



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
17 September 2024

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child Ninety-seventh session

Summary record of the 2825th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 30 August 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Skelton

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Mexico

* No summary record was issued for the 2824th meeting.

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 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Mexico ([CRC/C/MEX/6-7](#); [CRC/C/MEX/Q/6-7](#); [CRC/C/MEX/RQ/6-7](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mexico joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Mexico**, introducing her country's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports ([CRC/C/MEX/6-7](#)), said that Mexico had been working to develop a social policy that promoted the welfare of its 132 million people, including 38 million children and adolescents. The country had transitioned from a child welfare paradigm to a rights-based approach that included reparations for human rights violations.
3. The Committee's recommendations would be implemented by the Administration of the incoming President, Claudia Sheinbaum, would be the country's first woman President. Significant developments during the reporting period had included the creation of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents and the Federal Office for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.
4. **A representative of Mexico** said that the promotion and protection of the human rights of children and adolescents, which formed part of the third priority objective of the National Human Rights Programme 2020–2024, was a central pillar of Mexican foreign policy and a fundamental, cross-cutting aspect of its public policies at the national level. Under the incumbent Administration, the country's human rights policy had focused on combating poverty and the structural causes of inequality and violence. Thanks to a number of welfare programmes and increased investment, the percentage of children in multidimensional poverty had decreased from 50.3 per cent in 2018 to 45.8 per cent in 2022.
5. In the spheres of education and health, the National Strategy on Inclusive Education had spurred the creation of a more flexible, inclusive national education system for all children, while State spending on the national health system had reached a record high. The programme Bienestar of the Mexican Social Security Institute had increased its free coverage fourfold and was on track to reach 54.5 million people by the end of 2024. New opportunities had been created for children, adolescents, civil society representatives and members of local governments to express their opinion and to contribute to public policy decisions and the preparation of the country's periodic report. It was an honour to have Mexican children and adolescents in attendance at the present meeting.
6. The Government's pension and welfare programmes were focused on guaranteeing the social rights of historically marginalized groups, including children and adolescents, and on reducing poverty by providing direct economic support. Investment in such programmes had increased significantly in recent years. Examples included a support programme for children and the children of working mothers and a pension programme to assist persons with disabilities.
7. There were still many pressing issues. Current priorities included supporting children and adolescents in situations of human mobility, combating violence against children and adolescents and helping children deprived of a family environment or in other vulnerable situations.
8. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that he would like to know what barriers were preventing the full implementation of the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents and how the State party intended to address the gap between the law and practice. He wondered whether the State party intended to ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.
9. He would be interested to know whether the decision to dismantle the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents would be overturned by the new Administration and how the State party intended to address the issues facing both that System and the National Programme for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in terms of their lack of a budget and their limited territorial development. He would also like to learn what measures would be taken to reverse the downward trend in public investment in children

and adolescents, especially for early childhood development, to meet recommended levels of investment and to collect relevant data, appropriately disaggregated, on a sufficiently regular basis.

10. He would welcome information on the steps that would be taken to ensure that an approach based on children's rights was taken to planned judicial reforms. He would also be curious to know how the State party intended to address structural discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity and migration status.

11. He wished to understand how the State party intended to ensure that all decisions affecting children – for example, regarding institutionalization – were taken in the best interests of the child and that children were given sufficient freedom to express their views on all matters affecting them. He would be grateful for further information on the State party's plans to address violence, including homicide, femicide and enforced disappearance, and on the role played by the Ombudsperson's Office in the promotion and protection of children's rights. In addition, he would welcome information on any reports of abuse or the inhuman treatment of children with disabilities living in institutions.

12. **Ms. Todorova** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether the bill on a general act to harmonize civil registers had been made law and, if so, how it would improve birth registration for children and ensure that adopted children or children conceived through assisted reproductive technologies had access to information about their biological origin. She would also be interested to hear what precautionary measures were in place to protect child human rights defenders, including child environmental human rights defenders, and how the State party intended to expand Internet coverage to ensure children's right of access to information.

13. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Country Task Force) said that he wished to know whether corporal punishment was banned in the family setting countrywide and how the State party planned to ensure that parents did not resort to violence to discipline their children. He wondered what steps had been taken to address the patriarchal, social and gender norms that legitimized child marriage and other early unions. It would also be useful to know what mechanisms were in place to identify child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensure that they had access to justice. In addition he wondered what was done to ensure that such victims could exercise their right to be heard and what specialized support services were available to them.

14. He wished to know whether there was a one-stop centre where victims of sexual violence could receive legal assistance, counselling services, medical care and other necessary forms of support. He would appreciate information on any indicators or mechanisms used to measure progress resulting from the reform of the Federal Criminal Code undertaken in 2021. As more than 22,000 children were living in institutions, it would be useful to hear about any steps being taken to deinstitutionalize those children and address the root causes, such as poverty, of their separation from their families.

15. He wondered what was being done to ensure that all social assistance centres that accommodated children were properly registered and compliant with the regulations applicable to them. He would like to know whether an independent mechanism inspected social assistance centres and whether children living in them had access to a means of submitting complaints. It would be useful to learn, too, whether adoption functioned effectively as a protective measure and whether adequate steps were taken to ensure that families wishing to adopt a child were fit to do so. He would appreciate information on any measures being taken to ensure that all international adoptions were lawful and that adopted children were able to obtain information on their birth parents.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

16. **A representative of Mexico** said that, in the 10 years since the establishment of the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, 32 state-level and over 1,800 local-level comprehensive protection systems had been established. Furthermore, nine commissions and two working groups had been set up that made it possible to coordinate public policies adopted at the three levels of government. All 31 States and Mexico City had adopted laws on the rights of children and adolescents that

were in line with national law. The Commission of Executive Secretariats for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents of the National and State Systems had established a priority programme of work for the period 2022–2024 to address the main problems facing children in the country, which varied from place to place.

17. The General Act on Enforced Disappearance of Persons, Disappearance Perpetrated by Individuals and the National Missing Persons System had been adopted to combat enforced disappearance, which had been established as an offence in the laws of 19 of the country's 32 first-level administrative divisions. Thirty-two state-level search commissions had been established, and a standardized search protocol had been adopted that provided for a differentiated approach to searches for members of certain vulnerable groups.

18. In 2021, officials from the National Missing Persons System had held two meetings with representatives of the 32 state search commissions, the state prosecution services and other stakeholders. In 2021, the Additional Protocol for the Search for Children and Adolescents had been adopted. In 2023, legislative measures had been taken to ensure cooperation between media outlets and the federal and state-level authorities in broadcasting information on missing persons following the issuance of an Amber Alert. In 2024, over 800 Amber Alerts had been issued.

19. The Government had established a federal mechanism to protect human rights defenders and journalists and was working with state representatives to set up similar mechanisms at the state and local levels. The number of persons protected by the federal mechanism, as well as its budget and the number of staff members it employed, had increased significantly since the start of the current Administration.

20. **A representative of Mexico** said that the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents would be incorporated into the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family, which coordinated a series of measures and policies established to protect vulnerable groups, including children. A total of 32 offices for the protection of children and adolescents had been established at the state level, while over 1,000 such offices had been set up at the municipal level. In 2022 and 2024, the Government, in collaboration with over 100 State agencies and international organizations, had carried out consultations with large numbers of children, using questions that children had formulated. A diverse group of children had participated in the consultations, including children who spoke an Indigenous language, children with disabilities and Mexican children who lived abroad.

21. The Federal Electricity Commission was carrying out a large-scale project to increase access to the Internet in every part of the country. In the consultation held in 2024, one of the questions that children had been asked was whether they had access to the Internet. Their responses would enable the Government to map the areas where Internet access was lacking. According to the results of the 2024 consultation, a significant proportion of children were allowed to access the Internet without any parental controls. In response, efforts to strengthen children's protection against online risks were being made.

22. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family organized a network that encouraged children to participate in the life of their municipalities. Every Friday, the System organized online forums that addressed a number of issues relevant to children and adolescents, such as the prevention of violence, early pregnancy, child labour, discrimination and sexual abuse. Senior members of the Government and the armed forces participated in the forums to provide children with information necessary for their protection.

23. A public security bureau had been established to promote peace in Mexico. Every weekday, the country's President held a conference to discuss the security situation. Furthermore, commissions to promote peacebuilding met every day to discuss means of preventing violence and holding perpetrators accountable. The National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family held capacity-building sessions on the prevention of violence for adults, children and first responders who worked with children.

24. Every year, the Government organized a large number of activities to raise children's, parents' and teachers' awareness of the Convention, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents and the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of

Children and Adolescents, among other subjects. Courses on positive parenting were held for parents and caregivers.

25. The Government worked directly with the municipalities with the highest levels of homicide, femicide and enforced disappearance with a view to protecting persons at risk. In that connection, public officials visited homes to identify persons at risk of violence and to provide them with any assistance that they might require. Corporal punishment was prohibited under the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents. In order to promote compliance with the Act, steps were taken to raise awareness of the prohibition of corporal punishment and to help parents adopt a different approach to parenting. Measures were also taken to eradicate sexist attitudes and promote positive models of masculinity. Protocols on preventing and dealing with violence in schools had been established, and multidisciplinary teams had been set up to respond to violent incidents.

26. The offices for the protection of children and adolescents provided support around the clock to children whose rights had been violated. Children could call specialist hotlines staffed by trained personnel to report any violations of their rights. The Government organized forums and programmes with a view to eliminating all forms of discrimination against children.

27. **A representative of Mexico** said that the Federal Public Defender Service employed more than 800 public defenders, 207 of whom specialized in cases involving children and adolescents. Between 2021 and 2024, specialist defenders had assessed 44 cases involving the children of persons deprived of their liberty, advised and represented victims of sexual abuse in 191 cases and worked on over 1,000 cases in which persons had been institutionalized in shelters, alternative care institutions, hospitals or psychiatric facilities. Public defenders had also participated in around 20,000 *amparo* proceedings to ensure that children's rights and interests were respected, independently of those of their parents or guardians.

28. A total of 106 judges attached to trial and appeal courts specialized in cases involving children and adolescents, and a further 72 judges specializing in that area were expected to take up their posts shortly. Once they had done so, around 10 per cent of the country's 1,700 judges would be working in the area of juvenile law. The Supreme Court had developed training materials on children's access to justice that were an essential aid for federal and local judges, prosecution departments, lawyers representing children and associations for victims. The two most important documents produced by the Supreme Court were the protocol for a child- and adolescent-centred approach to justice and a handbook on criminal justice for adolescents. A number of other texts also contained chapters on the rights of the child.

29. The Charter of Children's and Adolescents' Rights had been drafted by the Federal Public Defender Service in child-friendly language. The Charter addressed the rights of children and adolescents as well as the work of the Service. The Human Rights Directorate of the Council of the Federal Judiciary had developed a website for justice officials that contained information on a number of treaties, including the Convention, as well as links to the Committee's concluding observations and other documents of interest.

30. Under a project to promote child-centred justice, child-friendly materials on the human rights standards applied by the courts would be produced and disseminated in schools. The Federal Training School for Judges organized specialized training courses on basic aspects of juvenile criminal justice and the constitutional system and the rights of children and adolescents. Judges participating in those courses became familiar with all the relevant international human rights instruments ratified by Mexico.

31. The Federal Public Defender Service conducted numerous awareness-raising activities on children's rights and had established a citizens' working group on children's rights to improve the service provided to children by the justice system. The working group had met four times in 2022 and 2023. The protocol on the special representation of children and adolescents in matters within the scope of the Federal Public Defender Service had been updated to ensure that lawyers who worked with children adhered to the same standards throughout the country.

32. The Council of the Federal Judiciary had developed guidance on juvenile justice hearings as part of a broader effort by the federal judiciary to increase its capacity. The Council and the Supreme Court were working on a joint project to compile and disseminate information on procedural accommodations and best practices adopted by courts at the federal level, so that justice officials throughout the country were aware of problems in other jurisdictions and how they had been resolved.

33. Another ambitious initiative was the development of a comprehensive policy on person-centred and child-friendly justice. In 2023, consultations had been organized with civil society organizations and groups working with children and adolescents to determine their expectations in the field of justice. In October 2023, input from that dialogue had been presented at a national congress on person-centred justice. In April 2024, consultations had been held with children themselves. A diagnostic study had been carried out and recommendations for child-friendly justice had been published. That work had fed into the formulation of the draft policy, which would soon be submitted to the Council for adoption.

34. In terms of internal measures, the Council had developed, in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund, a virtual course on positive parenting for judicial personnel. The federal judiciary had introduced equal parental leave in cases of childbirth, adoption and surrogate motherhood, it allowed parents to telecommute in order to balance work and childcare responsibilities and it promoted breastfeeding.

35. **A representative of Mexico** said that individuals could turn to the National Human Rights Commission to assert their rights. In addition, the Executive Commission for Victim Support had entered 2,436 child victims of human rights violations – including trafficking, cruel punishment, sexual abuse and gender-based violence – in the National Register of Victims. Since 2021, the Commission had provided assistance, support and reparation to more than 17,000 child victims.

36. The Government had made significant efforts to promote birth registration and had sponsored United Nations resolutions on the subject. The percentage of the population whose births had been registered had risen from 99.2 per cent in 2015 to 99.6 per cent in 2020; however, about 500,000 individuals did not have a birth certificate. Only about half of births were registered in the first 60 days, but 93.2 per cent were registered by the time the child turned 5 years old. The Government continued to work towards universal birth registration, including by creating a single registration system for the whole country. In March 2023, following a consultation process, the Chamber of Deputies had adopted the draft general law to harmonize and standardize civil registers, which was now before the Senate. Registration brigades had been established in 625 municipalities with low levels of birth registration, many of which were home to Indigenous communities. In addition, to improve data collection, the Government had established the National Catalogue of Indicators, which included 28 indicators related to children and adolescents, covering issues such as fertility, intrafamily dynamics, health, nutrition and education.

37. New legislation had been introduced to criminalize conduct comparable to marriage involving persons under the age of 18. In December 2023, the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents had been amended to require federal and state legislatures to make 18 the minimum age for marriage and adopt comprehensive measures to prevent children and adolescents from entering into de facto unions. In October 2023, the Federal Criminal Code had been amended so that any sexual act involving a minor, even with the minor's consent, would be punished as equivalent to rape. The Code had also been amended to make it a criminal offence to force a minor to live with another person in a manner comparable to marriage. A public policy had been developed that included 76 projects for the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence; one key element of the policy was the prevention of child, early and forced marriage in rural communities, communities of persons of African descent and Indigenous communities.

38. **A representative of Mexico** said that the current Administration had reformed social policy, including in the area of early childhood. In 2016, there had been only 9,000 of the publicly supported childcare centres known as *estancias infantiles*. Unfortunately, there had been cases of corruption involving those centres and incidents in which children had died owing to poor supervision. As a result, the State had introduced specialized childcare models

overseen by the National Council on Services for the Support, Care and Comprehensive Development of Children and the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family. There were currently 18,367 centres providing care for some 913,000 children; personnel were trained and certified to provide a range of services.

39. Under the current Government, the school breakfasts programme had expanded considerably; it currently had more than 6 million beneficiaries. One of the goals of the programme was to prevent children and adolescents from dropping out of school, particularly in remote communities. Increasingly, children were provided with nutritious, hot meals instead of the cold meals provided in the past. The federal Government was coordinating with the state and municipal authorities with a view to making the programme's coverage universal.

40. Between 2019 and June 2024, the National System for the Comprehensive Development of the Family had issued 67,600 credentials to children and adolescents with disabilities. The National System provided rehabilitation services for children and adults and had 21 children's rehabilitation centres under its direct management. There were 2,872 rehabilitation units run by the authorities. The Government was working to improve the availability of rehabilitation services in places that did not have them, including through mobile units that travelled to remote communities. Rehabilitation services were provided to more than 2 million children and adolescents.

41. The Government recognized the importance of mental health; however, not all the States and municipalities had sufficient qualified staff to provide psychiatric care. To address the deficit, the Government was training mental health professionals in the framework of the mental health gap action programme of the World Health Organization.

42. **A representative of Mexico** said that some legal proceedings, such as the remedy of *amparo*, had become increasingly complex over time. It had therefore been necessary to change them so that they were accessible to persons seeking the protection of the courts. For example, in communications with children who were parties to legal proceedings, courts used language appropriate to their development, age and circumstances. A protocol had been drawn up for the issuance of judgments in easy-to-read formats. Adjustments had also been made in evidentiary matters; judges had been empowered to collect evidence *ex officio* in all cases involving children and adolescents. Statements were taken by expert professionals, and non-verbal support materials, such as drawings, could be used.

43. Since the review of the previous periodic report, the Government had strengthened the direct participation of children in legal proceedings, recognizing that such participation should be voluntary and in accordance with their maturity, not necessarily their age. Interviews, which should be confidential, should take place in a safe environment, and a comprehensive record should be made so that they did not need to be repeated. The authorities recognized the progressive autonomy of children and adolescents and were of the view that decisions on the degree of autonomy a child or adolescent was to enjoy should be made on a case-by-case basis. In disputes between, for example, parents or grandparents, children should be provided with specialized representation or even assigned a temporary guardian for the duration of proceedings. Victims of sexual violence must be provided with specialized legal advice.

44. Important changes had been made in relation to the principle of the best interests of the child. The institution *patria potestas* had been abolished pursuant to a judgment in which the Supreme Court had found that parental responsibility was a social function that must be performed in accordance with the Convention, not a source of rights or prerogatives. The use of violence as a disciplinary measure had been prohibited pursuant to the ruling on direct *amparo* appeal No. 338/2013. Furthermore, the Supreme Court had prohibited child marriage pursuant to the application for constitutional review No. 22 of 2016, which concerned an attempt by the State of Aguascalientes to establish exceptions to the prohibition of child marriage.

45. The Supreme Court had issued two significant judgments on the right of children to information about their biological origin. In its rulings on direct *amparo* appeals No. 448 and No. 1446, both of 2016, it had established that the right to biological identity was linked to the development of the personality and right to health.

46. In recent years, the federal courts had handed down multiple convictions in cases of child abuse, child labour and child trafficking. Between 2018 and 2024, there had been 18 federal convictions for child pornography, although most cases of child pornography were addressed by local jurisdictions.

47. The federal judiciary was participating in the ongoing judicial reform, the outcome of which was uncertain. Concerns had been raised about the potential for the mass dismissal of judges and the replacement of the members of the Council of the Federal Judiciary. Past judicial reforms had resulted in the increased independence of the judiciary and the stronger protection of human rights.

48. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that, despite the progress made in the search for missing persons, he was concerned that search processes remained too bureaucratic and slow and that coordination and communication between different levels of government was inadequate. He wished to know what was being done to train officials so that they acted promptly and that search processes were informed by a rights-based approach.

49. He would be grateful for further information regarding the protocol for the administration of justice in cases involving children and adolescents, especially with regard to children's participation. As it seemed that the updated protocol required courts to obtain an expert opinion on whether children were fit to give testimony, he wondered whether that requirement restricted children's access to justice.

50. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck**, noting that the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents contained definitions of corporal punishment and humiliating punishment, said that the prohibition of corporal punishment seemed to be somewhat ambiguous. He would like to know how the State party ensured that parents clearly understood the law and knew that they must not use any form of violence.

51. He would appreciate further information on the safe use of the Internet and, specifically, on what children learned at school on the subject. It would be interesting to know whether lawyers received training in child-friendly justice, as they were often the first people in the judicial system to interact with children. If so, was the training compulsory, and what was its content? Could any lawyer take a case involving a child, or were lawyers required to have special training?

52. **Ms. Correa** said that one of the main obstacles to progress in Mexico was the prevalence of organized crime, which had a deleterious effect on the social fabric. She would therefore be interested to know whether the State party planned to develop a strategy for the protection of children's rights that was coordinated and integrated with the public security system and public policy on the fight against organized crime. It would be useful to know whether security policies incorporated a child rights approach. In the light of alarming figures that suggested a recent spate of offences against children, including femicides, abductions and trafficking, she wished to know whether the State party planned to formulate a public policy for the prevention of such crimes and how such a policy might repair the damage that had already been done to the country's social fabric.

53. She welcomed the adoption by Mexico City lawmakers of an amendment abolishing the statute of limitations for sexual offences committed against minors. She wondered whether lawmakers in the States had taken similar steps or might do so in the future. In respect of sexual offences, it would be interesting to know whether the law provided for plea bargains.

54. **Ms. Aho** said that, while she was grateful to the delegation for the up-to-date figures on birth registration, she wished to know what proportion of registered children had birth certificates. She would also be interested to know what steps the Government had taken to raise public awareness of the importance of birth registration and of obtaining birth certificates, particularly in the municipalities that had been identified as having low rates of registration.

55. **Ms. Beloff** said that she would appreciate clarification regarding the State party's application of the principle of progressive autonomy and why the principle was applied on a case-by-case basis, rather than generally.

56. **Ms. Todorova** said that she would be interested to know, in view of the recent increase in federal spending on health, what would be done to improve access to health care and the quality of health services for children, in particular for Indigenous children and adolescents, 1 million of whom reportedly lacked access to health care. She wished to know how the new health-care model would fill the gap that had been left by the abolition of the Seguro Popular national health insurance programme. The delegation might indicate what had been done to ensure that those most in need were aware of the changes that had taken place.

57. She welcomed the decrease in the teenage pregnancy rate. In that regard, she would be interested to know whether adolescents enjoyed universal access to health information, including sexual and reproductive health information and services, or whether such access was restricted in some parts of the country. She would like to know whether sexual and reproductive health education was offered in all mainstream schools. She wondered whether abortion had been decriminalized throughout the country, in accordance with the Supreme Court judgment of 2023, and whether the State party might go further by decriminalizing abortion on any grounds and ensuring free, safe and legal access to abortion for all women. Information might be provided on policies to combat malnutrition and obesity and on any difficulties facing the authorities in that regard.

58. As child poverty remained a major concern, affecting Indigenous children in particular, she would be interested to know more about the State party's efforts to reach the neediest groups – for example, by providing cash transfers and raising awareness of the support available to families. She was curious to know whether there had been any public debate regarding the possible introduction of a universal social protection scheme.

59. She would also be interested to know what the State party was doing to reduce its carbon emissions and to meet its environmental and climate commitments with a view to realizing children's right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The delegation might describe measures, strategies and mechanisms adopted at the federal and state levels to incorporate a child rights perspective into disaster risk reduction and climate change policies, plans, budgets and programmes.

60. Lastly, in the light of reports that Maya territories had been affected by agribusiness mega-projects and the resulting pollution, she asked what measures had been taken to protect the rights of Indigenous children, whose culture and way of life were linked to their ancestral territories. She wondered whether such projects were subject to child rights impact assessments and whether State or private-sector operators were legally bound to obtain the free and informed consent of Indigenous peoples, including children, before carrying out activities on their lands.

61. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he would like to know why immunization rates in the State party were not higher and why some essential vaccines were not included in the immunization schedule.

62. **Ms. Marshall-Harris** (Country Task Force) said that she was concerned about the decline in the level of investment in education during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the failure of investment in early childhood education to bear fruit, as deficiencies in literacy and numeracy persisted at the primary level, and marginalized communities' lack of access to early childhood education. In that context, she would be grateful for up-to-date information regarding the education budget.

63. She was also concerned about rising dropout rates among students aged 15 and older, as poor children were forced to enter the labour market in order to feed their families. She wished to know how the authorities were addressing the drivers of students' decisions to drop out of school, which reportedly included the threat of violence in the community and within schools and the recruitment of children into criminal gangs. Information might be provided on efforts to recruit more teachers and to provide schools with the educational materials and infrastructure that they needed to function properly.

64. Mexico was not the only country in the region to experience pushback on sexual and reproductive health education. In that regard, she wondered whether the State party had considered providing culturally appropriate and age-appropriate sexual and reproductive

health education. The delegation might comment on reports that, following the cancellation of the Full-time Schools Programme, its replacement, the “School Belongs to Us” programme, was poorly monitored and implemented and was failing to reach vulnerable children. The lack of access to quality education perpetuated intergenerational poverty among vulnerable groups.

65. The scale of the immigration challenge facing the State party, through which many groups transited on their way to the United States of America, was clear. As Mexico had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, she said that she would like to know whether Mexican border officers were trained in the principle of the best interests of the child. Information might also be provided on measures to ensure non-refoulement, to avoid the detention of migrant children and their separation from their families, and to promote family reunification. She was curious to know how the social services coped with the large number of migrant children who passed through the country. She wondered what was being done to improve the oversight of migrant holding centres, where abuses had allegedly occurred. She would also appreciate further information regarding the 2023 fire at a detention centre in Ciudad Juárez, in which some 40 migrants and asylum-seekers had died. In particular, she wished to know how many children had died, what the current status of the investigation was and whether the victims had received reparations.

66. Almost 4 million children were working in Mexico, including some who were engaged in hazardous labour and many – particularly girls – who worked as domestic servants. She wished to know what was done to enforce the labour laws and thus to prevent child labour and whether businesses were sensitized to the fact that they should not be hiring children.

67. Lastly, in view of the large number of vulnerable children who were in street situations owing to factors such as extreme poverty and recruitment by armed gangs, it would be useful to know whether the Government had analysed the situation in order to address its root causes or whether it merely treated children in such situations as criminals to be taken off the streets and placed in institutions. The delegation might explain, too, whether the social services were trained to deal with street children, including through the identification and referral of children who had been recruited or trafficked by armed groups.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.