



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
26 May 2017

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child Seventy-fifth session

Summary record of the 2201st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 May 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Winter

Contents

Consideration of reports of States parties (*continued*)

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Lebanon

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.

GE.17-08106 (E) 240517 260517



* 1 7 0 8 1 0 6 *

Please recycle The recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties *(continued)*

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Lebanon (CRC/C/LBN/4-5; CRC/C/LBN/Q/4-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Lebanon took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Bou Assi** (Lebanon), introducing the Lebanese report (CRC/C/LBN/4-5), said that Lebanon was committed to improving the lives of all children in the country. Although much had already been accomplished, much still remained to be done, especially given the unsettled situation in the Middle East.
3. The Ministry of Social Affairs Higher Council for Childhood was working with a range of bodies and organizations to safeguard children's right to life, to a safe family environment, to development and to favourable living conditions. Appropriate health services, educational opportunities, capacity-building and professional training were all crucial to enabling the effective participation of children in public decision-making and their protection from violence and exploitation. The Government's commitment to respecting international human rights conventions had been made clear when in 2016 Parliament had passed an act establishing an independent national human rights commission and a committee on the prevention of torture.
4. The crisis in Syria had had profound repercussions for Lebanon. The massive influx of refugees had meant that in 2015-2016, the Lebanese education system had had to absorb some 187,000 Syrian children. As a result, in 2017, 314 State schools had been selected to provide education to migrant children outside regular class hours. That was apart from the State schools which had already incorporated large numbers of migrant children during regular hours. Roughly 50,000 school-age Syrian children were being educated in both free and paying private schools; that meant that 50 per cent of all school-age children in Lebanon were Syrian.
5. Public schools offered free education from the first to the ninth year of primary school. The right to education in State schools included the right to free educational material, such as books. Through its strategy for the education of all children, which had been updated in 2016, the Ministry of Education was working with several United Nations organizations and donor countries to regulate informal education so as to ensure children's later incorporation into the formal education system. To that end, specific programmes were being tailored to focus on the early years of education.
6. The Ministry of Health was piloting a universal health coverage programme, which would extend to all individuals living at or below the poverty line, thereby meeting the needs of vulnerable families and minors. Thanks to focused efforts to ensure comprehensive coverage for both Lebanese and non-Lebanese children, all children had access to the national network of primary health-care centres, which fell under the aegis of the Ministry of Health. In addition, according to 2016 figures, more than 90 per cent of children on Lebanese soil were covered by a comprehensive national vaccination programme rolled out by the Ministry at nurseries, schools and primary health-care centres. Lastly, as of 2018, the Government would be defraying treatment costs for mental health patients at eight new psychosocial health-care centres.
7. To eliminate child labour, the Ministry of Labour had established an extensive administrative and institutional framework which involved local and international civil society organizations. A programme to eradicate the worst forms of the problem had been created by the National Committee to Combat Child Labour and would remain in effect until 2020. A monitoring mechanism had been established and specific measures were taken to address the issue of Syrian children subjected to child labour in Lebanon.
8. The country had fully met its responsibilities towards Syrian refugees but as a result of the Syrian crisis, security and social order had been destabilized and infrastructure and the economy were facing overwhelming challenges. Lebanon had never shirked its international obligations and was fully committed to upholding humanitarian values. It

would continue to work to improve the lives of all the children in its territory, but to do that it needed the assistance of the international community. His delegation was looking forward to its discussion with the Committee, which it hoped would pave the way towards securing a prosperous future for the children within its borders and beyond.

9. **Mr. Kotrane** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that the Committee was aware of the economic, social, and security challenges faced by Lebanon as a result of the war in Syria. However, several advances had been made since the previous State party report, including the accession to a number of human rights conventions and the enactment of legislation in areas such as education and protection from domestic violence.

10. The Committee was, nevertheless, concerned about Act No. 286 of 2014, which had introduced a legislative amendment allowing parents to discipline their children by means of non-violent actions, provided that they left no lasting physical or psychological scars. Ms. Aldoseri would go into further detail on the matter, but the idea would be to bring domestic legislation into line with the relevant international instruments and, in particular, specific provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It would be interesting to hear more about possible steps towards establishing an overarching law on the protection of children.

11. The Committee commended the State party for its National Human Rights Plan and, more particularly, for its institutional efforts and policies to protect children from negligence and violence. It would be helpful to know whether the strategic objectives of sustainable development could be incorporated into the existing framework.

12. Within the independent National Commission on Human Rights, which had been working on a system of independent oversight, there was an autonomous unit, staffed by qualified personnel, which was empowered to receive complaints concerning violations of children's rights. Details on the support provided to children thus far would be appreciated. Unfortunately, the Commission had been hampered by the blocking of a funding envelope; it would be useful to know what measures could be taken to release the funds in question and provide health and education assistance to children.

13. In the area of data collection, an exhaustive study had been conducted in 2009. Information on cases of abuse and exploitation of children had been gathered with a view to subsequent disaggregation so that the resulting database could be used by various ministries in order to design follow-up programmes.

14. It would be helpful to learn more about the reforms undertaken and programmes developed to ensure that all school and university curricula were in line with the relevant international instruments, particularly those concerning children.

15. Although the State party was to be commended for upholding many non-discrimination measures without reservations, those measures were limited to the areas of family relations and civil status. The Committee stressed the importance of preventing discrimination against children born out of wedlock; that was an issue which also affected the children of migrants, who were often marginalized because of their origin. It was incumbent upon the State party to work with civil society organizations and communities of all faiths in order to establish a uniform system of nationality applicable to everyone, regardless of parental background.

16. Many steps had been taken to give children a voice. However, questions remained as to the efficient and effective implementation of legislation regarding the views of children on matters which affected them. It was essential that children be heard in judicial proceedings which involved them and in that connection it would be useful to know whether children were able to participate in all administrative and legal processes. A "children's parliament" had been established; clarification on how it could voice its concerns would be appreciated.

17. **Ms. Aldoseri** (Country Task Force), while acknowledging the particular challenges and obstacles faced by the State party as a result of the ongoing crisis in the neighbouring Syrian Arab Republic, said that the full protection of the rights of the child in Lebanon was still achievable. She was concerned at the absence of a clear and uniform definition of the child, as indicated in paragraph 45 of the State party's report (CRC/C/LBN/4-5), and at the

fact that the marriageable age varied depending on which of the various personal status laws was applicable. Moreover, there were concerns that some early marriages were driven by economic motivations that essentially led to the sexual exploitation of the child. With that in mind, she wished to know what specific steps were being taken or were envisaged to introduce a comprehensive law to protect children under article 1 of the Convention.

18. Corporal punishment remained an accepted form of discipline in Lebanese society, and was still used in schools, despite a Ministry of Education memorandum banning verbal abuse and corporal punishment by teachers. She recalled that in its previous concluding observations (CRC/C/LBN/CO/3) the Committee had urged the State party to outlaw the use of corporal punishment in the home, which was permitted under article 1 of the Penal Code provided that no lasting damage to the child's physical or mental well-being was caused. She asked what steps had been taken to amend or introduce new legislation in that regard; whether a comprehensive law banning corporal punishment, in homes and in schools, had been adopted and, if so, whether all stakeholders had been fully apprised of the changes; and whether any awareness-raising on the prohibition of, and alternatives to, corporal punishment had been conducted.

19. She would be interested to hear about the results of the 2014 survey on sexual violence against children and the measures taken subsequent to a 2008 survey, which had revealed that a large proportion of children in Lebanon had been subjected to sexual harassment. She wished to know what procedures were in place to enable children to report abuse, including children living in shelters, and how such complaints were handled. It would also be useful to receive data disaggregated by the types of abuse, and information on the steps taken to punish the perpetrators, as well as the number of convictions and the sentences imposed. Lastly, article 522 of the Penal Code, which allowed a perpetrator of rape to avoid prosecution by marrying the victim, had yet to be repealed, despite erroneous media reports to the contrary. What concrete measures were being taken to expedite abolition of that article?

20. **Mr. Nelson** (Country Task Force), while commending the increased birth registration rate for Lebanese children, said that he wished to know what measures were being taken to remedy the low registration rates affecting refugee children of Palestinian or Syrian origin and children from the Dom and Bedouin communities. In that connection, he asked whether birth certificates could be withheld from parents by hospitals for failure to pay their hospital bills or produce the necessary identity documents and, if so, what steps had been taken or were envisaged to prevent that practice from occurring. Similarly, under the country's personal status laws, the birth registration of a child who had reached 12 months of age could only be effected through a judicial procedure that could, according to reports, be protracted and expensive. He wondered whether there were plans to amend the legislation so as to streamline that process or introduce a new procedure.

21. He would be interested to know what efforts were made to ensure that members of families of refugees could remain together and whether priority was given to families with children in decision-making on their legal status. In addition, reports indicated that refugee children and their families, as well as foreign spouses of Lebanese women and their children, experienced difficulties in obtaining residence permits, and he wondered what action was being taken in that regard.

22. He wished to know what progress had been made towards amending Legislative Decision No. 15 of 1925 on Lebanese Nationality so as to afford Lebanese women the same right as Lebanese men to transmit their nationality to their children. In addition, reports suggested that the provision under article 1 of that law, in which Lebanese nationality was automatically granted to children born in Lebanon to parents unknown or parents of unknown nationality, was not being implemented. If that was the case, he would be interested to know the reasons why and whether steps were being taken to enforce the law. In that connection, he noted that special identity cards were issued to children of Palestinian fathers, who were not recognized as refugees, and wondered whether those cards bestowed a status akin to formal registration.

23. He noted that freedom of belief, conscience and religion was enshrined in the Constitution and firmly protected by the courts. In that regard, he would be interested to

know whether, in practice, refugee families and their children could freely express those rights in refugee camps. In particular, he wished to know whether they enjoyed freedom of peaceful assembly and whether any complaints mechanisms were in place to enable them to denounce any breaches of those rights. Lastly, he asked whether information was freely available, in particular to refugee children and their families, in their native languages. Were educational materials and books, for example, available in the languages spoken by refugee children?

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

24. **Ms. Karam** (Lebanon) said that a 2016 decision of the Ministry of Social Affairs had paved the way to establishing the Children's Parliament as a legal entity. To that end, a task force working in conjunction with Save the Children and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), among others, was working to, inter alia, create the necessary statutes and structure, election processes and standard operating procedures, as well as to define the types of projects in which the Parliament would be involved, determine how children would participate and provide the relevant training to all parties concerned. In parallel, a project, primarily aimed at 12 to 16-year-olds, had been initiated in 2013, and extended to 2019, with a view to fostering youth empowerment and participation in democratic processes. The activities under that project included providing training on children's rights, citizenship and preparing for elections. The children elected as part of that project would be allocated small amounts of funding to implement development programmes in their regions, an initiative that it was hoped would motivate children to continue to participate in regional activities once the project had come to an end.

25. The National Plan to Protect Women and Children contained provisions to ensure that information was available and accessible to all children in Lebanon without distinction. For that purpose, 57 development services centres affiliated to the Ministry of Social Affairs were being fitted with television screens to broadcast information in Arabic, English and French. The Higher Council for Childhood had created television advertisements on issues relating to children, which were also broadcast in the centres. A variety of leaflets and publications had also been developed, some of which were illustrated rather than text-based, so that they could be understood by children as well as by illiterate adults.

26. **Ms. Awada** (Lebanon) said that the National Strategy to Protect and Shield Children from Violence, adopted in 2012, served as the basis for developing the Government's national priorities in the field of child protection and set out guiding principles for the protection of children in State institutions. In partnership with the Italian Government, the Ministry of Social Affairs had provided training to approximately 150 child welfare institutions and associations that had contracts with the Ministry, so as to build their capacities in terms of adopting and implementing child protection policies. Contracts signed by those institutions contained specific articles requiring them to adopt child protection policies, train their personnel on the obligations under those policies and ensure that children in those institutions were fully aware of their rights and of the institutions' duty of care towards them. Moreover, trained social workers supervised those institutions and advised them on how to implement relevant policies and develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools.

27. One of the aims of the National Strategy was to launch a hotline to provide assistance to children and their families, and efforts were proceeding in that direction. The necessary standard operating procedures had been drafted in line with international standards and a call centre had been equipped. Once a toll-free telephone number had been acquired, the hotline would be put into operation.

28. Lastly, several government ministries and security agencies were working together to formulate a draft national plan for the protection of women and children in Lebanon, which was to be focused on two central tenets: the health and protection of women and children, and the prevention of violence against them. The plan would ultimately form the basis of a national framework to provide referral services and establish complaints mechanisms in order to address violence against children and women.

29. **Ms. Hanineh** (Lebanon) said that as a result of the outcomes and recommendations of the study carried out by the Higher Council for Childhood and the Ministry of Social

Affairs, in conjunction with UNICEF and Saint Joseph University, efforts had begun in 2015 with a view to unifying and strengthening the system for the protection of children. User-friendly tools had been developed for use by all public officials working with children and several hundred professionals working in the public and private sectors, including front-line staff working with children in the areas of education and health, had received specialized training. A referral mechanism had also been set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs Juvenile Protection Service, and training had been provided to social workers and case managers around the country.

30. The first national study of sexual violence against children had been conducted in 2015, the results of which had indicated that 4.1 per cent of the more than 2,000 children surveyed had been victims of that crime. The highest concentration of cases (33 per cent) had occurred in northern areas of Lebanon, and 53 per cent of girls and 46 per cent of boys had reported having been exposed to sexual violence. In that light, a number of recommendations arising from the study were now being incorporated into a national plan to combat sexual violence against children.

31. **Ms. Fawaz** (Lebanon) said that the Government had taken the concerns raised by the Committee very seriously and, in conjunction with the judiciary, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Saint Joseph University, a project to evaluate all child-related legislation in Lebanon had been undertaken with a view to harmonization with the Convention. As a result, a number of bills had been submitted to Parliament or were in the pipeline, including a comprehensive code on the rights of the child, which was to include a definition of the child. While there was as yet no uniform legislation on children's rights, Act No. 422 of 2002, on protecting children in conflict with the law or at-risk children, applied to all children on Lebanese soil, irrespective of their gender or nationality. Moreover, it was important to point out that the courts took into account the best interests of the child and that in a number of recent cases the provisions of the Convention had been applied, even where they conflicted with the relevant personal status laws. Thus, a judge could rule that a child should be removed from the family home if he or she had been exposed to harm. One such case had recently seen a month-old infant being removed from the father's custody and placed with the mother as an urgent measure.

32. The various personal status laws came into play when determining the age at which children could marry. Civil society played an active role in efforts to prevent early marriage, and a number of bills were being discussed by Parliament with a view to setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years, with exceptions for children aged 16 years under the supervision of a judge.

33. The judicial procedure required to effect birth registration for children over the age of 12 months applied to all persons in Lebanon, including Lebanese nationals, Syrian refugees and foreign workers. The only exception concerned registrations for Palestinian nationals, since they were handled by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. No lawyer was necessary to initiate the birth registration procedure, although legal assistance could be provided if the petitioner was unable to afford the associated fee, which was currently set at 33,000 Lebanese pounds (LL), equivalent to around US\$ 20. Once the paperwork had been filed, the judge had a maximum of six months in which to conclude the process, which could, in some instances, involve DNA testing in the event that there was any doubt about a child's lineage, and issue birth registration documentation. A child born out of wedlock to a Lebanese woman and a foreign father could be registered with the mother's name and nationality if the child's paternity had not first been established.

34. Various measures were in place to ensure that children's views were taken into account by the authorities. By way of example, Act No. 422 on the protection of juveniles in conflict with the law or at risk, provided that, prior to deciding upon the appropriate measure, such as community service, the judge should take into account the opinions of the victim and of the child offender. In a similar vein, judges were obliged to ensure that children gave their consent before they could be adopted. Lastly, penalties for the sexual abuse of children were severe and were not at the discretion of the sentencing judge. Moreover, the harassment of a child, irrespective of whether or not it was sexually motivated, was also an aggravating circumstance in an offence.

35. **Ms. El Khoury** (Lebanon) said that the Ministry of Education periodically issued circulars to ensure that corporal punishment was banned in public and private schools. Anyone found to have used any form of corporal punishment would face sanctions; moreover, the school's head teacher would automatically be suspended pending the result of an investigation.

36. A policy to protect children in schools was in the final stages of being drafted by the Ministry of Education. Among other aspects, it aimed to enable child victims to file complaints and receive compensation, prevent discrimination in schools and provide for awareness-raising activities for pupils with a view to fostering a respectful school environment. In that connection, initiatives had been taken to raise awareness among children of bullying and other forms of violence, to encourage them to speak out about issues affecting them at school or at home and to attend extracurricular activities. Lastly, following the amendment in 2014 to article 186 of the Penal Code, which provided that parents alone could administer forms of discipline to their children, the Ministry of Justice was working with civil society organizations, which had called for a further amendment to outlaw all forms of discipline that could jeopardize the physical integrity of the child.

37. **Ms. Aldoseri** said that she would urge the State party to reconsider how it referred to corporal punishment, since, irrespective of whether it was used in the home, in schools or in prisons, it was still physical violence.

38. **Ms. Awada** (Lebanon) said that an ethics code and a set of guidelines had been issued to children's institutions so as to foster support for, and the education of, children and ensure their welfare. Moreover, a rigorous monitoring system for those institutions was in place.

39. The Ministry of Social Affairs had redoubled its efforts to combat lingering social perceptions of violence against children by launching large-scale awareness-raising campaigns to educate people on the issue. It was also working to establish appropriate complaints mechanisms and case management systems so as to ensure that identified cases could be the subject of follow-up.

40. **Ms. Fawaz** (Lebanon) said that children in conflict with the law could only be interviewed by the police in the presence of a social worker, who was required to stay with the child for a minimum of six hours. Moreover, any police officer found to have mistreated a child during interrogation would be brought to justice by the State prosecution service at the Court of Cassation. In that connection, it should be noted that there had been no reported cases of violence in the juvenile wings of the country's prisons.

41. Tackling violence in schools, prisons and in the home was a priority issue for the Government. In 2015 and 2016, some 70 child protection orders had been issued by the courts in respect of child victims of domestic violence. In those cases, at-risk children had either been placed in the sole custody of their mother or removed from the family home and placed in foster care. In some cases, the perpetrator had been barred from the family home and required to pay maintenance costs.

42. **Mr. Kotrane**, drawing attention to article 12 of the Convention, said that, when children were involved in judicial proceedings affecting them, it was incumbent on judges to provide them with an opportunity to be heard, in the best interests of the child. He wished to know whether DNA tests were used by the courts to establish paternity regardless of the child's religion. He would also like to know whether an independent complaints mechanism was in place for children whose rights under the law or under the Convention had been violated by a public institution.

43. **Ms. Hanineh** (Lebanon) said that children whose rights had been violated could lodge complaints with the Juvenile Social Protection Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Although there were no laws governing the right to request a DNA test to establish parentage, in general, the possibility of testing to determine whether a putative parent was biologically related to the child was open to all. DNA tests were widely accepted and, in fact, were requested by judges when confronted with cases in which the child's parentage was called into question.

44. As far as personal status was concerned, the relevant laws contained different provisions depending on the religious denominations recognized in Lebanon. In child custody cases involving parents who had married in a civil ceremony outside the country, the judge must be a civil judge and must apply the laws under which the couple had been married. If such laws required the judge to hear the views of the child and seek to obtain his or her consent on custody matters, then the judge would proceed accordingly.

45. **Ms. Skelton** (Country Task Force), referring to paragraph 135 of the State party's report (CRC/C/LBN/4-5), said that children could be removed from their parents and placed in social welfare institutions not only by a judicial decision but also by a referral from social workers, NGOs and even family members. In such cases, was there any judicial review of the decision to place the child in residential care? If so, could a child be released from such care and reintegrated into society? She would welcome further information on the study on alternative care that had been conducted in the country, which was referred to in paragraph 137 of the report. She would also be interested to hear more about the training provided to the staff in alternative care institutions. It would be useful to know how many social workers in total there were in Lebanon.

46. She would be grateful if the delegation could account for the discrepancy between the statement in the periodic report that the number of care institutions contracted by the Ministry of Social Affairs between 2011 and 2014 had increased (para. 140) and the figures for the years 2014-2016 presented in the table in the list of replies (CRC/C/LBN/Q/4-5/Add.1, para. 54), which suggested that the number of children placed in such institutions had been on the decline. The only category of children in the table that was increasing in number was the one referred to as "infants". What was meant by infants and why was that number increasing, whereas all the other numbers were decreasing? Furthermore, what happened to babies and toddlers below the age of 4 if they could not be placed in social care institutions? She wondered whether there were alternative forms of care for them. The terms "vocational education boarders" and "vocational training boarders", as used in the table, also needed clarification. She would like to know to what extent placement in such boarding facilities was dictated by poverty or protection needs.

47. Recalling the recommendation made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations concerning adoption and *kafalah*, or foster placement (CRC/C/LBN/CO/3, para. 46), she would welcome further information on any developments on the review of the relevant laws and practices, especially as little information on them had been provided in the report. The Committee was also concerned that the State party had not reported on any progress regarding the illicit transfer and non-return of children. She therefore would like the delegation to indicate whether any steps had been taken to ratify the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

48. Referring to paragraph 141 of the periodic report, she welcomed the fact that the term "illegitimate" that had been on the identity card of the girl in question had been removed once she had been adopted by a stepfather. However, the question arose whether all children who were born out of wedlock had the word "illegitimate" or some other indication of illegitimacy entered in their identity documents?

49. The Committee noted with appreciation the extraordinary measures that the Government had taken with regard to refugee children in Lebanon, particularly in the area of education. However, some children had been detained in juvenile detention facilities. The Committee had been informed that, as at 30 June 2016, a total of 145 children had been detained, 74 of them Lebanese, 46 Syrian and 25 of other nationalities. That meant that about half the children were foreigners, possibly from families seeking asylum or engaged in migrant work. She wished to know whether the children were in those facilities simply because of their immigration status or because they had been charged with criminal offences.

50. She asked whether there were impediments to obtaining birth certificates for children from migrant family backgrounds who had been born in the country. The Committee had received reports that many migrant workers had been detained and then deported together with their children. It had been alleged that women with children had been particularly targeted. She would like clarification of the policy on the children of

migrant workers, in particular whether migrant workers could obtain the right to remain in Lebanon and whether their children had access to basic services such as schooling.

51. Turning to the issue of children in armed conflict, she asked the delegation to comment on the practical steps that had been taken on the national plan to protect children affected by armed conflict. She wished to know what was the minimum age of recruitment into the Lebanese armed forces and whether recruitment was voluntary. It would be useful to have an account of the practical actions that had been taken to prevent the recruitment of children into local and foreign armed groups, particularly under the projects funded by the European Union.

52. She wondered whether the community service work for children in conflict with the law referred to in the periodic report (para. 272) was imposed as an alternative to a trial. It was not clear whether children who were required to do such work avoided having a criminal record or whether such work constituted an alternative, non-custodial sentence. Lastly, it would be interesting to know whether closed-circuit television or interview rooms designed for children who testified — the kinds of child-sensitive procedures that were set out in the United Nations Guidelines on Justice involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime — had been introduced.

53. **Mr. Nelson** said that he wished to know whether the State party planned to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the near future. He would also welcome an update on the national action plan for children with disabilities referred to in the replies to the list of issues (para. 21) and the progress made to date on integrating students with disabilities into mainstream schools. He wondered whether any special measures had been taken on behalf of refugee children with disabilities. Further information on measures to support persons who cared for children with disabilities would also be appreciated. It was clear from the State party report and other information available to the Committee that there was a high rate of institutionalization of children with disabilities. He asked what steps had been taken to prevent and address the abuse of such children, particularly children with intellectual disabilities. It would also be useful to hear about the efforts to monitor the quality of care in such institutions and whether complaint mechanisms were available. He would also appreciate learning about any awareness campaigns undertaken to remove the stigma that was often attached to children with disabilities.

54. It would be interesting to know more about the efforts to expand the national network of primary health-care centres. Did the Government have plans to reduce its reliance on NGOs for the funding of such centres. He would like to know what measures were being taken to tackle the high infant mortality rate among the Syrian refugee population. He wondered whether the national immunization campaigns mentioned in the replies to the list of issues were continuing, especially in the camps and among refugee children. It was not clear whether children who did not have a birth certificate or residency status had access to health care. He asked what was being done to increase the number of specialists in children's mental health facilities. More information was needed on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country. He would be grateful for information on programmes targeting substance abuse, including alcohol and tobacco use in schools. He asked whether any comprehensive study had been conducted to assess the nature and extent of adolescent health problems. The Committee had received reports of an alarming increase in the distribution of drugs in Palestinian camps, where dealers were allegedly targeting children and teenagers. What measures were being undertaken to address that problem?

55. **Ms. Aldoseri**, referring to the Arab Gulf Programme for Development for the period 2014-2015, said that she would appreciate further information on early childhood development projects in Lebanon and on the outcome of the Gulf Programme. Further information on the school enrolment rate of Palestinians living in the country would be welcome. What was being done to ensure the safety of Palestinian schoolchildren, particularly girls, when they travelled to and from school? It would also be helpful to have data on dropout rates. Further information on human rights education would be appreciated. Lastly, it would be interesting to learn more about the child-friendly green spaces mentioned in the report (para. 211).

56. **Mr. Kotrane** said that he wished to draw attention to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/70/836-S/2016/360), which covered children affected by clashes in the Bekaa governorate and the Ein el-Hillweh Palestine refugee camp, bombings in Tripoli and Beirut and violence along the border. The United Nations had verified 14 cases of child casualties relating to the explosive remnants of war in southern Lebanon. He wished to know what was being done to prevent further casualties. Such incidents should prompt the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

57. As a large share of family revenue came from child labour, and a large number of Lebanese employers recruited children by flouting the law, he would like to know what measures were planned to ensure that child labour laws were observed. More information was needed on the efforts to inspect workplaces in both the private and public sectors. He also urged the State party to act on the recommendations of the study conducted by the International Labour Organization on children living and working on the streets in Lebanon.

58. With respect to the sale of children, the Committee remained concerned that Lebanon remained a source, transit and destination country for children subjected to forced labour, including domestic servitude, and to sexual exploitation. While the State party was aware of the problem, more needed to be done to end such exploitation. He would welcome further details of its policies and efforts to identify, investigate, prosecute and punish persons who engaged in trafficking in children and to reintegrate victims into society. It would also be useful to have more information on the state of implementation of the international conventions covering migrant and domestic work.

59. Lastly, drawing attention to general comment No. 10 on children's rights in juvenile justice (CRC/C/GC/10), he asked the delegation to comment on the State party's efforts to uphold the principles under the Convention concerning the treatment and conditions endured by children deprived of their liberty.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.