



## Convention on the Rights of the Child

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### COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Second session

#### SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 38th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Monday, 4 October 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. BADRAN

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\* No summary record was prepared for the previous meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON "CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICTS" (agenda item 10)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that defence of the rights of children in armed conflicts was provided for not only in the Convention on the Rights of the Child but also in other international instruments, such as the 1974 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Situations of Emergency and Armed Conflict, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, of 1977. The relevant articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were articles 38 and 39. Despite the action taken by United Nations agencies and the efforts made by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a very large number of children in many different countries were still suffering from war and from the effects of armed conflicts. Their sufferings would not cease while arms sales continued. Arms were bought to the detriment of investments to promote the health and well-being of children. UNICEF had indicated that the funds spent on purchasing only one weapon could save the lives of thousands of children. Arms merchants were exploiting human misery in general and the suffering of children in particular. It was to be hoped that there would be no more trade in arms and that the international community would be able to devote itself mainly to preventive action. She welcomed the presence of many representatives of United Nations agencies and NGOs engaged in the protection of children's rights in armed conflicts and would give the floor to all those wishing to speak in the general discussion.

2. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS recalled that the decision to hold a general discussion on children in armed conflicts had been taken at the Committee's previous session under rule 75 of the provisional rules of procedure. The reasons which had led to that decision were of several different kinds. It was obvious that the problem of children in armed conflicts occupied an important place in the defence of children's rights in general. In view of the large number of conflicts in the world, which were increasingly affecting the civilian population and particularly children, it was an urgent matter to make States aware of the problem. The question of children in armed conflicts was complex. The situations involved did not fall only under articles 38 and 39 of the Convention; they affected rights of different kinds which all had to be effectively protected, since they contributed to the child's physical and mental development. The importance of the physical and mental readjustment of children affected by armed conflicts and their social rehabilitation must also be stressed. Finally, consideration should be given to possible forms of prevention, both before conflicts broke out or during them, in order to reduce the suffering of children. In that connection, the experience of the NGOs could be of great interest to the Committee.

3. Mr. KOSIRNIK (International Committee of the Red Cross) expressed great satisfaction that a discussion had been organized on the question of children in armed conflicts. Armed conflicts were, unfortunately, not exceptional, but the situations in which children were the innocent victims were particularly numerous and tragic at the present time. It was sufficient to mention the events in Somalia, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. As far as child soldiers were concerned, the first essential step would be to oppose the recruitment of children under 15 years of age, in the hope that the limit could be

progressively raised to 18. If rules to that effect were formulated, ICRC would support them and watch over their implementation. For the moment, however, it might be advisable to sound out the international community with a view to ascertaining whether progress in that field was considered possible.

4. There was also an urgent need to deal with the situation of children who were non-combatants but were directly affected by armed conflicts. The conflict in Somalia, for example, was taking a very heavy toll of children, who suffered from malnutrition and lacked the essential minimum to stay alive in a disintegrating society. The rights of the child in armed conflicts must be defended not only on the basis of articles 38 and 39 of the Convention, but also on the basis of the Convention as a whole and of human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. Lastly, the Committee and NGOs must see to it that all societies were aware of and accepted the rights of particular relevance to children and that they respected the international rules in force and tried to prevent the infliction of suffering on children in armed conflicts.

5. Mr. SANAD BASTA (United Nations Children's Fund) pointed out that participation by children in armed conflicts was nothing new. Only since the beginning of the present century had States begun to pay attention to the protection of children in war situations. The first set of recommendations specifically relating to the rights of children had been adopted in the United Kingdom in 1923, through the efforts of the Save the Children organization. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations had not remained inactive. In the Geneva Declaration of 1924 it was stipulated that children should be the first to receive assistance in times of distress. The Fourth Geneva Convention, relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, adopted in 1949, called for special measures to be taken on behalf of children. In 1959 the United Nations General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, article 8 of which stated that in all situations, the child should be among the first to receive protection and aid. In 1974, the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Situations of Emergency and Armed Conflict had been adopted, and in 1989 the United Nations General Assembly had adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Lastly, in 1990, at the World Summit for Children, the representatives of 159 countries, including 71 Heads of State, had endorsed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children.

6. Nevertheless, despite so many national and international provisions, countless children were still being killed, kidnapped, tortured, mutilated, or forced to take up arms. The number of children recruited into armed forces had increased substantially in recent years, and they were being enlisted at a younger and younger age. Children were also being used as mine detectors and as spies and were being subjected to forms of indoctrination which could be brutal.

7. Civil war led, among other things, to the destruction of the family, but wars were also the cause of the breakdown of essential sanitation and health services, resulting in the reappearance of diseases such as poliomyelitis and measles and in increased child mortality. Over 1.5 million children had been killed in wars during the past 10 years. More than 4 million were handicapped

as a result of wounds. Five million children were to be found in refugee camps because of conflicts; 12 million had lost their homes. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1,000 children had died, 30,000 had been wounded, and most children were traumatized. The figures available on the situation in Nagorno Karabakh were equally disturbing. No accurate information was available for Somalia, but everything indicated that the situation there was extremely serious.

8. In countries at war UNICEF was trying to negotiate cease-fire periods between the warring factions in order to be able to help children. Its Executive Director, James Grant, had requested the representatives of the parties to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia to suspend hostilities against hospitals and schools, particularly between 1 and 7 November. It would be helpful if the Committee on the Rights of the Child could play a role during that week of peace. Like many other international agencies, UNICEF had welcomed the fact that a large number of States had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was, however, enormously disappointed by the persistence of serious violations of those rights. As the representative of an international humanitarian organization, he was overwhelmed by a feeling of frustration and great sadness: frustration because of the hypocrisy and unacceptable conduct of States which, having ratified the Convention, waged war without protecting children; and sadness for the children involved, who, of all persons, were the most vulnerable in armed conflicts.

9. The time had come for Governments and public opinion, as well as the United Nations, and in particular the Centre for Human Rights and members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to react. He proposed a monitoring mission, led if possible not by UNICEF but by the Centre for Human Rights, to investigate the consequences of the suffering inflicted on children during armed conflicts. It would also be necessary to select indicators in order better to evaluate and defend the rights of children, as well as to institute a system for monitoring the sale of arms. Many weapons were manufactured in the countries of Europe, including some not very far from Geneva, and were sold to countries in the third world. Since rich countries collected taxes from the sale of arms, it was surely possible to monitor such sales by the middlemen, in order to remedy the tragic situations of children in Somalia, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and other countries. Perhaps the day would come when a United Nations body, maybe the Committee on the Rights of the Child, would state in a report that the excessive sale of arms was at the root of specific violations of human rights and of the rights of the child.

10. Mr. MACPHERSON (Quaker Peace and Service) said that his organization had just published, in London, a report on child soldiers compiled from information from some 28 countries. The report examined the recruitment of children under the age of 18 and their participation in armed conflicts. The age of 18 had been used because it was the generally accepted age of majority. However, existing international legal instruments permitted States to recruit children as from the age of 15. For over 300 years the Quakers had been opposed to war and had refused to participate in war, on the basis of what they held to be an unwavering principle, namely, that it was wrong to kill. In 1979 the Friends World Committee for Consultation had expressed its abhorrence of the widespread involvement of children in military training and

armed conflicts. Since 1985 Quakers had submitted information on child soldiers to the United Nations and campaigned for the development of relevant international standards and for the improvement of existing ones.

11. Tens of thousands of children under the age of 18 were currently fighting alongside adult soldiers or in separate units. Most of the wars took place in countries of the so-called South, from where the children involved came. However, several Governments in Europe and in North America subsidized military training for persons under 18 years of age and allowed boys and sometimes girls of 16 and 17 to enlist voluntarily. Children who enlisted in the armed forces did so either out of patriotism or to obtain certain material rewards such as food and clothing. Frequently, children were also forcibly recruited, a practice which was akin to slavery and to the exploitation of child labour.

12. He wished to make eight recommendations to the Committee: first, it should encourage those States that had not yet done so to ratify the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Additional Protocols of 1977 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Violations of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols should be regarded as a breach of contract with all the ratifying States. States parties should also take measures to ensure that other ratifying States respected humanitarian principles.

13. Second, the United Nations should appoint a special rapporteur or working group to monitor the implementation of existing standards concerning the recruitment of children into armed forces and their participation in hostilities. Alternatively, the Commission on Human Rights could decide to broaden the mandate of its Special Rapporteur to consider matters relating to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. For their part, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Committee should question States parties about their military recruitment practices with regard to children under the age of 18.

14. Third, States should be encouraged to make unilateral declarations that they would not recruit persons aged under 18 into their armed forces. States parties to the Geneva Conventions should consider raising the age of recruitment from 15 to 18 years; it would also be desirable to add to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an optional protocol in which States would agree not to recruit into their armed forces persons under 18 years of age.

15. Fourth, the Committee on the Rights of the Child might wish to consider an in-depth study on the recruitment of children into armed forces and their participation in hostilities. It would be helpful if the Committee were to issue its own general comment on that point, to complement and strengthen the Human Rights Committee's general comment 17 on article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

16. Fifth, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations should provide all necessary assistance to those children who had suffered physical or mental injury as a result of taking part in armed conflicts.

17. The sixth point was that the international community should grant refugee status to children fleeing recruitment into armed forces and guarantee them protection and assistance.

18. Seventh, the United Nations should provide advice and technical assistance to Governments and non-governmental organizations wishing better to understand and implement existing standards concerning the recruitment of children into armed forces and their participation in hostilities. Institutions such as UNHCR and UNICEF should bring together Governments; non-governmental organizations and experts familiar with the situation of children in armed conflicts and anxious to improve health, education, employment and social services for reintegrating former child soldiers into society.

19. The eighth and final point was that those Governments and political movements that maintained friendly relations with armed opposition groups should exert their influence and encourage those groups to respect international norms governing hostilities.

20. Mrs. COHN (Henry Dunant Institute) raised two points in connection with the involvement of children in hostilities: first, the normative gap between human rights and humanitarian law relating to violent internal strife, and second, the need to broaden the discussion on children and war beyond articles 38 and 39 of the Convention.

21. As to the first point, human rights and humanitarian law converged in many situations, but did not always adequately respond to violent situations in which the humanitarian law covering international armed conflicts, and particularly common, article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions or Protocol II of 1977, did not apply. The problem had been considered in several forums and experts had examined ways of effectively enhancing protection for children in such situations. Professor Méron had proposed that the General Assembly should adopt a declaration containing minimum humanitarian norms applicable in situations of internal strife and violence which could provide a starting point for negotiations over a new legal instrument, and Mr. Gasser, Legal Adviser to the Directorate of ICRC had proposed a draft code of conduct whose essential purpose was to disseminate a number of basic rules to be observed in situations of violence and internal strife. At the invitation of the Institute for Human Rights, Abo Akademi University (Finland), a group of independent experts had met at Turku to draw up a draft declaration of minimum humanitarian standards "to be respected by, and applied to all persons, groups and authorities, irrespective of their legal status and without any adverse discrimination" (declaration, art. 2). Article 10 of the draft declaration went beyond article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as it stipulated that "every child has the right to the measures of protection required by his or her condition as a minor and shall be provided with the care and aid the child requires. Children who have not yet attained the age of 15 years shall not be recruited in or allowed to join armed forces or armed groups or allowed to take part in acts of violence. All efforts shall be made not to allow persons below the age of 18 to take part in (such) acts". After a meeting held in August 1992, it had been agreed to give greater weight to the declaration by examining the possibility of proposing it to the Commission on Human Rights as the basis for its recommendation to States regarding the

rules applicable in situations of strife and internal conflict. It was vital for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and NGOs to give due importance to the declaration, which could be used to exert pressure on Governments that supported armed groups or on States that violated the standards. The declaration's rules concerned all those who might resort to violence.

22. As to the second point, namely "children and war", the discussion must not be confined to articles 38 and 39. It was essential, when the Committee came to consider a report by a country in a situation of conflict or domestic strife, for it to study the impact of the conflict on children in terms of the Convention as a whole and not of those articles alone.

23. Mr. HARDER (International Save the Children Alliance) said that the Alliance was a 24-member association engaged in promoting the rights of children and in assisting development in over 90 countries throughout the world; its 1992 budget was in excess of US\$ 280 million. It was gratifying to note that the Convention on the Rights of the Child received increasingly keen interest from non-governmental organizations. The Alliance had extensive experience of issues connected with the situation of children in armed conflicts. It was represented in the field by people who dealt in particular with the problems that arose from the participation of children in conflicts and their reintegration into society; those issues were related to article 39 of the Convention. He was also pleased to mention the presence of two of the largest organizations belonging to the International Save the Children Alliance, the Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom) and the Rädde Barnen International Bureau, whose representatives would describe, in a personal capacity their activities in the field.

24. Mr. BENNETH (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO did not take part in activities relating to the situation of children in armed conflicts, but that it carried out numerous projects designed to promote children's rights, understanding and peace through education. UNESCO had its own network of schools throughout the world in which it provided teaching on those topics. It also cooperated with a UNICEF department based in New York in publishing documents on humanitarian law, and in particular on the protection of children from the scourge of war. Furthermore, UNESCO was also committed to practical activities to ensure the well-being of children, in the fields of work by women and maternal and child health care, and protection of children, in every sphere, above all when an improvement was needed in the status and education of women throughout the world. Lastly, UNESCO encouraged the adoption of legal instruments for children as a basis on which the developing countries could prepare a programme for children.

25. Mrs. RICHMAN (Save the Children Fund - United Kingdom) told the Committee of matters drawn from her experience as a child psychiatrist in Mozambique. In Mozambique, small boys aged between seven and nine were abducted by RENAMO (Mozambique National Resistance), which enlisted them in order to commit atrocities or to take part in sharp fighting. The fate of girls was scarcely any better, as RENAMO also took them for prostitution. The State, which was striving to assist children affected by war, had adopted a number of measures: an amnesty law has been proclaimed for all the participants in the war, including children. A programme had been introduced to reintegrate children

into their families. There were pre-school programmes designed to provide support to families through schools. The aim of the teachers was to improve the relationship between children, their parents and the community and to organize a variety of creative activities to allow children to release the tension inside them. As concrete examples of reintegration into society through schools, she described the case of a little girl who had been raped and a small boy whose parents had been killed. The programmes, which sought to promote reconciliation at all levels, could not be carried out without the financial and moral support of non-governmental organizations.

26. However, the programmes met with considerable difficulties on account of bias on the part of the authorities and inadequate funds. In conjunction with educational and social protection programmes, it was essential to set up an integrated economic revival programme to ensure that young people, whether delinquents or victims, were able to work. It was also essential to secure the economic independence of families and communities in order to prevent children from living in a social void. She was optimistic about national reconciliation, and pointed to the example of Nicaragua, where the huge problems encountered in implementing a child assistance programme had finally been overcome and where genuine cooperation had developed, on one committee, between a former CONTRA chairman, a former Sandinist treasurer and a local secretary, all of whom worked at the same table.

27. Mrs. HARPER (Save the Children Fund - United Kingdom), speaking of her personal experience in Somalia as a nurse, said it was important for members of the Committee to realize that there were numerous situations in which everything that had or would be written about children's rights was meaningless in the field. Somalia, for example, was surviving in total anarchy, and all those articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which referred to the obligations of the State party had no foundation, for there was no State in Somalia. Moreover, for a whole generation of children and young people who had been armed to the teeth by the different super-Powers, international and humanitarian law were totally meaningless concepts. As to food support programmes for young children, it had to be borne in mind that in practice the food distributed was usually the only food that the children ate. In addition, when the mother and older brothers and sisters in a family died of hunger, a child who received a ration through a food programme would obviously share it with his other relations. In such circumstances, it was easy to understand that in Somalia, which had suffered total devastation, the concept of children's rights was of scant significance, and for a mother, could only be a dream which might become reality in the very long term.

28. Mrs. SKATVEDT (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that UNHCR had always been and remained deeply concerned about the fate of refugee children, most of whom had crossed international boundaries in order to flee from armed conflict. There were currently between 8.5 and 10 million child refugees throughout the world. Theoretically, they could hope to live in safety, far from regions subject to conflict, but in practice that was often far from the case. Violence and aggression remained their lot throughout their lives as refugees. When they fled, they were frequently attacked, raped or robbed, or used as hostages by the warring parties. When, later, they reached their destination in the host country and



settled in a refugee camp, the camp was frequently attacked by armed forces or gangs of looters. Forcible enlistment of child refugees was common practice in some countries, either by the regular national army or by illegal paramilitary groups hostile to the government of the host country or to that of the refugees' country of origin. Refugee children were recruited to transport arms, to clear places of mines, and even to take a direct part in the fighting. UNHCR had frequently interceded to prevent child refugees from being forcibly enlisted, but unfortunately the host country authorities were often unable or were not sincerely willing to protect them. Child refugees could also be arrested for having entered the host country unlawfully and they could be held in prisons or camps, frequently located in the vicinity of war zones.

29. Inadequate emergency programmes or services in the refugee camps often did nothing to alleviate the suffering of refugee children, who died in large numbers for lack of proper food, drinking water or a vaccination policy. Lastly, when they were repatriated, even after the hostilities ended, children were still faced with violence. Mines and other unexploded munitions could still be lying around, the infrastructure was in general destroyed, the economy and agriculture ruined and the educational system annihilated. Although UNHCR protected refugee children during repatriation and at the beginning of their reintegration, there was nevertheless a gap between humanitarian assistance and the development assistance that the returnees so direly needed.

30. Mrs. McGALLIN (International Catholic Child Bureau) said that in the case of refugee children, in order to implement article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was necessary to start by considering the conditions that could promote the readjustment and reintegration of children. It was essential to provide refugee children and their families with sufficient protection against violence, intimidation and attacks: children needed to feel safe before they could begin to rebuild their lives. The harmful impact on family and community functioning of events and experiences associated with conflict, flight and camp living conditions also had to be taken into account. In such circumstances, the international community could enable families and communities to resume control over the upbringing of children. Any initiatives that could be taken in refugee settlements to help children overcome the effects of their experiences were bound to contribute to effective readjustment and reintegration once the children's lives became normal and stable. The following specific measures were required in order to implement the provisions of article 39 of the Convention for refugee children: definition and implementation of strategies to secure the protection of refugee children and their families; examination, through the NGOs, of the conditions in which it was possible for children to readjust in refugee camps; speedy assessment of the physical or psychological harm caused to children by their experiences, in order to permit rapid treatment; particular attention to the situation of families and the educational measures adopted by the community, especially for unaccompanied children, so as to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation; and an assessment of the skills and resources available in the refugee community in order rapidly to implement strategies for a community-based response to the needs of children and promote their recovery. Lastly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child could be translated into practice only if the personnel of governmental and

non-governmental organizations was capable of implementing it after fully understanding its meaning, as a guideline for their activities in the field.

31. Mr. JIMMERSBACH (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) said that one of FAO's tasks was to ensure that children received sufficient food and he drew the Committee's attention to the International Conference on Nutrition to be organized jointly by FAO and WHO in Rome in December 1992. The representatives of the States participating in the Conference should adopt a plan of action designed to meet the nutritional requirements of vulnerable groups, particularly children, and to ensure the unimpeded delivery of food and medical supplies to places where there were refugees or displaced persons. FAO hoped that the plan would be a milestone in improving the food and health of children during and after armed conflicts.

32. Mrs. LAFTMAN (Rädda Barnen International Bureau) said she wished to emphasize, as others had, how important it was to use the local resources and skills of the population to implement rehabilitation programmes. Her organization had gained considerable experience in that field, particularly in Central America, where it was involved in psycho-social rehabilitation programmes for the victims of war, and particularly children.

33. Mrs. KUPER (Rädda Barnen International Bureau) said that as article 38 of the Convention was worded in somewhat general terms, the Committee should prepare a general guideline clearly to define the obligations of States parties under that article. The Committee could, in particular, draw attention to the main provisions of humanitarian law concerning children in armed conflicts. It could also encourage States parties to raise the minimum age (fixed at 15 years in art. 38, para. 2), at which individuals could be compelled to take part in hostilities. It could also advise States parties to ensure that children took neither a direct nor an indirect part in hostilities. It should also clarify whether article 38 applied to children living in occupied territories. In the view of her organization, such was indeed the case, for article 2 of the Convention stipulated that States parties undertook to respect the rights of all children within their jurisdiction, without discrimination of any kind. The Committee could also draw attention to the importance of zones of protection for children and define the minimum rules to be applied to protect children affected by a domestic conflict.

34. Mr. BELSEY (World Health Organization) said that, as far as food and health were concerned, it was possible to bring emergency assistance to the child victims of armed conflicts, provided the necessary resources and political will existed. Evils attributable to war, such as malnutrition, violence or the break-up of families could hinder a child's physical and psychological development and leave indelible marks. War could lead children to believe that violence was the only way to obtain food and shelter. To survive, children became combatants at the service of a clan or ethnic group in a world in which the law of the jungle had taken over from social values.

35. It was not for WHO to propose a political solution to those problems. It could merely underscore the consequences for society and for health of armed conflicts, provide emergency assistance for children affected by war in

conjunction with the specialized agencies and NGOs, and help to re-educate and reintegrate them in society, once peace returned.

36. Mr. CARRAGHER (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) said it was deplorable that the international community should lose interest in certain conflicts, for example the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, which had already produced 300,000 refugees, two-thirds of whom were children. Armenia was unable to meet the needs of the refugees, first of all because it lacked resources, and second, because the supply of humanitarian assistance was hindered. The Committee should expressly denounce those responsible for such obstruction.

37. The United Nations system currently disregarded events in Lebanon, where approximately 1 million children of war neither attended school nor received the assistance they needed to solve their problems. The International Council of Volunteer Agencies had repeatedly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to strengthen humanitarian assistance to Lebanon. It had merely received bureaucratic replies set out in paternalist terms. UNICEF should considerably strengthen its cooperation with local NGOs in Lebanon.

38. Lastly, the Committee should ensure that programmes for children carried out by United Nations agencies were transparent, open to discussion and in keeping with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

39. Mr. SCHUBERT (United Nations Children's Fund) said that UNICEF intended shortly to publish a book on emergency assistance and the reintegration of children affected by armed conflicts. The book dealt with the effects of war on children (violence, torture, displacement, the break-up of the family and the social and educational system, etc.) and the ways and means to make good the damage. It concerned not only the emergency assistance required during a conflict, but also the measures required before and after the conflict, in particular to reshape children's systems of values - a need to which Mr. Belsey had drawn attention and to break the vicious circle of hate and aggressiveness.

40. In reply to Mr. Carragher's point, he would point out that in Lebanon UNICEF was cooperating with over 200 local NGOs in an educational programme for peace which concerned a considerable number of children and was an illustration of what could be done to achieve national reconciliation and the reintegration of children. By ensuring the implementation of the Convention, the Committee would help to put an end to the transmission of a culture of violence from one generation to the next, and thus to establish peace.

41. Mrs. RICHMAN (Save the Children Fund - United Kingdom) said she endorsed Mr. Carragher's remark concerning the need to follow up the work of the international organizations and NGOs. It was also essential not to impose outside solutions on countries, in particular on poor countries, and to cooperate as closely as possible with the creative forces within those countries.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.