Chair** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the approximately 1,000 Roma children and children of Egyptian origin who had gained access to education as a result of the removal of legal barriers were now enrolled in schools. If so, she wished to learn more about the practical implications of integrating such a large number of previously out-of-school children of different ages. She would also like to know how the

State party dealt with uneven education outcomes and prevented school dropout. Given the reported increase in the number of private schools, she was curious to find out about the reporting State's position vis-à-vis the privatization of education and steps taken to regulate private schools. As regarded inclusive education, it would be useful to know whether the 1,515 special education teachers were distributed evenly throughout the country.

55. She was curious to find out about plans to remove legal barriers to access to basic health, education and social care services for children without legal residence. She was also interested to learn about the procedures in place to deal with unaccompanied or separated asylum-seeking and migrant children, and the availability of legal aid and alternative care options. It would also be helpful if the State party could clarify its position on statelessness.

56. The delegation might explain the reasons for the reported increase in the number of victims and potential victims of child labour and sexual exploitation and describe the measures taken to tackle the problem. She wondered what provisions were in place to support children living in the street after the National Action Plan for the Protection of Children from Economic Exploitation, including children in street situation, 2019–2021, had expired. She wished to know how many children were currently living on the street and whether child professionals were trained to support children in such situations.

57. Additional information was needed on measures taken to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of children online, in prostitution and in the context of travel and tourism. It would also be helpful to learn more about the services provided by the Lilium centre and the two other one-stop emergency response centres for child victims of sexual abuse. She wondered how child victims were informed about their right to access psychosocial and recovery services and what measures were being taken to tackle the low rate of prosecutions compared with the number of potential victims of trafficking.

58. She wished to know what mechanisms were in place to ensure independent oversight of the situation of children in detention, and why only 79 per cent of the budget allocated to building a child-friendly justice system in 2016–2020 had been implemented. It would be helpful to obtain additional information on the procedures in place for gathering evidence and taking testimony in proceedings involving child victims or witnesses of sexual abuse.

59. With regard to the Inter-institutional Action Plan on the Reception and Treatment of Albanian Citizens Returned from the Syria and Iraq Conflict, the Committee was particularly interested in the treatment afforded to returning children and about the measures taken to repatriate the remaining children.

60. Additional details of the measures taken to implement the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict would be appreciated.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*