



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
7 February 2024

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports submitted by Pakistan under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2021*

[Date received: 3 August 2023]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Abbreviations

ADP	Annual Development Plan
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
ALP	Alternate Learning Programme
ASRHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights
ATU	Anti Trafficking Unit
ISP	Income Support Programme
CCO	Children Complaint Office
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CII	Council of Islamic Ideology
CJCC	Criminal Justice Coordination Committee
CPIs	Child Protection Institutions
CPI	Community Physical Infrastructure
CPMIS	Child Protection Management Information System
CPP	Child Protection Policy
CPUs	Child Protection Units
CPWA	Child Protection and Welfare Act
CPWB	Child Protection and Welfare Bureau
CPWC	Child Protection and Welfare Commission
CRIN	Child Rights Information Network
Cr.PC	Code of Criminal Procedure
CRM	Child Rights Movement
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECA	Employment of Children Act
ECE	Early Children Education
EFA	Education for All
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
ESR	Education Sector Reforms
EVS	Education Voucher Scheme
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GJPP	Gender Justice and Protection Project
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GWA	Guardians and Wards Act
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGOs	International non-governmental organizations

JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
JJS	Juvenile Justice System
JJSO	Juvenile Justice System Ordinance
JJWG	Juvenile Justice Working Group
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LHWs	Lady Health Workers
LJCP	Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
MNCH	Maternal and Newborn and Child Health
MoHR	Ministry of Human Rights
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NCCWD	National Commission for Child Welfare and Development
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NCPC	National Child Protection Center
NCPP	National Child Protection Policy
NCRC	National Commission on the Rights of Child
NCRCL	National Centres for Rehabilitation of Child Labour
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NEP	National Education Policy
NFBE	Non-Formal Basic Education
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NNS	National Nutrition Survey
NPA	National Plan of Action
PBM	Pakistan Bait ul Maal
PCCWD	Provincial Commissions for Child Welfare and Development
PDNCA	Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act
PESRP	Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHWA	Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PSDP	Public Sector Development Programme
RHIA	Reproductive Health Initiative for Adolescent
SCPA	Sindh Child Protection Authority
SJA	Sindh Judicial Academy
SMC	School Management Committee
SWD	Social Welfare Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

I. Introduction

1. This is the sixth and seventh combined periodic report of Pakistan, which has been prepared in accordance with article 44 (1) (b) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and revised treaty-specific guidelines. The report covers the period from June 2016 to June 2021.
2. Pakistan is the fifth most populated country in the world. According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20, the population projected for 2019 was 211.17 million. The population falling in the age group of 0–4 years is 12.1 percent, and between 5–14 years is 22.1 percent. Pakistan has an extraordinary asset in the shape of youth bulge, meaning that the largest segment of our population is young people. The population falling in the age group of 15–59 years is 59 percent, whereas 27 percent is between 15–29. The Government has commenced different programs for improving employment opportunities for youth, such as the “Prime Minister’s Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme” and “Prime Minister’s Hunarmand Programme-Skills for All”, among others.
3. The federal government has adopted legislation in the area of child rights which includes: the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2016; National Commission on the Rights of Child Act, 2017; the Hindu Marriage Act, 2017; ICT Child Protection Act, 2018; Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, and Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020. Child Domestic Labour has been banned at the ICT level by inserting it in Part-I of the Schedule of the Employment Children Act, 1991. In addition, Pakistan has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), and its initial report is being prepared. Similarly, provincial governments have also adopted various child rights legislations.
4. The Government is committed to achieving Goal 4 of SDGs, i.e., “Quality Education,”; which stipulates equitable education, removal of discrimination, provision and up-gradation of infrastructure, skill development for sustainable progress, universal literacy, numeracy, and enhancement of the professional capacity of teachers.
5. To ensure uniform education, the Government aims to introduce a uniform education system for all to ensure equitable access to quality education across Pakistan’s three schooling systems, i.e., public, private, and madrassa. Some of the critical elements of the government’s efforts to promote child education include (a) selection of a standard curriculum framework, (b) streamlining national teaching and learning standards, (c) ensuring a multilingual policy, (d) strengthening regulatory bodies to ensure coordination across the different school systems, (e) raising awareness about the quality of Government school education through campaigns, and (f) initiating reforms and by strengthening community action through the dissemination of educational information.
6. The Government is fully committed to increasing health coverage and providing good nutrition to meet the emerging demand, develop effective human capital, and promote child-wellbeing. The Government has initiated Ehsaas Nashonuma programme to address stunting in children.
7. The Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI) is now providing immunization to children against Eight (08) vaccine-preventable diseases, i.e., childhood tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, neonatal tetanus, measles, hepatitis b, and typhoid. Almost 40 million children, including 6.8 million at school-designated fixed points, were vaccinated in December 2019 through the National Immunization Day (NID) campaign nationwide. The number of children left out during the last NID campaign in April 2019 decreased from 1.8 to 0.5 million in December 2019 through the NID.
8. Pakistan has demonstrated high-level political commitment, including the Prime Minister’s inauguration of the campaign in December 2019, leading to an investment of 46.8 billion PKR for polio eradication activities during 2019–2021.
9. The federal and Provincial Governments have launched the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program to translate the National Health Vision (2016–2025) to provide better access and quality to mother and child health and family planning services through the provision of comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) services in

275 hospitals/health facilities, provision of basic EmONC services in 550 health facilities and family planning services in all health outlets.

10. The Government of Pakistan initiated Ehsaas Nashonuma program (health and nutrition conditional cash transfer program) on August 13, 2020, which aims to address stunting in children under 23 months of age. The Programme has been launched as a pilot project in 9 country districts in the first phase, which has been selected based on high stunting rates and in consultation with the Provincial health departments.

11. Under this program, 33 Ehsaas Nashonuma Marakiz/Centers are being established at the Tehsil level to provide all the services under one roof. A Nutrition program, i.e., “Tackling Malnutrition Induced Stunting in Pakistan,” costing 312 billion PKR, aims to address malnutrition and stunted growth among children and has been developed for 67 high-burden malnutrition districts of the country.

12. Stunting Reduction Programme, Human Capital Investment Programme, and Ehsaas Nashonuma Programme are under implementation in Punjab. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Stunting Prevention and Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain is under implementation in 4 districts. A new project, “Integration of Health Services Delivery,” costing 7.0 billion PKR, is under implementation throughout the province. An Accelerated Action Plan for Stunting Reduction and Malnutrition with the cost of 5.6 billion PKR has been implemented in 23 districts of Sindh and Balochistan. The Nutrition Programme for Mothers & Children has been implemented in 7 Balochistan districts and is now completed.

13. A new project titled “Pakistan National Social Protection Programme (NSPP)” was launched on 28 April 2017, having a total budget of US\$ 100 million. The main objective of this project was to strengthen Benazir Income Support Program’s (BISP) service delivery and enhance access of the vulnerable segment of society to complementary services.

14. The rapid spread of COVID-19 since February 2020 has brought economic activity to a near halt, besides undermining children’s access to education and livelihoods, especially for people living in extreme poverty. With the support of development partners, the government took unprecedented steps to counter and minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, save lives, and protect the poor and vulnerable people from the economic effects of the pandemic.

II. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6)) Committees’ concluding observations on Pakistan’s 5th periodic report

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 5 of the concluding observations (CRC/C/PAK/CO/5)

15. The Government of Pakistan has taken various necessary measures to address the Committee’s previous recommendations. In this regard, the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) has been established, which monitors the child rights situation in the country. Two children (one male and one female) have been given representation in the Commission. As recommended by the Committee, the Convention has been disseminated among the relevant stakeholders, and training workshops on UNCRC and child protection have been conducted at national and provincial levels.

Legislation

Follow-up information relating to paragraphs 7–9 of the concluding observations

16. The Government has adopted most of the pending bills mentioned in its 5th Periodic Report and enacted several other laws to harmonize its legislation with provisions of the CRC. In 2017 the NCRC was enacted, and the Sindh Government passed the Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act. The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act of 2016 punishes those responsible for child sexual abuse, exposure to seduction, and child pornography.

17. In 2017, it enacted the Hindu Marriage Act to bring the age of marriage of Hindu boys and girls to 18. In 2018 the Government enacted the ICT Child Protection Act and the Juvenile Justice System Act (JJSA). In 2020, it passed the Zainab Alert, Response, and Recovery Act (ZARRA). The ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020 was enacted to place a legal and institutional framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, women, and children.

18. The Government has scrutinized existing legislation at the federal and provincial/territorial levels and has attempted to bring them in conformity with the Convention. The Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 has been enacted to replace the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000. Child Domestic Labour (CDL) has been banned at the ICT level and inserted in Part-I (Occupation) of the Schedule of the Employment Children Act, 1991, as a prohibited occupation. The National Assembly has passed the ICT Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill 2021, and will be tabled in the Senate. This Bill will prohibit the infliction of corporal punishment on children in educational institutes.

19. Significant progress has also been achieved at provincial levels. The Government of KP has enacted the Private Schools Regulatory Authority Act, 2017; Free Compulsory, Primary & Secondary Act, 2017; the Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act, 2018; Legal Aid Act, 2019; School Bags (Imitation of Weight) Act 2020. In 2020, the KP Government enacted the Vagrancy Restraint Act to establish Darr-ul-Kafala for the care, education, training, skill development, and maintenance of vagrants and their dependents. The KP Rehabilitation of Minorities (Victims of Terrorism) Endowment Fund Act, 2020, has been enacted. It establishes an endowment fund for the welfare and well-being of minority victims (including children) of terrorism and their family members. The KP Child Protection & Welfare Amendment Rules 2019 have been framed. In 2018, the KP Commission proposed amendments to the Child Protection and Welfare Act 2010. To harmonize the issue of the age of the child to 18 years, the KP Commission, with input from public departments, civil society organizations, gynecologists, and religious scholars, reviewed the existing Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, considering laws adopted in some of the other OIC countries to finalize the draft KP Child Marriage Restraint Bill. The Bill is under process with the Cabinet.

20. In Sindh, the Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act 2019 was enacted to create public awareness and reduce maternal deaths. The Act protects against sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of gender-based violence. It promotes the right to reproductive healthcare information by including reproductive health education in the secondary and higher secondary school curriculum as “life skills.” It also mandates public awareness of the prevalence and impact of morbidity and mortality.

21. In Punjab, the Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019 has been enacted to protect the rights of domestic workers, including children, regulate their terms of employment and working conditions, provide them with social protection, and ensure their welfare. In collaboration with UNWOMEN, Punjab has reviewed child-related laws and identified the implementation and normative gaps.

22. The Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016, has been enacted, which protects children from all forms of physical or mental violence, including injury, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, and sexual abuse. It also provides for establishing a Commission to monitor the implementation of Article 19 of the CRC in Balochistan.

Coordination and devolution of powers

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 11 of the concluding observations

23. The Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) is coordinating implementation of human rights conventions and preparation of Pakistan periodic reports on their implementation. The National Commission on the Rights of Child has been established, which monitors the child rights situation in the country and coordinates with all child rights bodies at the national level. Moreover, Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) have been established at federal and

provincial levels to oversee the implementation of human rights conventions, including the CRC. PKRs 20 million were provided to NCRC for the financial year 2020–21. Besides, technical and human resources have been provided to NCRC, which comprises officers, officials, and technical staff. 19.260 million PKR were provided to the Punjab TIC during 2018–2019. The other provinces have also equipped their respective TICs with sufficient human, financial, and technical support.

Allocation of resources

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 13 of the concluding observations

24. The Government continuously increases budgetary allocations for protecting children's rights, including girls, refugee and temporarily dislocated children, religious and ethnic minorities, children without parental care, children with disabilities, and children in street situations. The health-related expenditure was 145.97 billion PKR in 2016–17, which has increased to 482.3 billion PKR in 2019–20. The education-related expenditure was 663.36 billion PKR in the financial year 2016 and increased to 611.0 billion PKR in 2019–20. Federal Government is committed to investing 46.8 billion PKR for polio eradication activities during 2019–2021. BISP budgetary allocation has been increased from 102 billion PKR in FY2016 to 180 billion PKR in FY2020. Under the Ehsaas Programme, the 80 billion PKR Education Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program has been expanded and massively reformed under Ehsaas to bring 5 million deserving primary school children into its fold from across all 154 districts of Pakistan over a 4-year duration. An eighty billion PKR Education Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program has been expanded and massively reformed under Ehsaas to bring 5 million deserving primary school children into its fold from across all 154 districts of Pakistan over a 4-year duration.

25. The Government of Punjab allocated 496.783 million PKR for Child Protection & Welfare for the financial year 2020–21. Punjab increased its expenditure on Annual Development Plans (ADPs) on education in 2018–19 to 371.8 billion PKR compared to 340.8 billion PKR in 2017–18, which shows an increase of 9.1 percent. It allocated 196.987 million PKR for the Elimination of Bonded Labour in 4 Districts of Punjab (October 2012 to June 2020). Similarly, 212.589 million PKR have been allocated for Provincial Child Labour Survey (Sep 2015 to December 2020). Punjab has also allocated a budget for development projects for specialized healthcare and medical education for FY2020, which is 64,891.26 million PKR. This helped smooth and timely implementation of 62 development projects, including 58 ongoing projects.

26. The Government of KP has increased expenditure on education to 152.7 billion PKR, compared to 142.6 billion PKR last year, which shows an increase of 7.1 percent in 2018–19. The health expenditures increased by 10.5 percent. As a percentage of GDP, health expenditure has improved from 0.91 percent in 2016–17 to 0.97 percent in 2017–18. The KP Government has earmarked 241.705 million PKR for child labor surveys in the province.

27. The Government of Baluchistan has increased its expenditure in the Education Sector from 52.8 billion PKR in 2017–18 to 55.3 billion PKR in 2018–19, which shows a growth of 4.8 percent. It has allocated an amount of 7.1 billion PKR for 63 ongoing and 93 new health projects in the ADP 2020–21, spread over all the sub-sectors of health, namely Primary Health, Curative Health, and General Health, to enhance health infrastructure/facilities across the province.

28. The Government of Sindh's expenditure on education stood at Rs 162.6 billion in 2018–19. It has allocated 114.14 billion PKR for the health sector in the budget for FY2020. For FY2019, 13.5 billion PKR was allocated for 170 schemes, and by June 3, 2019, 4.61 billion PKR was expended against a release of 8.01 billion PKR.

Cooperation with civil society

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 15 of the concluding observations

29. The Government is proactively working to implement child rights in the country in collaboration with civil society organizations. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is providing Grant-in-aid to registered Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with all its operational parameters and functional responsibilities to enable broader and extensive participation in welfare projects by NGOs at the national level.

30. SCPA has signed MoUs with different NGOs/INGOs working to implement child rights and is strengthening cooperation with CSOs to protect children's rights. KP Commission & Social Welfare Department coordinate with civil society organizations by giving them membership in the Executive Boards to strengthen cooperation, coordination and networking on child rights issues.

31. At the ICT level, the MoHR coordinates with the Child Rights Movement (CRM) (a consortium of NGOs working on Child Rights). MoHR also works with the National Action Coordinating Group on Violence against Children (NACG) (a consortium of NGOs working to protect children from violence and abuse).

32. The Government of the Punjab, Human Rights and Minority Affairs (HR&MA) Department is working in partnership with civil society to promote human rights in the province. The CSOs are consulted during Provincial and national consultations. The Government duly investigates violations of human rights reported by CSOs to provide redress to the victims.

33. The Balochistan Social Welfare Department has registered various CSOs and works with them in multifaceted fields. Sixty Rural Community Centres are providing vocational training techniques to trainees in remote areas with the support of CSO. Technical and vocational skills are being imparted to the youth, including girls and boys with certain minimum academic qualifications, and bringing positive changes in their lives by helping them acquire the capability to earn and support their families.

III. Definition of the child (art. 1 of the Convention)

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 17 of the concluding observations

34. Several laws have been enacted to harmonize the definition of a child with the internationally accepted definition.

35. In the wake of the 18th Constitutional amendment, the subject of minors has been devolved to provincial governments, and accordingly, respective governments are taking legislative reforms in this regard. The Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act 2004 defines a child as a natural person who has not attained the age of eighteen. The KP Child Protection Welfare Act, 2010 defines a child as someone who has not attained the age of 18 years. The Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011 defines a child as someone who has not attained the age of 18 years. The JJSA 2018 also defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years. The Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016, Section 2(e) defines the child as a person, either girl or boy, below 18.

36. The Hindu Marriage Act, 2017 prohibits marriage of male and female persons below 18, extends to ICT, Punjab, KP, and Balochistan. This is like the Sindh Hindu Marriage Act 2016, which prohibits the solemnization of marriage between parties under 18 years of age.

37. The Government of Sindh has enacted a law that provides for solemnizing marriage at the age of 18 and above for both girls and boys.

38. Punjab's Local Government & Community Development Department placed a summary with the Standing Committee of the Cabinet on Legislative Business to amend the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 18 years for girls. The Committee directed that the matter be consulted with other stakeholders and resubmitted to the committee.

39. The KP Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2020, which raises the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both girls and boys, is pending before the Cabinet. The Federal Government is also considering amending the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 to extend the girl child age to 18.

IV. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6, and 12 of the Convention)

Non-discrimination

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 19 of the concluding observations

40. The Government has taken legislative, administrative, and programmatic measures for addressing the issues of infant mortality, out-of-school, early marriage, debt settlement, and domestic violence without discrimination.

41. To address the issue of infant mortality, Pakistan has taken dedicated actions without discrimination. Pakistan's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has declined from 62.1 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 55.7 in 2019. The new immunization policy envisages Pakistan's Vision 2025 by addressing its crucial goal to reduce infant mortality rate from 74 to less than 40 (per 1000 births) and reduce the maternal mortality rate from 276 to less than 140 (per 1000 births) and continue reducing the infant mortality rate through immunization targets and activities to achieve SDG 3. Besides, Pakistan's Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy includes provisions for adolescent girls' nutrition, including micronutrient supplementation, regulation of foods marketed to adolescents, addressing gender equality issues, and health and nutrition education. Moreover, Pakistan Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategy, 2016–2020, is being implemented in the country.

42. To enroll out-of-school children without discrimination, the Government is specifically focusing on the enrolment of the girl child and addressing the school dropout issue. In this regard, the Waseela-e-Taleem program has been launched, which aims to encourage BISP beneficiary families with children (girls & boys) in the age group of 5 to 12 years to send their out-of-school children to schools for Primary Education in return for cash transfers with the long-term prospects of human capital formation. The government is providing stipends of 250 PKR per child per month. In total stipend, worth 2.4 billion PKR has been disbursed to these poor families against the enrolment of 1.3 million children in primary schools.

43. The Punjab Government earmarked 60% of the Punjab Education Sector Reforms Program to provide missing facilities for girls' schools, including toilets and boundary walls. Free textbooks are provided in public schools, while curricula are revised to include gender equality and human rights. About 70% of jobs in primary education have been allocated to female teachers. About 20,181 institutions for non-formal education have been established across Punjab, and 2,124,300 students study in these centers; 90% of the teachers and more than 50% of students in these institutes are female. A special scheme, 'Parrho Punjab Barrho Punjab' (Educate and Uplift Punjab), ensures 100% enrolment of children by providing a stipend of Rs. 1000/- per month to girl students. The Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme also offers stipends to girls from grades (6–10) to improve enrolment, retention and reduce gender disparity. Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) provides incentives to low-income students and teachers. Currently, the PEF operates a network of 6,500 partner schools and manages 461 schools for girls where 825,854 girls (45% of total beneficiaries) are enrolled.

44. The Government of Sindh disbursed 7.5 million textbooks from classes 1–12 and provided stipends to 420,000 girls to encourage girls' education. The amount was increased from 1000 PKR to 2500 PKR and 2400 PKR to 3500 PKR at DSP Talukas. The Sindh Education Policy, 2016 emphasizes strengthening education management and governance and enhancing gender equity.

45. The Government of KP disbursed about 1,100 million @200 PKR/ month among 442,030 girls' students in 2014–15, which increased girls' enrolment by 2%. The allocation was increased during the fiscal year 2015–16, and a stipend was disbursed to 465,000 girl

students. Free textbooks costing 2.05 billion PKR were distributed among 5,415,662 students. Similarly, 3000 scholarships were given to girls' students of Torghar and Kohistan districts. Stoori Da Pakhtunkhwa Scholarships were awarded to 1,226 students with Secondary School Certificate and KP Higher Secondary School Certificate. Out of 27,506 schools, 39% of schools are for females. Education Sector Reform Unit (ESRU), KP has brought numerous reforms to attract female teachers and increase female students' enrollment in far-flung areas.

46. Directorate of Social Welfare, Zakat & Ushr, Special Education, Women Empowerment Department Merged Areas, initiated focused activities on Girls' rights to Education piloted at District Kurram & Orakzai, Merged Areas (erstwhile FATA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Formation of adolescent groups at Primary and Middle schools and communities at the village level. Capacity building of the selected adolescent groups for five days on Child rights and girls' rights to education. Trained adolescents will be disseminating key messages learned during five days of training on Child rights and girls' rights to education further in their joint family system and surrounding communities. Since April 2021 total of 1092 (380 Boys – 712 Girls) adolescents were trained. Capacity-building training of public authorities (Government officials) was conducted at the district level on girls' rights to education.

47. The Government of Balochistan is implementing the Balochistan Compulsory Education Act 2014. Besides, Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been set up. Based on the evidence of the EMIS, the District Education Plan (2016–2017 to 2020–2021) has been implemented.

48. To address the issue of child marriages without discrimination, the SCPA has broadcasted programs on “Social & Economic Issues of Child Marriages” to discourage child marriages, especially marriages of the girl child, on Radio FM 105.4. The KP Government disseminated on electronic media (1121 & Mobile plate form) 511600 text messages on Child protection, including preventing girl-child marriages in the general masses at three districts. Similarly, 318000 voice messages have been disseminated among three districts' general masses. The Governments of Punjab and Balochistan are discouraging child marriages by registering criminal cases against the accused, and accordingly, an investigation is completed with due care.

49. To address the issue of the exchange of girls for debt settlement, Section 310 (A) has been inserted in the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004, which is intended to punish the “giving” of girls and women in marriage as part of a compromise to settle a dispute between two families or clans. Anyone convicted of this offense may receive ‘rigorous punishment’ for 3 to 10 years. Besides, the KP Elimination of Customs of Ghag Act, 2013 has been enacted, which declares the custom of ghag (forced marriage of women) under which the violators would face up to seven years imprisonment and 500,000 PKR fine or both.

50. The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2013, is being implemented in Sindh. Under the Act, an offender is punishable with imprisonment of a minimum of six months or with a fine to be paid as compensation to the aggrieved person, which will not be less than ten thousand rupees or with both. The Act defines all acts of gender-based and other physical or psychological abuse committed by a respondent against women, children, or other vulnerable persons with whom the respondent is or has been in a domestic relationship.

51. The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014, is being implemented. Under the Act, aggrieved persons, including women/girls, apply to the Court for relief. The Act defines Domestic Violence as all intentional acts of gender-based or other physical or psychological abuse committed by an accused against women, children, or other vulnerable persons with whom the accused has been in a domestic relationship.

52. The KP Government has recently enacted “Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic violence against women (prevention and Protection) Act, 2021, to ensure the prevention and protection of women, including girls, from different kinds of abuses. The KP Government has recently enacted “The KP Home-based Worker Welfare and Protection Act, 2021, for the protection & recognition of the rights of home-based workers. The said legislation is a crucial step for promoting & protecting the rights of children working as home-based workers.

53. To protect the rights of girl child, one of the landmarks TV shows titled “Qanoonboltahai” is being telecast on Pakistan Television (PTV) to create awareness regarding the rights of girls under the national and national obligations and also provide legal awareness to girls/women under the supervision of highly qualified lawyers. Moreover, PTV has dedicated 30% of its time to gender-based advocacy through advertisements, sitcoms/dramas, and talk shows. The Government of Punjab launched a massive media campaign to raise awareness about inheritance rights. The Government has recently strengthened the National Commission for Minorities (NCM), which protects minorities’ rights. The Commission comprises members representing all minority communities living in the country. The Government has provided welfare services to children living in rural areas, including children of minorities. The Ministry of Human Rights has established child welfare centers that provide social welfare services to children in rural areas of ICT.

54. In KP, 9,145 girls were empowered to take positive action to protect themselves through life skills-based education. A total of 105(80 Men – 25 Women) Government officials, including Social Welfare, Education, Health, Local Govt& rural development, and District Administration Officials, were trained on Girls’ rights to education and protection. Capacity building of the religious leaders, teachers, community elders, and decision-makers on Girl’s rights to education and protection. Total 589(192 Men – 397 Women) were trained. The KP Government has increased the allocation of budget 70/30 (Girls/Boys) policy for increasing the enrolment and retention of Girls in schools.

55. Despite limitations on face-to-face interaction due to the pandemic, the Government of Sindh’s doctors provided online training to manage the care of children living with HIV. As a result, 1,339 children living with HIV enrolled in antiretroviral therapy centers. In five flood-affected Sindh districts, 111,772 people, of whom 28 percent were children under five, received integrated health, immunization, and nutrition services through 20 mobile teams. While following an assessment of COVID-19 impacts on children, the Government of Balochistan prevented and responded to violence against children. The alternative care services linked with the Child Protection Case Management and Referral System protected 42 girls and 161 boys. The Government of Balochistan has declared 10,000 primary schools as ‘gender-free.’

Best interests of the child

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 21 of the concluding observations

56. Generally, the child’s best interest is taken as the primary consideration in all matters about the child. Specifically, the Juvenile Justice System Act of 2018 defines the “best interest of the child” as the basis for any decision taken regarding the child to ensure fulfillment of his/her fundamental rights and needs, identity, social well-being, physical, emotional, and psychological development. Moreover, all orders passed by the Juvenile Court to release juveniles or diversion proceedings will be made in the child’s best interest.

57. The ICT Child Protection Act, 2018 also includes provisions for determining the best interests of a child, which include child protection and care, well-being and safety of a child; physical and emotional needs of a child; religious and cultural views of a child; level of education and educational requirements of a child; considering the family as a preferred environment for the care and upbringing of a child; and effect on a child, of delay in making a decision. The Act also provides for an investigation by the Child Protection Officer before returning a child to the same alternative care that the child fled from. The Act also provides for the child’s right to identity privacy in all media reports, save for reasons to be recorded in writing by the Court.

58. The National Child Commissioner and Federal Ombudsman Secretariat are regularly strengthening the capacity of Provincial Governments through orientation sessions and workshops arranged for civil servants on safeguarding the child’s best interests in all decisions. Moreover, the Commission examines international instruments, undertakes a periodical review of existing policies and programs on child rights, and makes recommendations for their effective implementation in children’s best interests.

59. SCPA has developed special lectures and training programmes for capacity building of officials, NGOs, and stakeholders and is organizing them regularly for the guidance of relevant persons in authority to protect the child's best interests.

60. The Government of KP has approved the Provincial Awareness Plan to protect children against child abuse. Establishing a well-equipped Child Protection Case Management and Referral Mechanism in KP is being processed. The ToRs of the District Coordination Working Group have been amended. The Minimum standards for Humanitarian Action with the help of stakeholders have been contextualized and approved.

61. KP has also adopted and enacted the KP Child Protection and Welfare (KPCP) Act, 2010, for the maintenance, protection, welfare, and reintegration of at-risk children. Child Protection Courts have also been established to provide justice and protect children from violence, maltreatment, and abuse. KP Child Protection & Welfare Commission is closely coordinating with relevant stakeholders to safeguard children's best interests in all decisions related to children. Exclusive Child Protection Courts were established in seven divisional headquarters under section 15 of the KPCP Act 2010, considering the evidence data provided by KP Child Protection & Welfare Commission.

62. Under the Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016, all state bodies, agencies and organizations, public and private social welfare institutions, and civil society organisations are mandated to safeguard and promote the best interests of the child in need of protection. These institutions consider the child's best interests in need of protection as the primary consideration while making any decision.

63. Under the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004, a Fund for the care, protection, and rehabilitation of destitute and neglected children and ensuring the child's best interest has been created. Under this law, a Child Protection Officer shall take a destitute and neglected child into custody and produce him before the Court within twenty-four hours.

Right to life, survival, and development

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 23 of the concluding observations

64. The Government has taken various steps to protect children from acts of terrorism and counterterrorism activities. from acts of terrorism and counterterrorism activities as and when received.

65. The Government of KP is implementing a project in the newly emerged district: "Strengthen the protective environment for the adolescents and children aiming towards self-empowerment and meaningful participation to reduce child protection rights violations" since 2018 with the technical and financial support of UNICEF. The key activities of the project are empowerment of adolescents through Life Skills Based Education; Protection of children and Adolescents from all forms of abuse for the provision of protective environment for the families, communities and decision makers; capacity building of the public authorities and service providers ; delivery of information, communication and awareness packages, on Mine Risk Education Session to children and communities; provision of recreational activities to all children (both girls and boys) below the age of 18 years; Delivery of activities from the "Sticks and Stones – The Involvement of Children in their Protection" manual for all children and their caregivers, in accordance with age and gender needs and cultural sensibilities; coordinate access for children to birth registration service; provision of steepen to secondary school girl's student in some rural areas, especially for New merged district (EX-FATA) in KP province; provision of missing facilities for all the schools including polarization, boundary walls, wash rooms etc. for the welfare of children and introducing girls' community schools to facilitate girls' enrolment in schools. The KP government has approved 07 child protection units (including home-based care to orphans) in Merged Areas (erstwhile FATA). Those Units will be established for the welfare and protection of children.

66. The government is committed to ensuring adequate security measures in all educational institutions. The Punjab Government has released a set of school requirements, including installing closed-circuit cameras, raising the boundary walls of schools, and

topping them with razor wire. Five security agencies collectively inspect the schools to gauge their compliance with the security guidelines.

67. Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) has been identified as a critical priority. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), through its Gender and Child Cell (GCC), has pursued this objective since 2010. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (NDRRP) was the first step in this direction, followed by several interventions to meet the standards of the GCC Framework.

68. Recognizing the immense significance of the safety of schools, NDMA has formulated the Pakistan School Safety Framework (PSSF). The primary purpose of the PSSF is to provide policy guidance and set a standard for implementing comprehensive School Safety at national, provincial, district, and school levels. It is an effort to contribute towards Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) of children. To effectively implement PSSF, the NDMA and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) have taken various measures.

69. The NDMA identifies and selects all new school sites based on a child-inclusive natural hazard and security risk assessment. The safety and security risk assessment has become the basis for determining whether the school will be safe in the identified location. Such assessment is based on data on children's population, and their level of well-being/deprivation in a given location.

70. Other tools are continuously being developed for making risk assessments more child inclusive. Pakistan uses the UNICEF-promoted Child Centred Risk Assessment (CCRA), which includes different indicators of child deprivation, child population, and hazards in a spatial mapping exercise, to identify various regions where children are exposed to risk. All schools are assessed for multi-hazard safety against all types of natural calamities and security against man-made hazards to undertake retrofitting and/or enhanced measures as needed to minimize potential harm to students and school staff. NDMA also ensures that all schools are equipped to ensure the security of the school population against bomb threats and terrorist attacks.

71. To mitigate the nutritional issues at national and Provincial levels, a Multi-Sectoral National Nutrition Action Plan has been drafted to address all forms of malnutrition through short, medium, and long-term approaches. The National Nutrition Awareness Programme costing Rs 1,050 million, has been prepared to create nutritional awareness among the population for behavioral changes. Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition have been revisited, and the revised version has been launched along with an e-learning course for guiding the masses on adopting healthy dietary behavior and lifestyle. The Food Composition Table (FCT) has been revised, having updated nutritional information (macro and micro) on raw & cooked foods from 12 agroecological zones. The researchers will utilize the data for context-specific guidelines to be adopted by the general masses.

72. The Nutrition Management Information System (NMIS) is being launched at the national level to mitigate nutrition data gaps (both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive) for policy planning and programming. National Guidelines on Adolescent Nutrition and Supplementation have been prepared and launched with the consultation of federal and Provincial stakeholders. Stunting Reduction Programme and Nutrition Programme are implemented for eleven districts of southern Punjab with a focus on improving the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women, newborns, children under the age of 5, and adolescents, mainly focusing on those belonging to marginalized groups.

73. The Programs provide screening & growth monitoring of children below 5; provision of multiple micronutrients (MMS); Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counseling and awareness at community & health facility level; promotion of early initiation, exclusive and extended breastfeeding; bi-annual Vitamin A supplementation of children between 6–59 months; establishing breastfeeding corners and Child Nutrition clinics; establishing of 1717 Out Patient Therapeutic Program (OTPs) centers and 58 Stabilization Centers (SCs) for the treatment of malnourished children; emergency management of Diarrhea and Pneumonia through 24/7 BHUs; interventions for the control of diarrhea; provision of ORS and Zinc Syrup; promotion of hand washing/ sanitation and personal hygiene; and prevention of intestinal parasitic infections by biannual deworming of children of 24–59 months.

74. An Accelerated Action Plan for Stunting Reduction and Malnutrition in Sindh is being implemented. In Balochistan, the Balochistan Nutrition Programme for Mothers & Children (7 districts), Food for Peace (5 districts), and the targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (9 districts) is being implemented in the province. The KP Stunting Prevention and Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain (KP SPRING) was approved for three years, costing Rs 2,217 million for four districts. KP Health Department addresses malnutrition issues in children through the KP Health Nutrition Program with the support of the relevant UN agencies and under the Integrated Health Project (IHP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by integrating the Nutrition, EPI, MNCH, and LHW Programs in the province.

75. In response to the drought, the Government of Sindh has launched a comprehensive Accelerated Action Plan to reduce Stunting and Malnutrition (2016–2021) to improve mother and child health significantly. Under this, timely and equitable distribution of food and water aid is monitored.

76. The perpetrators of infanticide are brought to justice under sections 328 and 329 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). Section 328 of the PPC provides a punishment of seven years imprisonment or a fine for parents of children under 12 years who expose or leave such child in any place to abandon such a child wholly. Section 329 of the PPC punishes those who secretly bury or dispose of the dead body of a child or intentionally conceal or endeavor to conceal the birth shall with two-year imprisonment, a fine, or both.

Children sentenced to the death penalty

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 25 of the concluding observations

77. After the enactment of JJSA, no person who was a juvenile offender at the time of the commission of an offense shall be awarded the punishment of death. Consequently, no juvenile has been sentenced to death.

78. Section 8 of JJSA provides that where a person alleged to have committed an offence physically appears to be or claims to be a juvenile for this Act, the officer in charge of the Police Station or the investigation officer shall inquire to determine the age of such person based on his birth certificate, educational certificates, or any other pertinent documents. In the absence of such documents, the age of such accused person may be determined based on a medical examination report by a medical officer.

79. Moreover, when an accused person who physically appears to be a juvenile for this Act is brought before a Court under section 167 of the Code, the Court, before granting further detention, shall record its findings regarding age based on available records, including the report submitted by the police or medical examination report by a medical officer.

80. According to JJSA, only the Juvenile Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction to try cases where a juvenile is accused of commissioning an offence. All cases of juveniles pending before a trial Court shall stand transferred to the Juvenile Court having jurisdiction.

81. The Government has established six pilot child courts in Pakistan, while four more are being established. Institutionalizing child participatory processes contributes to strengthened justice for children. The notification of 9 Juvenile Justice Committees (JJC) is improving the alignment of the Pakistani regulatory framework with international child safeguarding standards. The capacity building of 160 actors of justice is leading to groundbreaking child-sensitive jurisprudence, which contributes to promoting child rights in alignment with SDGs 16.2: 5, 3.3 & 17. Children in conflict with the law tried in the pilot child court(s) were 992, with 3% girls and 97% boys; from December 2017 – March 2021, 70 children availed of diversion.

Killings in the name of so-called “honor”

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 27 of the concluding observations

82. The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act, 2016 has been enacted to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal

Procedure, 1898, to deter and prevent offences in the name or pretext of honour in Pakistan. This Act has amended sections 290, 302, 309, 310, 311, 338E, and 345 of the PPC. Fasad-fil-arz, a concept used to decide the severity of punishment awarded, including the offender's past convictions, extreme nature of the offence, and the offender being a danger to the community, now includes offences committed in the name of honour. Additionally, murder committed in the name of honour is punishable with death or imprisonment for life. Even if the victim's Wali or other family members pardon the accused, the Court may still punish the accused with imprisonment for life.

83. The MoHR provides shelter and free psychological counseling services through its Family Protection & Rehabilitation Centre for Women (FPRC). The Center protects women and children at risk or who are already victims of violence through refuge, rehabilitation, and legal and medical support. Victims of violence can share their sufferings in strict confidentiality through psycho-social counseling. Through trained and professional staff, Shelter Home assists victims of violence round the clock.

84. The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women launched the Commission's helpline for complaint redressal, including honour killing and awareness raising. It has been a fundamental tool for the Commission to address inquiries and complaints, including honour killings from women across Punjab.

85. The Government of Punjab has expanded the Dar-ul-Amans network to every district. It has systematically introduced measures to deliver services aligned with international best practices, mainly through revised standard operating procedures, guidelines, minimum standards of compliance, and robust referral and complaint mechanisms.

86. Transitional Housing Scheme for Women Victims of Violence project aims to facilitate socio-economic independence among survivors of violence. Residents are expected to stay for six months to one year and must establish personal goals to achieve economic independence and financial stability.

87. A Project, namely, "Prevention and Protection of Women from Violence through Access to Justice, Services and Safe Spaces" (2016–20), has been implemented in Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan Knowledge products developed for Police and Justice Sector stakeholders to build their capacity on EVAW & GBV.

88. In collaboration with UN Women, the Government of Sindh has established Women Protection Units in Karachi and Khairpur to support survivors of Gender-Based Violence. The KP Social welfare department has provided shelter to all victim women in crisis centers. This Resource Pack for the Orientation of Justice Sector Stakeholders has been developed in collaboration with UN Women Pakistan to orient justice sector officials in Pakistan to understand the process of legal aid/ assistance/ advice, client handling, and management of cases of Gender-Based Violence for better dispensation of justice.

V. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 13–17, 19 and 37 (a) of the Convention)

Birth registration

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 29 of the concluding observations

89. Child Registration Certificate is a registration document used to register minors under the age of 18 years. Besides, a juvenile card is an identity card issued to children under the age of 18 years. This chip-based card is distinguished from the Child Registration Certificate as it is an 'entitled document' carrying multiple facilities. A child's parents or blood relatives holding a valid identity card are required to be physically present for providing the biometrics.

90. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) introduced the Civil Registration Management System (CRMS) in all provincial local governments and cantonment boards across the country to increase the percentage of birth registration in Pakistan. From July 2016 to December 2020, 28,235,045 children have been registered with

NADRA. The number of children registered through CRMS at local Councils / Cantonment Boards is 16,450,138.

91. Due to the Government's collaboration with UNICEF and public-private partnerships, advocacy campaigns, and investments in technological solutions, birth registration of 784,432 children (71%) was accomplished in 2020. This has been a drastic improvement from Pakistan's historically low birth registration rates, which was 34 % in 2012/2013 and 42.2 % in 2017/2018.

92. To achieve universal birth registration by 2024, the Government also scaled up birth registration systems by using an innovative digital/paper model through a public-private partnership with Telenor, a telecom company. The digital system enables quick and cost-free birth registration, saving parents the time and money they previously required in purchasing forms and submitting them to several offices after waiting in long lines. Under this project, UNICEF is imparting training to the relevant staff on using Android-based mobile phones and tablets for birth registration through a door-to-door digital registration process.

93. Since July 2016, the KP Commission has established 180 Child Protection Committees in twelve districts of KP to create awareness regarding child protection issues including birth registration, and to facilitate families with birth registration processes.

94. The Punjab Local Government and Community Development Department (LG&CD) has introduced a mobile and desktop application in collaboration with Punjab Information and Technology Board (PITB) to enable citizens of Punjab to obtain e-birth and death certificates. The Punjab Social Welfare Department is implementing social mobilization on birth registration in collaboration with UNICEF to create awareness of the importance of birth registration, focusing on girl childbirth registration.

95. The model was scaled up in 2018 to five additional districts and two cities in Punjab and Sindh. Local Government staff has been trained on effective registration in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and KP. Social Welfare Departments are undertaking social mobilization drives to increase demand.

96. In KP, the Village Council or Neighbourhood Council is mandated to register births, deaths & marriages under the KP Local Government Amendment Act, 2019.

97. KP Health department conducts surveys regarding Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), and Skilled Birth Attendance (SKBA) and keeps a record of children born at hospitals. It also issues vaccination cards to children giving them an immunization record and date of birth (DOB) registration.

98. In Sindh, a CRVS unit was established by Government A partnership among NADRA, local Government, and health departments developed systems to ensure that children born in hospitals are registered at birth. The Government of Balochistan is making all its efforts to increase childbirth registration.

Freedom of religion

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 31 of the concluding observations

99. Pakistan's constitution guarantees religious freedom to all religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadis. All children, including Hindus and Christians, enjoy the freedom of religion in and outside of schools.

100. No discrimination against religious minorities or derogatory statements/material exists in children's textbooks. The textbooks are sensitive to religious, national, social, and other aspects. They are free from religious, sectarian, ethnic, regional, cultural, sexual, occupational, socioeconomic, prejudices, hate material, and gender biases. The textbooks promote harmony and peaceful co-existence through respect for diversity and tolerance and promote positive images of girls and women. Furthermore, the content is aligned with the international human rights conventions on human rights and Sustainable Development Goals.

101. The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is in the development stages and will be implemented throughout Pakistan by 2023; encourages religious tolerance and freedom by

allowing students from minority religions to be exempted from Islamic education and taught religious education coinciding with their religious beliefs.

102. Pakistan is also fully committed to preventing misuse or abuse of the blasphemy law. The procedure has been amended, and the District Police Officer now carries out the preliminary inquiry in blasphemy cases. Section 211 of the PPC states that a person who intentionally initiates a false criminal case or puts false charges on any other person for an offence without any lawful ground shall be imprisoned for two years, fine, or both. He may also be imprisoned for seven years and fined if the punishment for such a falsely charged crime is death, imprisonment for life, or seven years or more. However, children are already exempted from criminal responsibility under the JJSA 2018.

VI. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24, para.3, 28, para. 2, 34, 37 (a) and 39)

Torture and other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 33 of the concluding observations

103. All children are exempted from punishment for Hadood offences, which involve amputation, whipping, stoning, and other forms of torture and cruel and degrading treatment since the enactment of the JJSA 2018.

104. The officers/officials involved in torture are being prosecuted under the relevant provisions of the law. Strict measures have been taken to avoid torture by the police. Women and children-friendly policing, including women-friendly police and establishing women police stations, are also underway.

105. In Punjab, a branch works efficiently with the nomenclature of the Internal Accountability Branch (IAB) at the regional level and CPO Headquarters Lahore, where applicants' grievances are being redressed. Moreover, 8787 is a forum where an aggrieved person can call/complain, which is inquired thoroughly and impartially. The officers/officials found guilty during inquiry proceedings are being proceeded against departmentally and legally by initiating proceedings under the relevant civil services laws, E&D rules, and according to the gravity of charges. Criminal proceedings are also initiated against them according to penal provisions.

106. In 2019, 8420 cases of Police Torture/Death in Police Custody were reported. However, no case was registered in which women or children were victims.

107. The Police Order of 2002 imposes penalties, including fines or imprisonment for up to five years, on police officers who torture or abuse a person, including children, in their custody.

108. The Sindh High Court, in one of its judgments, stated that "No child would be charged with or tried for an offence together with an adult, and the child would have the right of legal assistance at the expense of the state." In this regard, the District & Sessions Judges have been empowered to constitute a panel of lawyers to provide free legal aid to Juvenile inmates. Besides, national and provincial helplines have also been set up that extend legal advice and counseling services to women and children. The Government of Punjab is initiating action against the accused on the receipt of information/complaints regarding torture and other cruel treatments, especially against children.

Corporal punishment

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 35 of the concluding observations

109. To prohibit corporal punishment, the federal and provincial governments are taking steps to address the challenge of corporal punishment. Prohibition of corporal punishment is a norm in all Special Education Centers working under the umbrella of the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE). Provincial Governments have also enacted legislation

that prohibits corporal punishment, including the Punjab Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill, 2020, Sindh Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act, 2016, KP Child Protection, Welfare Act, and the Baluchistan Child Protection Act, 2016 and GB Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act, 2016, etc.

110. The National Institute of Special Education (NISE), National Mobility & Independence Training Centre (NM&ITC), and Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment of Disabled Persons (VREDP) regularly organize training sessions to sensitize parents and guardians to non-violent forms of discipline and raise awareness on the harmful effects of corporal punishment. Effective institutional mechanisms also exist to ensure compliance.

111. In Punjab, slogans to promote non-violent forms of child-rearing and discipline have been displayed outside schools, along with contact numbers of district and provincial management to report violations.

112. To prohibit corporal punishment against children in ICT at the workplace and in all educational institutions, including formal, non-formal, and religious, both public and private, and in childcare institutions, including foster care, rehabilitation centers, and any other alternative care settings, both public and private and in the juvenile justice system, the Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act has been enacted.

113. The Government of Sindh has enacted the Sindh Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2016. Section 3 of the Act provides that the child has the right to be shown respect for his personality and individuality and shall not be made subject to corporal punishment or any other humiliating or degrading treatment. Section 4 (1) of the Act provides that whoever violates the provisions of section 3 of this Act shall be liable to the punishments prescribed for the said offences in the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and other respective laws. In addition, minor and major penalties will apply to persons who violate the provisions of section 3 of this Act in educational, care, and penal institutions and other alternative care settings.

114. The Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016, protects children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse and matters.

115. The KP Government has enacted Child Protection and Welfare Act. Section 4(h)(i) prohibits physical and corporal punishments of any kind which may endanger the child's life, physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development, both within the family and in any institution. Section 34 of the Act provides that whosoever causes or permits to cause corporal punishment, through omission or commission, in any form, under any circumstances or for any purpose, to a child, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to fifty thousand rupees, or with both.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 37 of the concluding observations

116. The Government has adopted laws that clearly and explicitly define and prohibit child sexual abuse and exploitation. The Criminal Law (2nd Amendment) Act, 2016, has been enacted whereby Sections 377-A, 377 B, 292B, and 292A have been inserted in the PPC. Section 377 defines child sexual abuse as engaging the child in fondling, stroking, caressing, exhibitionism, voyeurism, or any obscene or sexually explicit conduct with or without consent where the age of the person is less than 18 years. Section 377-B provides for punishment extendable to seven years and liable to a fine which shall not be less than Rs. 500,000 or both. Similarly, Section 292-A penalizes those responsible for exposing a child to seduction. Section 292-B penalizes Child pornography and defines it as producing a film, video, or picture that involves the use of a minor boy or girl engaging in obscene or sexually explicit conduct and punishment with imprisonment of not less than two years and may extend up to seven years.

117. Similarly, Section 18 of the ICT Child Protection Act 2018 gives a Child Protection Officer authority to remove a child from parents or legal guardians' custody if the child is either subjected to or there's a threat of her/him being subjected to abuse and exploitation.

The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA, 2020) has been enacted, which protects missing and abducted children by raising an alert with law enforcement agencies to recover the child promptly and save her/him from sexual abuse and exploitation.

118. The KP Child Protection & Welfare Act defines sexual abuse clearly and explicitly. It punishes perpetrators with imprisonment for a term which may extend to fourteen years and shall not be less than seven years and shall also be liable to a fine which shall not be less than ten hundred thousand rupees. Under this law, 288 cases were facilitated through twelve district child protection units.

119. Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016 and Sindh Child Protection Authority Amendment Act 2021 also explicitly define child abuse and protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation.

120. At the Federal level, the NCRC monitors the child rights situation in the country and inquiries into child rights violations in all settings. The MoHR has a child-friendly toll-free helpline, 1099, where incidents of child rights violations can be reported and dealt with by a competent team that provides free legal aid and referral services. Child abuse cases reported from homes, schools, institutions, and all other settings are taken up by the Ministry, and perpetrators are punished with sentences commensurate with the gravity of the crimes.

121. In Sindh, KP, and Balochistan, child rights violations are monitored through their respective Commissions. Child Protection Officers follow the reported child abuse and exploitation cases and provide free legal aid, psycho-social support, financial assistance, and residents' facility.

122. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has aired public service messages on child's right to education and the issue of child abuse, child labor, child abduction, and use of drugs in educational institutions on TV and Radio. Child Commissioner, Federal Ombudsman has conducted need-based child Protection Training of Teachers "Meri Hifazat" (My protection) for awareness raising and capacity building campaign.

123. The Government recognizes commercial sexual exploitation of children as a fundamental violation of children's rights. In this regard, programs and policies for the prevention, recovery, and social reintegration of child victims have been developed in accordance with the outcome documents adopted at the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation through the Child Protection Welfare Commission, Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, and Child Protection Authority.

124. The National Child Commissioner (NCC) initiated a project in 2017 in the aftermath of the Zainab case in Kasur for the protection and rehabilitation of victims of child abuse. NCC has established a window Child Protection and Rehabilitation Center at the District Headquarters Hospital, Kasur. The center has been functional since 2019 and supports child victims of sexual violence and abuse. SOPs have been developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders for internal and external referral of child abuse cases. Psychological Counseling and psychiatric treatment have also been provided to juvenile prisoners at the district jail.

125. A total of 491 teachers (male and female) of both public and private schools were trained in three separate training sessions on child protection and identifying threats, dangers, and risks in their schools. Moreover, broad-based consultations on strengthening institutional mechanisms for child protection were held in Islamabad, Lahore, and Quetta.

126. KP Health Department supports the legal justice system through medico-legal services. These medicolegal services include assessing, treating, and psychologically rehabilitating victimized children and their parents. The Health Department works in collaboration with other departments, i.e., social welfare and education departments, for the prevention of sexual assaults and the protection of children's rights.

Harmful practices

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 39 of the concluding observations

127. The MoHR provides rescue services through its helpline, women's crisis centers, and the NCRC to protect children from harmful practices including burning, acid attacks, mutilations, stripping, and sexual harassment throughout the country and by prosecuting perpetrators through relevant legislation.

128. The Hindu Marriage Act, 2017, which extends to ICT, Punjab, KP, and Balochistan has been enacted to protect children of the Hindu community from child marriage, safeguard their legitimate rights and interests and have a consolidated law providing for the solemnization of marriages by Hindu families. The Sindh Hindu Marriage Act 2016 is being implemented, and investigations are carried out to prosecute persons, including members of local councils (jirga), who decide and endorse harmful practices.

129. Efforts to implement various legislative measures already enacted for addressing the issue of child marriages and prosecution of perpetrators are also underway. The State Party is using the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act 2011, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2004, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act, 2012, the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2013 and Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2015 to prosecute those responsible for conducting child marriages. The harmful traditional practice like the exchange of girls for debt or enmity settlement (Swara) are declared criminal offences and prohibited under KP Child Protection & Welfare Act 2010.

130. The Mohr launched a digital film festival in August 2020 to promote awareness of the rights of different groups of individuals, including women and children, through short informational videos in all regional languages. The topics included child marriage and sexual abuse, among others.

131. The NCSW, in collaboration with NCHR and Child Right Movement, organized a national consultation to raise awareness on the issue of child marriages in 2017. It was part of implementing the Regional Action Plan on Ending Child Marriages in South Asia (2015–18). In 2018, NCSW, in collaboration with Shirkat Gah, organized a National Dialogue on ending child marriages wherein critical insights of the three years (2015–18) study, "Hamsathi" were shared. NCSW has also initiated awareness through media on ending violence against women and girls. NCSW, in collaboration with Kashf Foundation, launched a drama serial on the trafficking of girls. Weekly radio programs have also been run to create awareness of women's and girls' rights.

132. KP Commission has been working to educate the public on child rights issues, including early forced marriages and harmful practices, through coordination with all human rights institutes and district child protection units at the provincial, district, and grass-root community levels. Several training workshops for judges on violence against women and girls and women's rights were conducted by the Punjab Judicial Academy during 2017–2019.

133. In 2018, Pakistan introduced another piece of legislation to increase further punishments for the crimes of child pornography and sexual abuse.

134. Child Protection & Welfare Bureau provides round-the-clock rescue services to destitute and neglected children through different procedures and mechanisms. The Bureau has rescued 24983 children, and 23523 children were reunited with their families.

Freedom from all forms of violence

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 40 of the concluding observations

135. While recalling the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children of 2006 (A/61/299), the Government, considering its General Comment No. 13 (2011) and taking note of Sustainable Development Goal 16.2, has taken various measures. National Policy for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is under process, whereas the ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020 addresses all forms of violence against children with disabilities.

136. To address all forms of violence against children, NCRC has been established under the NCRC Act 2017, which monitors the child rights situation throughout the country and is the national point of contact for addressing all forms of violence against children. NCRC coordinates with all other commissions at the provincial levels to amalgamate efforts to address and prevent all forms of violence against children. A girl child has also been given representation in the NCRC to highlight the rights of the girl child and issues of violence against the girl child.

VII. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (paras. 1 and 2), 20–21, 25 and 27 (para. 4))

Family environment

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 42 of the concluding observations

137. The Government has taken every possible measure to safeguard the family as a fundamental unit of society. It provides financial assistance to families living in poverty, psychological and social support, and guidance in fulfilling their parental responsibilities to prevent abandonment and institutionalization of children. A family with two or more special needs children has been declared a “special family” and benefits from Rs 25,000/- annually, whereas a family with one special child receives financial assistance of Rs 10,000/- per annum.

138. Sehat Sahulat Programme is a flagship program of social health protection and a milestone towards attaining Universal Health Coverage through which identified underprivileged citizens across the country can access their entitled medical health care swiftly and dignifiedly without any financial obligations. General financial assistance to families living in poverty is provided through Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

139. In Punjab, PSPA provides financial assistance to families/individuals having other vulnerabilities, e.g., disability (unconditional cash transfer program for persons with disabilities (PWDs)) and old age (Ba-himmat Buzurg Programme, which is a social pension program). It encourages sending girls to schools (under PSPA’s Zevar-e-Taleem Programme) and provides health services to pregnant and lactating women (under the upcoming Punjab Human Capital Investment Project (PHCIP)). The program also supports the graduation of poor families from financial assistance through micro-credit and asset transfer. In FY 2020-21, PSPA aims to initiate a financial assistance program (‘Sarparast’) for widows and orphans. A program for the assistance of special children, conditional to school attendance, is also being planned.

140. In Punjab, The Punjab Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Act, 2015 was enacted, which requires filling in all provisions of the nikahnama and penalizes persons who are not licensed to solemnize a Nikah. Additionally, penalties for polygamy without permission of the existing wife have been enhanced. The PCSW also trained Nikah Registrars to sensitize them to these changes.

141. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) also provides wheelchairs to children with a disability which helps families to look after children with special needs.

Children deprived of a family environment

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 44 of the concluding observations

142. To provide support for family and community-based alternative care for children deprived of parental care, PBM has established 51 Dar-ul-Ehsaas Institutions in the country and is constantly making efforts to improve the service delivery of these institutions. PBM has recently launched a family-based Orphans and Widows Support Programme (OWSP) for matriculated children of Dar-ul-Ehsaas. It will enable children to stay within their families and continue their education by providing financial support. Through OWSP, PBM is providing a stipend of 8000 PKR to families having one college/university going Dar-ul-

Ehsaas child and 16000 PKR to families having two or more college /university going Dar-ul-Ehsaas children to strengthen support for community and family and alternative care for children and reduce institutional care.

143. PBM has also launched Waseela-e-Taleem program in 50 districts of the country and will further expand the program coverage to an additional 50 districts in Pakistan. The overall objective of this program is to incentivize primary education through regular cash transfers to needy families with children to discourage abandonment and institutional care. Moreover, the Punjab Social Protection Policy 2021 & Child Protection Policy are under process.

144. Under section 32 of PDNC Act, 2004, a child ordered to be admitted to a child protection institution shall be kept in such custody until he reaches eighteen years old. For children who cannot be placed in a safe, family-like environment, CP&WB has established standardized alternate care institutions.

145. Furthermore, the Child Protection Court grants temporary custody and guardianship rights of the abandoned child primarily to childless couples for the upbringing of the child under section 28 of the PDNC Act. It considers the views of the child in all such decisions.

146. Training programs on case management for capacity building of officers and officials of Government Departments have also been conducted. The KP Government, through the KP Commission, provides training to relevant staff on protocols for dealing with children along with reporting mechanisms as part of the consolidated SOPs, which are under process and expected to be notified soon.

147. The MoHR has a fully functional toll-free helpline where children can easily report rights violations. The NCRC is mandated to inquire into complaints of child rights violations and has the power to take suo-moto on serious violations. Children can easily approach child members of the NCRC to report violations of their rights and ensure remedial actions through the NCRC and MoHR. By December 2020, 1645, individual complaints made by children through NCRC were handled and remedial actions were taken.

148. The Governments of Punjab, KP, and Sindh are also operating helplines through CP&WB and their respective Commissions where violations of children's rights are reported and remedial measures are taken.

149. The ICT Child Protection Institute has provided 3.5 million PKR and 1.6 million PKR to the National Child Protection Center. The Provincial Governments have increased the number of child protection units and accordingly increased the budgetary allocation to provide medical, psychological, and educational services and to facilitate rehabilitation and social reintegration of children.

VIII. Disability, basic health, and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (para. 3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (paras. 1–3) and 33)

Children with disabilities

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 46 of the concluding observations

150. The Government has taken various measures for the welfare and protection of children with disabilities. The ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020 has been enacted to put a legal and institutional framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, women, and children as provided under the UNCRPD.

151. Unconditional Cash Transfer for PWDs is being implemented. Under this program, children with disabilities from poor families can receive 2,000 PKR per month if they cannot work and 1,500 PKR if they can.

152. The Special Education Department creates awareness among children, parents, and the community by launching awareness-raising campaigns to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities / special needs. Recently, the Special Education Department

launched an awareness campaign under ADP 2019–2020 in all districts of Punjab using social, print & electronic media.

153. As per School Management Counsel (SMC) Policy, 2010, School Management Counsel (SMC) is established in all special education institutions comprising parents, teachers & General Members of the Community who actively participate in the process of service delivery and program design for the welfare of children with special needs. With the involvement and support of SMC, each special education school initiates awareness-raising campaigns to educate students, parents, and the community at large to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and to make society inclusive at all levels.

154. A Pilot Project for Inclusive Education for Children with disabilities in Public & Private Schools at ICT has been launched for FY 2020–21 to accommodate all children with disabilities in schools under the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). Punjab Special Education Policy 2020 has been launched, which emphasizes the social inclusion, rehabilitation, and economic empowerment of persons/children with disabilities (PWDs) to make them productive and respected citizens.

155. Special Education Department, Government of Punjab, launched the “Punjab Inclusive Education Project (PIEP)” (2015–2017) as a pilot project in Bahawalpur and Muzaffargarh districts. The project aimed to identify and mainstream children with mild disabilities by providing them with formal school opportunities. Punjab Special Education Department launched a “Voucher Scheme” (2015–2018) for inclusive education with the collaboration of PEF Schools to mainstream special needs children.

156. Under the Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships Program, needs-based undergraduate scholarships will be awarded to 50,000 students from low-income families, with 2 percent of the quota fixed for persons with disabilities. The four-year program commenced in November 2019 for the academic year 2019–20.

157. The Pakistan Accessibility Code 2006 outlines public infrastructure standards. It seeks to ensure easy and safe access for PWDs by laying down comprehensive space standards, design guidelines, and building bylaws and applies to public and privately-owned buildings meant for public use. To provide barrier-free access to children with disabilities, the Pakistan Council of Architects and Planners (PCATP) and Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) have been taken on board in the light of “Accessibility Code of Pakistan-2006” and “Design Manual & Guidelines for Accessibility-2007” by DGSE.

158. Punjab Special Education Department launched School Information System (SIS) in 2017, wherein data regarding the number of children with special needs is available. SIS helps manage students’ records and information and assists administrators in formulating strategic policies and programs that correspond to their individual needs.

159. The Government of KP has established an MIS for collecting data from all the institutions through specially designed questionnaires for Special Education Institutions in consultation with all stakeholders. The data was incorporated into the MIS and used to design a report on the number of children with disabilities.

160. Since July 2016, the KP Commission has registered 280 cases of children with disabilities who required assistive aids such as crutches, wheelchairs, etc, which were provided through different development partners.

161. Disability is diagnosed through a medical checkup arranged by the Social Welfare Department of each province at a government hospital associated with the Health Department, following which a disability certificate is issued. NADRA issues Special CNICs to persons who possess a disability certificate without any service charges.

162. The Government of Balochistan has enacted the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017. Section 6 of the Act (1) provides that the Government will take special measures to ensure that such women, children, and elderly people are fully protected under the law in enjoying their rights”. Moreover, Section 6(2) provides that the Government will also take necessary measures to ensure the development, advancement, and empowerment of women, children, and senior citizens with disabilities.

163. The Government of Balochistan has taken various steps to rehabilitate persons with disability especially blind, hearing impaired, physically handicapped, and mentally retarded children. Apart from schools and vocational training centers, the Department also offers facilities for printing of Braille books, pre-service teachers training leading to B.Ed. and M.Ed. in Special Education, in-service teachers training for teachers of special education, screening services for students in general education institutions, provision of special aids like cochlear implants, and inclusive education through mainstreaming of special children with mild disabilities into the general education schools.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 48 of the concluding observations

164. The Government has taken various measures to ensure access to health services for children. Cumulative health expenditures by federal and provincial governments in FY2019 increased to 421.8 billion PKR from 416.5 billion PKR last year, showing a growth of 1.3 percent. The government of Pakistan has supported various programs and projects through the PSDP development portfolio to fulfill the global commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda of improving the health status of people and reducing the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). During FY2020, PSDP allocations of 23,975.926 million PKR were made for 62 health sector projects, and 11,483.979 million PKR were released to enhance the healthcare system's access and quality. The Government of Pakistan is fully cognizant of the access to quality healthcare facilities for children, especially in rural areas.

165. Several measures have been taken to reduce the rate of under-5 child mortality to at least 25 per 1,000 live births and to reduce neonatal mortality to at least 12 per 1,000 live births by 2030. The Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Programme has been implemented by the federal and Provincial departments of Health to implement the National Health Vision (2016–2025) by providing better access and quality to mother and child health and family planning services.

166. Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) services are available in 275 hospitals/health facilities, and basic EmONC services in 550 health facilities across Pakistan. Improvement is also observed in the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to 62 per one thousand from 66 per one thousand in 2015. Measures are being taken to reduce the number of clandestine procedures and their negative consequences by increasing grounds for a legal basis for safe abortion and improving access to safe abortion services.

167. The Government has taken various measures to provide immunization to every child with services and raise awareness in communities about the importance of vaccinations. The Expanded Programme for Immunization (EPI) has now risen to 60 to 70 percent in rural areas. Measures are being taken to address constraints for improving vaccine coverage through better program management, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E), upgraded performance in service delivery, logistics control, human resources management (HRM), and financing.

168. Almost 40 million children, including 6.8 million at schools, were vaccinated during December 2019 through the National Immunization Day (NID) campaign nationwide. The number of children missed during the last NID campaign in April 2019 decreased from 1.8 million children to 0.5 million children in December 2019 NID. The Federal Government has invested 46.8 billion PKR for polio eradication activities during 2019–2021.

169. Pakistan has also taken various measures to provide children with health facilities and quality medical services by trained medical professionals through NDMA and PDMA.

170. To mitigate the nutritional issues at national and provincial levels, a Multi-Sectoral National Nutrition Action Plan has been drafted to address all forms of malnutrition through short, medium- and long-term approaches. Two high-level bodies/forums have been constituted, i.e Pakistan National Nutrition Coordination Council under Ehsaas Programme and National Nutrition Forum in Planning Commission. These forums are being used for coordination, review, and resolving all the nutrition-related issues in the country, including resource mobilization.

171. The Government launched Ehsaas Nashonuma in August 2020, a health and nutrition conditional cash transfer program to address stunting in children under 23 months. The

National Nutrition Awareness Programme costing 1,050 million PKR, has been prepared to create nutritional awareness among the population for behavioral changes. Pakistan Dietary Guidelines for Better Nutrition have been revisited, and the revised version has been launched along with an e-learning course for guiding the masses on adopting healthy dietary behavior and lifestyle.

172. The Nutrition Management Information System (NMIS) will be established at the national level to mitigate nutrition data gaps (both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive) for policy planning and programming. Stunting Reduction Programme and Nutrition Program are under implementation in 11 districts of southern Punjab. KP Stunting Prevention and Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain (KP SPRING) was approved for three years with a total cost of Rs 2,217 million for four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. An Accelerated Action Plan for Stunting Reduction and Malnutrition in Sindh is being continued. In Balochistan, the Balochistan Nutrition Programme for Mothers & Children (7 districts), Food for Peace (5 districts), and the targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (9 districts) is being implemented in the province.

173. In collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, and UNICEF, the government is scaling up the globally recommended training strategies for improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health.

174. During FY2021, the Government of Punjab allocated 22.2 PKR and 11.5 billion PKR for specialized healthcare & medical education departments and primary & secondary healthcare departments, respectively. The government of Punjab is also scaling the Sehat Insaf Card Programme aiming to provide health insurance to 30 million families in the province by December 2021.

175. The government of Sindh has allocated 28.9 billion PKR for 141 ongoing and 51 new health schemes under ADP 2020-21. Efforts are being made to strengthen, upgrade, and rehabilitate teaching hospitals and establish new primary healthcare facilities in the province.

176. The Health Department of KP (including merged districts) has a network of 106 RHCs, 940 BHUs, nine teaching hospitals, 30 DHQs, and 22 THQs. It has initiated/executed the up-gradation process of several BHUs to RHCs level in the province. The Government adopted a multi-year Accelerated Implementation Programme (AIP) 2019–2022 to address the key developmental gaps in the Merged Areas.

177. The government of Balochistan has allocated an amount of 7.1 billion PKR for 63 ongoing and 93 new health projects in the ADP 2020–21, spread over all the sub-sectors of health, namely Primary Health, Curative Health, and General Health, to enhance health infrastructure/facilities across the province.

178. A School screening program has been conducted to identify the major health-related problems of children that hinder their studies. Based on the screening, a School Health Programme will be launched to improve access to education and enhance children's learning outcomes by addressing their problems.

179. Health kits have been provided to children studying in Schools lagging behind districts under response, recovery, and resilience in education projects with financial support from Global Partnership for Education.

Mental health

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 50 of the concluding observations

180. The President of Pakistan launched the President's Programme to promote the Mental Health of Pakistanis on Oct 10, 2019, on World Mental Health Day. The program emphasizes the role of early-life interventions that promote mental health and prevent mental illness. It calls for a phased implementation of two evidence-based interventions: a) the WHO Thinking Healthy Programme, a psychosocial intervention delivered by community health workers to high-risk mothers in low-resourced settings, and b) the WHO School Mental Health Programme, a teacher training program on mental health to promote early recognition and management of mental health problems. These interventions, to be implemented in one

district in the first year, are planned to be rolled out across all four provinces of Pakistan within five years.

181. Mental health services provided to children primarily include diagnosis of neurotic, stress-related, somatoform disorders, and mood disorders, and psychological counseling services are provided through mental health facilities accordingly.

182. The Government of Sindh is organizing community awareness sessions to prevent suicide and advising parents to create a friendly environment in homes so that children feel comfortable discussing problems related to mental health with their parents.

183. In Punjab, CP&WB psychologists function through psychometric assessment, counseling, and therapeutic interventions focusing on behavior modification, cognitive restructuring, and rehabilitating destitute and neglected children. The aim is to address the significant factors and issues children face and resolve these at individual and group levels. Child psychologists initiate efforts to enable children to face and handle difficult and alarming situations skillfully and resiliently. Psychological Support has been provided to 20536 children during 2016–2020.

184. The Government of KP enacted the KP Mental Health Act 2017, through which a special program has been launched for children called Mental Health Psychosocial Support Services (MHSPSS), which gives psychological support to children, adolescents, and older adults in districts of KP. Besides providing psychological counseling services, the KP Commission closely monitors the issue of psychological counseling services during emergencies to ensure children's best interests. During the reporting period since July 2016 till date, a total of 1316 (803 male and 513 female) children have been registered for counseling services.

Adolescent health

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 52 of the concluding observations

185. National Health Vision 2016–25 has been adopted to improve the health of all Pakistanis, particularly women, and children, through universal access to affordable quality essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and to deliver a resilient and responsive health system.

186. The Family Planning and Primary Health Care (FP&PHC) program has been expanded through Ehsaas Programme and strives to control the population through modern contraception and prevent unsafe abortions. Lady Health Workers (LHWs) have been engaged to support these efforts by increasing awareness of improved sanitation, birth spacing, iron supplementation, and vaccination, and through the provision of Ante-Natal Coverage (ANC) and Post-Natal Coverage (PNC) of pregnant women.

187. In Punjab, awareness of sexual and reproductive health education for youngsters (Boys & Girls) is disseminated through pamphlets. A plan for making sexual and reproductive health education a part of the mandatory school curriculum under the SNC is under process.

188. The KP Health Policy 2018 provides a strategic direction for improving family planning. It focuses on the provision of family planning services through the health facilities network, and community-based Lady Health Workers and Midwives work with the Population Welfare Department to enhance the provision and coverage of family planning services to avoid early pregnancies and STIs and educate the masses about sexual and reproductive health in general.

189. The Government has planned to set baseline minimum level criteria for establishment of Family Welfare Centers (FWCs), Reproductive Health Centers (RHS), Mobile Service Units (MSU), ToR's for Lady Health Workers, and Village-based Family Planning Workers. This mechanism will ensure the standardization of basic facilities so that population welfare facilities may be uniformly extended to potential clients.

190. Moreover, the Reproductive and Healthcare Rights Act 2013 was enacted to provide sexual reproductive health care services. To implement the provisions of this Act, the Government has evaluated all policies and programs to effectively promote reproductive rights and health with a particular focus on protecting the rights of adolescent mothers and pregnant teenagers and combating discrimination against them.

191. The Government, in collaboration with UN Agencies, civil society, and young people, is providing better youth-friendly health services; these include setting up adolescent counseling centers; developing service protocols; sensitizing communities, and building the capacity of health facilities, civil society organizations, and young peer educators. In collaboration with UNFPA, the government has piloted four adolescent counseling centers. More than 9,000 adolescents and young people accessed services in the past two years.

HIV/AIDS

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 54 of the concluding observations

192. The Government is implementing an HIV/AIDS program that provides services to high-risk population groups, including treatment of STIs, supply of safe blood for transfusions, and capacity building of various stakeholders. A health sector project sponsored by Science Foundation is being implemented to analyze Population-Specific Epitope and Drug-resistance Mutations in HIV-1 in Pakistan.

193. The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination has established children-specific HIV Treatment Centers in Sindh and Punjab. Training sessions were also organized for HIV Physicians working with children. The National Aids Control Programme (NACP) regularly conducts awareness sessions for children and adolescents on HIV/AIDS in universities and colleges, madrasahs, schools, and communities, focusing on Larkana and Ratodero in Sindh. In Larkana, 1044 children are on ARV lifelong treatment.

194. Testing and counseling have also been conducted on household members of HIV/AIDS-positive cases (pre and post-test counseling). NACP also conducted an integrated Biological Behavioral Surveillance survey in 23 cities of Pakistan in 2017 to determine the prevalence and behavior among a vulnerable population segment, i.e., sex workers, drug abusers, gay men, transgender persons, etc.

195. On World AIDS Day, various sessions were conducted to create awareness of HIV/AIDS throughout Punjab. MoUs have also been signed with all leading Universities of the Punjab in this regard. 2113 HIV-positive Children are on ARVs (lifelong treatment) medicines across Pakistan till December 2020. Punjab AIDS Control Program has taken measures to create mass awareness through print, electronic and social media. P&SHD and PACP have developed baseline informative material for children about HIV/AIDS to be included in their school curriculum.

196. Prevention Parent-to-Child Transmission (PPTCT) centers provide service delivery to pregnant women. Anti-Retroviral is available in all ART centers of the Punjab AIDS Control Program.

197. The KP HIV/AIDS Control Program has established 08 HIV Family Care and Treatment Centers at the divisional level across KP to provide free of cost anti-retroviral therapy (ARVs medicine), to carry out focus group discussions, and has conducted multiple awareness sessions with students at Government colleges between 2017–19.

198. Prevention of Mother-Child Transmission (PPTCT) is ensured by providing free Surgical Equipment and Safety Kits by KP HIV Program. A total of 40 antenatal examinations have been conducted at PPTCT Centers in Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar with Zero HIV transmission rate.

199. HIV/AIDS *Integrated Biological & Behavioral Survey* (IBBS) is carried out every five years across the country with the support of UNAIDS. It includes relevant indicators on the risks and dynamics of HIV/AIDS among key populations, adolescents, and children. The Round-V of IBBS was conducted between 2016–17.

Drug and substance abuse

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 56 of the concluding observations

200. An Anti-Narcotics Policy is being implemented to mobilize the people of Pakistan, especially youth and institutions (national/international, private/public), to ensure their active participation in eradicating drugs. Mass awareness about the harms of drugs is being created through lectures and debates in schools and colleges. Students and heads of various institutions were invited to drug-burning ceremonies in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, and Islamabad. There are three rehabilitation centers at the Government level run by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), one each in Islamabad, Karachi, and Quetta.

201. According to the Prevention of Drugs in Educational Institutions Act 2018 and Compulsory Drug Test of Student Act 2018, students who test for drugs twice will be referred to a drug rehabilitation center, with the Government bearing the costs for students unable to afford the fee.

202. Policy, Strategic and Planning Unit (PSPU), P&SH Department has developed a mobile phone application called School Health Nutrition App. It has synchronized it with School Department software named SIS which mentions children's credentials concerning class and school name. School Health Nutrition Supervisors also visit Union Council Level Schools and check nutrition status, with a drug addiction parameter to prevent drug abuse among children. PSPU is working on designing a program on the rehabilitation of drug addicts, paying special attention to drug abuse among children.

203. SCPA is continuously organizing awareness sessions on the impact of drug abuse on children. The KP Commission, through trained psychologists at twelve district child protection units (CPUs), also addresses the issue by conducting community awareness sessions and individualized counseling sessions with families and children. The CPUs have identified 168 boys and referred them for drug addiction services to relevant public & private organizations.

204. Provincial Health Departments provide curative services in all Government hospitals for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers and collaborate with Social Welfare Departments for long-term rehabilitative services to People Who Use Drugs (PDUD) and control of transmission of diseases in People Who Use Injectable Drugs (PWID).

Environmental Health

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 58 of the concluding observations

205. The Government of Pakistan will assess the effects of polluted air, water, and soil on children's health to provide a basis for devising a strategy to address such issues. However, according to estimates from the WHO Global Health Observatory, about 200 deaths per 100 000 population are attributable to environmental factors in Pakistan.

Standard of living

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 60 of the concluding observations

206. BISP was introduced in Ehsaas, to reduce poverty and inequality and protect the most vulnerable and poor in Pakistan. Through BISP, more than 5 million deserving families have received support through cash transfer (current quarterly stipend: 6,000 PKR per household). 3.6 billion US dollars have been disbursed so far.

207. Owing to BISP, social protection expenditure increased from 0.1 percent of GDP in 2008 to 0.9 percent in 2011 and reached 2 percent in 2018.

208. Pakistan has been running an Education Conditional Cash Transfer for primary school-going children called Waseela-e-Taleem since 2012 in selected districts which has been expanded nationwide. Children of the poorest families are provided conditional cash

grants of 1,500 PKR for a boy and Rs. 2,000 per quarter for a girl on attainment of 70% attendance in school.

209. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal has recently launched a family-based Orphans and Widows Support Programme (OWSP), (a conditional cash transfer program) for matriculated children of Dar-ul-Ehsaas, as an exit strategy. It will enable children to stay within their families and continue their education.

210. PSPA is strengthening the social protection system in Punjab by using better poverty targeting mechanisms, introducing new social protection programs, improving payment mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluating social protection initiatives of all Government organizations, details of which have been mentioned earlier.

211. KP Vagrancy Restraint Act, 2020 and the KP Rehabilitation of Minorities (Victims of Terrorism) Endowment Fund Act, 2020, have been enacted to extend social protection to vulnerable families by establishing a fund and voluntary donations.

IX. Education, leisure, and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29, 30, and 31)

Education, including vocational training and guidance

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 62 of the concluding observations

212. National and provincial laws have been enacted to protect and uphold the right to education enshrined in Article 25-A of the Constitution. These laws aim to ensure universal, free, and compulsory primary education for all children in the country. They include the [ICT Free and Compulsory Education Act 2012](#), [Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014](#), the Sindh Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2013, Balochistan Compulsory Education Act 2014, and the KP Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017.

213. The Government has taken various measures to prevent children, particularly girls, from dropping out of school and to facilitate their access to schools along with providing financial support to children belonging to disadvantaged families through the following initiatives already detailed in the report: Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships initiative, Waseela-e-Taleem program, Advancing Quality Alternative Learning (AQAL)), Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme, Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) stipends, technical and financial support to educational institutions through the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), KP Stoori Da Pakhtunkhwa Scholarships etc.

214. In February 2019, the MoHR launched a nationwide campaign against child abuse to sensitize the public to all forms of child abuse and spread awareness about the importance of education for children.

215. The Punjab School Education Department (SED) has launched the Universal Primary Enrollment (UPE) Campaign 2018, aiming to enroll 95% of children. It also set up special teams for monitoring and door-to-door campaigns.

216. The Punjab Government earmarked 60% of the Punjab Education Sector Reforms Program (PESRP) to provide missing facilities for girls' schools, including drinking water, toilets, boundary walls, heating, etc. Punjab Government also provided funds through the ADP scheme for the construction/reconstruction of school infrastructure for installing missing infrastructure in institutions especially affected by natural disasters or conflicts.

217. To improve the quality of education, the Government focuses on improving teacher management while ensuring the continuous professional development of teachers for the purpose of multi-grade teaching. This is accomplished by implementing a meritocracy in the teacher's placement process, ensuring implementation of early childhood education, ensuring the availability of teaching and learning resources and their utilization in schools, and increasing access to information about nutrition and stunting for mothers and students.

218. The country has 206 teacher training institutions, with an enrolment of 722,728. Out of the total teaching training institutions, 155(75%) are in the public sector. Public sector teacher training institutions throughout the country provide pre-service and in-service training to teachers.

219. The Punjab Government In-Service Training College for the Teachers of Disabled Children has been established in Lahore to enhance teachers' capacity in teaching. Curricula and teaching methods are being monitored through CEOs (DEA) across Punjab.

220. Moreover, the Alternate Learning Programme (ALP) offers more flexible hours than formal schools. Students can study an accelerated curriculum and still have time to help with household chores, encouraging girls from rural areas to pursue their education.

221. The Government has taken various measures to protect schools from terrorist attacks, all over Pakistan. These include the installation of barbed wires on the boundary walls, deploying special security guards, maintaining the movement register, guarding the main entry gate, installing CCTV cameras, and building boundary walls.

222. Private schools' authorities in all four provinces have the authority to regulate private schools and monitor their compliance with minimum educational standards. These include capping the annual increase in fees, engaging in the development of an SNC to be adopted by private and public schools to provide uniform quality education to all children, etc., in compliance with Article 25-A of the Constitution and SDG 4 that ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

223. Pre-Primary education is the basic component of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Prep classes are for children between 3 to 5 years of age. An increase of 9.9 percent in Pre-Primary enrolment (12.6 million) in 2017–18 compared to 2016–17 (11.4 million) was observed.

224. The provincial governments have provision of ECE at the Primary level and strengthening of Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITE). In Punjab, in PSPA's upcoming programs, the following categories of children will be directly targeted: Special Children to be given conditional cash transfers, infants (below two years of age) of poor lactating women (under PHCIP), children of grade one to three under social inclusion component of Punjab Human Capital Investment Project, which aims to strengthen early childhood education.

225. UNICEF has been working with the Government to help more children access ECE, including those from underprivileged backgrounds, fulfill their right to quality education, and promote the child's intellectual development and growth.

226. During 2020–21, the Government of Punjab allocated 34.6 billion PKR for 110 ongoing and 29 new development projects in the education sector. Of these, 27.6 billion PKR has been allocated for school education, 3.9 billion PKR for higher education, 0.6 billion PKR for special education, and 2.5 billion PKR for literacy and non-formal education.

227. During 2020–21, the Sindh Government allocated 23.4 billion PKR for 399 ongoing and 11 new development projects in the education sector. Of these, 15.5 billion PKR has been allocated for School Education & Literacy. The school clustering Policy has been notified for upgrading the integration of schools and retention of enrolment. Human rights have been included in all syllabuses of all class levels. An initiative has been taken to bring digital learning solutions for girls and the most marginalized children aged 10–14 in 10 selected schools in Karachi and Hyderabad. Another initiative has been taken to rapidly scale up the success of digital learning to all students in Sindh Province through the introduction of a Learning Passport.

228. The KP Government has allocated 30.1 billion PKR in 2020–21 for 188 ongoing and 61 new development projects. Of these, 6.3 billion PKR has been allocated for primary education, 9.7 billion PKR for secondary education, and 9.0 billion PKR for higher education. This amount is 94 percent higher than last year's allocation.

229. In partnership with international donors, the KP government has rebuilt 179 schools across the province that were damaged by conflict. There has been a 30%–40% increase in enrolment at reconstructed schools due to increased capacity and better facilities.

230. The Balochistan Government allocated 9.1 billion PKR for 108 ongoing and 176 new development projects in 2021. Out of the total allocation, 1.1 billion PKR has been allocated for primary education, 0.7 billion PKR for middle education, 2.1 billion PKR for secondary education, and 4.1 billion for college education.

231. The Government of Balochistan has developed the 2nd Education Sector Reform Plan 2020–25, which has identified two key policy-focused areas after conducting a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis. In addition, the Secondary Education Department is implementing activities of the Project, namely, “Strengthen the performance of inclusive and response education” with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training in 22 lagging behind districts through improving infrastructure, learning material, access to education through multi-modal approach and training of teachers.

232. Through the Public Sector Development Programme, the Government of Balochistan provides buses in 141 Government Higher Secondary Schools to pick and drop students and teachers with an estimated 500 million PKR. The overall aim of the intervention is to improve access to education for students living in remote and far-flung areas.

233. The Government of Balochistan is also introducing a school nutrition program in 132 Primary Schools in remote areas with an estimated cost of 100 million PKR to improve access to primary education for children from low socio-economic strata and learning outcomes.

234. The Single National Curriculum (Phase-I Pre-Grade-I-V) is being implemented this academic year, commencing on 1st March 2022. The distribution of new books has been completed across Balochistan. The Secondary Education Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, is working on a program to orient all primary school teachers to Single National Curriculum so that they can implement the new curriculum as per its spirit.

Madrassas

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 64 of the concluding observations

235. In 2019, the Government initiated an effort to register and monitor madrassas to prevent the possibility of abuse, exploitation, and incitement of violence, following which 295 madrasahs applied for Government registration. In 2020 The ICT Waqf Properties Act 2020 was passed in the National Assembly for the management, supervision, and administration of waqf properties, including madrasahs.

236. As part of the effort, the Government decided to mainstream all madrasahs and ensure that other subjects were also taught along with modern religious education, including human rights education and life skills-based education. The SNC will ensure equality in quality across the three schooling systems in Pakistan, i.e., public, private, and madrassa.

X. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32–33, 35–36, 37 (b)–(d), 38, 39 and 40)

Asylum-seeking, refugee, and stateless children

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 66 of the concluding observations

237. The Government has approved a new National Policy on Afghan Refugees focusing on effectively implementing the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration, and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR). It promoted creating conducive conditions for voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration, enhancing refugee education and livelihood opportunities, supporting host communities, providing alternative stay arrangements for those remaining, facilitating resettlement to third countries, and developing a national refugee law. The Policy also provides for developing a national refugee law.

238. The Government is registering all children at birth, including those born to refugees. In addition, during the Afghan Citizen Card Project (July 2017–Feb,2018), the Ministry of SAFRON, in collaboration with NADRA, has identified and documented 188,199 Afghan Children under the age of 5 years.

239. All Afghan children have access to basic services such as primary education and health services in Pakistan. UNHCR has also been working with the Government to give refugees access to shelter, health, and education services, strengthen social cohesion between refugees and their host communities and help refugees who decide voluntarily to return home.

240. Pakistan is committed to preventing and protecting refugee and asylum-seeking children from falling victim to abuse and ensuring access to all rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and CRC. Pakistan is also bound by customary international law to protect the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless children.

241. The principal legislation determining citizenship in Pakistan is the Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951. Persons, who are born parents or grandparents born in the territories now included in Pakistan before the commencement of the Act, are citizens of Pakistan. Children born to Pakistani mothers and foreign national fathers after 18th April 2000 are also treated as citizens of Pakistan.

242. From the 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees (holding PoR cards), some 4.4 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan under the UNHCR-facilitated voluntary repatriation operation since 2002. Pakistanis are also bound by a tripartite agreement executed with Afghanistan and UNHCR in 2003, which, while facilitating repatriation, accords Afghan refugees their rights and privileges.

Internally Displaced Children

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 68 of the concluding observations

243. As a result of law enforcement actions in Pakistan, many people were dislocated in KP. These people are called Temporarily Dislocated People. The Federal and Provincial Governments, in collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs, are responding to the immediate humanitarian needs and protecting the human rights of Temporarily Dislocated People, including their safe return to their homes and the well-being of children per international humanitarian standards.

244. The Ministry of SAFRON is leading the response to the needs of these dislocated people supported by NDMA and its provincial partners. The Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) has established a technical working group. The response includes conducting protection, monitoring, reporting, advocacy, and interventions to support the humanitarian response.

245. Moreover, it also includes strengthening access to assistance and services with specific needs, providing tents and non-food items, family kits that include emergency shelter material, upgrading facilities at collective centers, finding alternative accommodation options through the extension of existing camps and establishment of new camps, and providing technical support on camp management and coordination. Humanitarian communication mechanisms have also been strengthened to inform Temporarily better-dislocated People of available support/services and registration processes.

246. The Government, in collaboration with UN Agencies, IOs, and NGOs, is protecting the human rights of children by establishing Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) where children are oriented on how to protect themselves from abuse, exploitation, etc. Besides, the Protection Cluster ensures Cluster actors' effective contributions relating to humanitarian communication, registration, and verification support towards Grievance Desks, child protection, gender-based violence response, and prevention.

247. In emergencies, the Social Welfare Department has issued registration cards to protect dislocated, unaccompanied, separated children and children with disabilities to ensure their safety from sexual abuse, harassment, abduction, and trafficking.

248. In KP, helpdesks have been established to conduct awareness sessions with the local community and ensure protection and response in the affected areas with the support of PDMA.

249. The Government is taking all possible measures to limit civilian casualties in military operations and ensure the protection of their right to life and survival through domestic and international laws. Reference to earlier responses can be made.

Children in armed groups

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 70 of the concluding observations

250. Non-State actors cannot legally recruit anyone, including children, because private military organizations are prohibited under Article 256 of the Constitution. Forming such an organization is also punishable under the Private Military Organizations (Abolition and Prohibition) Act 1973. The Government is making utmost efforts to prevent the recruitment of children by terrorists and extremist groups. National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has been established, striving for peace and safety by countering terrorism and extremism in all its forms. NACTA has taken the lead role in regulating cash movement across land and other routes in collaboration with stakeholders to combat terrorist financing effectively.

251. Pakistan's militant rehabilitation program was launched in September 2009 in Swat district for detained militants. The program is called the 'De- Radicalization and Emancipation Programs (DREPs). Based on the age of the beneficiaries, *Sabawoon* (First Ray of Dawn) and *Rastoon* (Place of Right Path) is for juveniles between 12 and 18 years of age; and Sparlay Center is for militants' families to create awareness about aftercare initiatives for rehabilitated individuals, particularly children, and adolescents. These centers are run as learning places rather than as prisons. The programs are run within a public-private partnership framework, although the overall supervision is with the Pakistan Army.

252. The Hum Pakistan Foundation (HPF), an umbrella body of local civil society and non-governmental organizations in Swat, assists the army in managing these programs. Moreover, the Swat programs are supported by a dedicated team of doctors, psychologists, religious clerics, and other professionals. The programs have four components: psychological rehabilitation, religious counseling, formal and vocational training, and social reintegration. The programs also include meeting with parents and encouraging the beneficiaries to participate in sports, cultural events, and festivals.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 72 of the concluding observations

253. The Federal and Provincial Governments have taken various measures to eradicate child labour, particularly the worst forms of child labour. Child Domestic Labour has been inserted in Part-I (Occupation) of the Schedule of the Employment of Children Act, 1991, at the Federal level.

254. Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour and the Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016, have been enacted. CP&WB Punjab has proposed an expansion plan by establishing child protection units in thirteen districts of Punjab in Phase-I and the remaining 12 districts in Phase II.

255. In KP, the KP Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015, has been enacted to prohibit the employment of children in any establishment and to regulate the hours and other conditions of workers in commercial establishments. The KP Government has also formulated The KP Child Labour Policy, 2018. The KP Commission has developed close coordination with relevant stakeholders for the eradication of child labour and ensures the protection of children involved in labor.

256. Balochistan has enacted the Balochistan Child Protection Act 2016, to protect children from physical or mental violence, injury, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, and sexual abuse.

257. The Government of Sindh has enacted the Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2017, to prohibit the employment of children and to regulate the employment of adolescents in certain occupations and work.

258. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal has established 159 Centers for Rehabilitation of Child Laborers wherein the children withdrawn from workplaces are given free education and stipend, etc. More than 15,000 students (ex-child workers) are enrolled in these Centers, and more than 5000 students have passed the examination. Among the passing children, more than 4500 have been admitted to Government institutions for higher education. During 2020–21, the number of passed-out children/students was 31,137.

259. In collaboration with UNICEF and DFID, the government is implementing a five-year (2018–22) program, AAWAZ II, which will empower and protect Pakistan's youth, women, girls, and boys who are too often exploited and left behind.

260. According to the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1992, employers who use bonded labour risk punishment of imprisonment for a term of at least two years and a maximum of five years, or a fine of at least 50,000 PKR or both.

261. A National Child Labour Survey was initiated in March 2019 by MoHR in collaboration with UNICEF. The study's findings will provide information for enacting evidence-based policies and legislative and programmatic measures for eradicating child labour.

262. The Domestic Workers Bill 2021 is under the legislative process at the ICT level. This bill regulates domestic workers' employment terms, sets the minimum employment age at sixteen years, and prohibits employment under the bonded labour system to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

263. The Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019 has also been passed. Awareness seminars, workshops, walks, etc., are being arranged by various functionaries of the Department in close coordination with the social partners to promote and facilitate the registration of domestic workers and employers. So far, over 30,000 domestic workers have been registered.

264. In KP, Social Mobilisers employed in the Child and Bonded Labour Unit (C&BLU) help educate parents, families, and key stakeholders on the detrimental effects of child labour. The Workers Education Wing in the KP Labour Department is also engaged in education and awareness raising on human rights, child labour, occupational safety, health, etc.

265. The Industrial Relations Institute and Saeed Ahmad Awan Center for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (SAACIWCE) are also working to build the capacity of Labour Inspection Staff, employers and workers, and trade union representatives in the areas of occupational safety and health, labor laws and improvement of the working environment in industries. These institutions also provide counseling and advisory services and develop training/information materials for promoting awareness of the issues of Labor Rights.

266. IPECL has been assisting the Government of Pakistan in eliminating child labour. Pakistan has agreed to enforce laws based on the ILO conventions, including the Minimum Age Convention, 1973, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999.

267. In Punjab during the Jan 2019– April 2020, under the Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kiln Act, 2016, 12058 inspections were made wherein 1239 child labour were found, and 859 FIRs were registered against the perpetrators. Similarly, under the Punjab Restriction of Employment of Children Act, 2016, 39620 inspections have been made wherein 2361 child labour were found, and 1969 FIRs were registered.

268. The Government of KP has established a regular monitoring mechanism in the industrial sector in each district. Regular inspections are made by inspecting staff notified under relevant labour law in the industry to eliminate the menace of child labour. In 2020

and 2021, 8982 and 9186 inspections were carried out in industrial and commercial establishments by the inspection team, respectively. Besides, prosecution carried out were 156 and 48, cases decided by courts were 134 and 43, and fines imposed by courts were Rs. 360500 and 109500, respectively. KP, a Home-Based Workers (Welfare and Protection) Act 2021, has been enacted to benefit Home-Based Workers.

Children in street situations

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 74 of the concluding observations

269. The Federal and Provincial Governments have established various child protection centers for street children, providing services like protection, shelter, health care, and educational opportunities. The Child Protection Institute was inaugurated in June 2021, providing such services at the ICT level. 113 street children have been provided with various services.

270. In the wake of the 18th Constitutional amendment, the subject of minors has been devolved to provinces for taking measures to address the issue of street children. Moreover, the Government has launched Ehsaas Programme, which, inter alia, includes inflation-adjusted BISP / Ehsaas Kafaalat cash transfers, an asset ownership program for graduation out of poverty, access to finance for the youth, graduate and undergraduate scholarships for the poor and needy students. Besides, the Government has introduced a Relief Package of 144 billion PKR, in the backdrop of COVID-19, to provide immediate cash relief of 12,000 PKR per household for four months to almost 12 million poor families under Ehsaas Programme.

271. Panagahs (protection centers) have been constructed in major cities to provide shelter for the homeless. The conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme (Waseela-e-Taleem) has been extended to another 50 districts during 2020, which involves a cash transfer of 750 PKR and 1000 PKR per quarter to boys and girls, respectively. Besides, capitalized Telehealth and Tele-Education Facilities to expand health and education coverage.

272. The Government of Punjab has initiated a program worth 62 billion PKR to fill many coverage gaps in social protection. PSPA has initiated “Sarparast Program,” social assistance and financial support to the families of poor and vulnerable widows to improve their well-being and social status. Sarparast program will provide dignified social assistance specially designed for the poor widows of Punjab. The program will help reduce the poverty rate amongst beneficiary households by directly supplementing monthly household income to reach out to the poor and vulnerable segments of society and promote the well-being of children.

273. The Government of Balochistan has developed a District Education Plan from 2016–2017 to 2020–2021 to enroll street children in schools. The district plans included specific actions for each prioritized area and target, indicators for implementation and monitoring, a steering and management structure at the district level, and reporting mechanisms for both the district and Provincial levels. The Director of Education Schools, through prioritization, planning, execution, and monitoring, has brought improvement in Quality Education, the establishment of new schools, real-time monitoring and complaint cells in all district education offices, and connecting all offices and schools through advanced technology.

274. SCPA started Anti Beggary drive with effect from 26th January 2021 to address the root causes of beggary and children in street situations.

275. The KP Commission regularly monitors the issue of street children through twelve district child protection units. A Street children-related project has been implemented from April 2019–March 2020 in Peshawar. During the project period, 1681 children (164 girls and 1517 boys) have been registered. 3190 children (268 girls and 2922 boys) benefited from adequate protection services. 694 children (3 girls and 691 boys) benefited from psychosocial, legal, and information counseling in the protection and information center, whereas 2029 children were provided counseling and recreational services at outreach by social mobilizers and sports coaches.

Sale, trafficking, and abduction

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 76 of the concluding observations

276. To address the issue of child trafficking, Section 369-A has been inserted in the PPC through the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2016.

277. The MoHR regularly conducts awareness sessions on the sale and trafficking of children to sensitize stakeholders about the issue's root causes and educate them about remedial measures.

278. Pakistan enacted Trafficking in Persons Act in 2018 to combat the menace of human trafficking, especially women and children. It provides that "anyone who commits the offense of trafficking in person is liable to be punished with imprisonment of up to seven years or fine up to one million PKR or with both and punishment may be extended up to ten years."

279. FIA and UNODC jointly prepared the National Action Plan 2021–2025 for undertaking various anti-human trafficking-related activities during 2021. The plan provides a blueprint that the Agency will use to coordinate actions and track results against human trafficking. It will provide a structure and a sequence of actions to achieve the goals outlined by the agency in conjunction with the recommendations from international partners. The P5 Strategy (Prevent, Protect, Partner, Pursue, and Prosecute) will enable FIA to clearly illustrate its primary objectives, key performance indicators, and commitment to a victim-centered approach, with a clear mandate to pursue and prosecute criminals, traffickers, and migrant smugglers, both in Pakistan and internationally.

280. The Government continued to use sections of the PPC that criminalized some forms of human trafficking. For example, Sections 371A and 371B criminalized the buying and selling of a person for prostitution and prescribed penalties of up to 25 years imprisonment and fines. Section 374 criminalized unlawful compulsory labor and prescribed penalties of up to five years imprisonment, a fine, or both. Section 366A criminalized the procreation of a "minor girl under 18" and prescribed penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment and a fine. Section 370 criminalized buying or disposing of any person as a slave and prescribed penalties of up to seven years imprisonment and a fine. Section 371 criminalized habitual dealing in slaves and prescribed penalties of up to life imprisonment and a fine if the imprisonment was less than ten years. Law enforcement and judiciaries investigated 800 sex trafficking cases, initiated prosecutions in 756 cases, and convicted 91 sex traffickers. These efforts have helped in combating child trafficking and holding perpetrators accountable for the sale of children and child pornography.

281. The Provincial Governments, on receiving complaints regarding internal trafficking, initiate criminal action under the relevant provisions of the Prevention and Trafficking in Person Act 2018 to eradicate such types of illegal activities.

282. KP Commission, CP&WB also provide comprehensive social and psychological assistance to child victims of sale and trafficking for their recovery and social reintegration.

Enforced disappearances

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 78 of the concluding observations

283. The Government has introduced a Bill in the National Assembly to criminalize enforced disappearances, which is undergoing the legislative process. The missing person cases are being handled by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances and dealt with under the Pakistan Commission of Inquiry Act, 1956 and regulation there under "Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, Regulation, 2011. When a case or application is received, the Commission and Home Departments in respective provinces constitute a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to investigate and trace the missing person. Subsequently, FIR is registered by the concerned Police Station. The Joint Investigation Team regularly holds meetings to resolve the case and reports to the Commission.

284. Mostly, these cases are heard by the Commission twice a month, and a representative of the Home Departments attends the hearing conducted by the Commission. Provincial Task

Force (PTF) considers cases presented to them of missing persons that remain un-traced despite efforts made by the JIT and Convener of Joint Investigation Team (JIT). PTF submits its report to the Commission by giving a specific viewpoint on the case.

285. The Provincial Governments adhere to the provisions of the Juvenile Justice System, 2018, if a person arrested is found under the age of 18 years during registering FIR.

Administration of juvenile justice

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 80 of the concluding observations

286. The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016 has been enacted to harmonize our laws with the provisions of the UNCRC with amendments in Sections 82 and 83 of the PPC.

287. Under JJSA, no person who was a juvenile offender at the time of the commission of an offence shall be awarded the punishment of death. According to JJSA, the Juvenile Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction in cases in which a juvenile is accused of commission of an offence. All cases pending before a trial Court in which a juvenile is accused of an offence stand transferred to the Juvenile Court having jurisdiction that is staffed by specially trained juvenile judges, prosecutors, probation officers, and other relevant staff. The JJSA 2018 also provides a mechanism for the determination of the age of juveniles and further protection for juveniles. It allows children in conflict with the right to seek legal assistance from a qualified legal practitioner appointed by the Government or by the Juvenile Court with at least seven years standing at the Bar. No juvenile may be charged with and tried for an offence with an adult. In compliance with international standards, the JJSA provides for establishing educational institutions, monitoring the performance of such institutions through the Juvenile Justice Committee, conducting investigations and observation at homes instead of Police Stations, and ensuring access to health services.

288. Furthermore, JJSA 2018 provides for disposing of cases through diversion and social reintegration of child offenders. To report to the Juvenile Court or Juvenile Justice Committee on measures being taken for social reintegration, health, education, or other conditions of the inmates, a medical officer, a member of the Committee, with the prior approval of the head of the Committee or an officer authorized by the Government may inspect an Observation Home or a Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre.

289. The Supreme Court in 2019 observed that jirgas and panchayats may not work within the parameters of the law and Constitution and held that the way they function violated articles of the Constitution. According to the Constitution, they may operate within the permissible limits of the law to the extent of acting as arbitration, mediation, negotiation, or reconciliation forums for civil disputes only.

290. Section 8(1) of the JJSA provides that where a person alleged to have committed an offence physically appears to be or claims to be a juvenile for this Act, the officer in charge of the Police Station or the investigation officer shall inquire to determine the age of such person based on his birth certificate, educational certificates, or any other pertinent documents. In the absence of such documents, the age of the accused person may be determined based on a medical examination report by a medical officer.

291. Section 399 of the CrPC provides those youthful offenders, instead of being imprisoned in a criminal jail, may be confined in reformatories established by the Provincial Governments where they can be given suitable education and vocational training. The Juvenile prisoners are kept in separate barracks, while in the central prisons, adolescent facility centers are provided. For instance, in Haripur Central Prison, in KP Province, basic education facilities, such as computer courses, a library, teaching facilities up to 10th class, religious teaching facilities, and basic recreational facilities are being provided in partnership with NGOs.

292. Pakistan's domestic law also considers special protections for women and children under Article 25(3) of the Constitution. The law prohibits pursuing criminal charges against children under a certain age. The CrPC also allows for crimes not punishable by death or imprisonment for life committed by persons under the age of fifteen to be tried under the

scope of the Reformatory Schools Act 1897. Women are meant to be arrested and searched by female law enforcement officials. They must also be segregated from male prisons, inmates, and officials.

293. The Government of Punjab Home Department has declared the Borstal Institute, Bahawalpur, Borstal Institute Faisalabad, and Juvenile wards in the Punjab jails as Juvenile Rehabilitation centers under section 20 of JJSA wherein all facilities admissible under the rules are being provided to the juvenile prisoners, including education, health, technical education, and religious education, etc. The Prison Department, in collaboration with the Literacy and & Non-Formal Education Department, has established literacy centers in all jails of Punjab. MoU has been signed with TEVTA and Punjab Prisons for providing technical education and vocational training courses, including different skills for male and female prisoners and juveniles confined in the jails of Punjab. In this regard, 12139 prisoners have qualified for different technical courses. 17 psychologists and 15 junior Psychologists have been working at different jails to rehabilitate prisoners, including juvenile prisoners. Moreover, they are responsible for several behavior modifications and risk prevention. Their main responsibilities are to address all the psychological needs of offenders undergoing prison rehabilitation programs. The Provincial Governments have set up special enclosures for keeping juveniles under trial prisoners in jails. Children are not detained with adults in prisons.

XI. Ratification of the Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and a Communications procedure

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 82 of the concluding observations

294. Pakistan ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in the Armed Conflict (OPAC) on 17th November 2016.

XII. Ratification of international human rights instruments

Follow-up information relating to paragraphs 83–84 of the concluding observations

295. Pakistan's Initial Report to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (OPSC) has been submitted to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in November 2020.

XIII. Implementation and reporting

Follow-up and dissemination

296. The recommendations of the Committee were disseminated among the relevant stakeholders for implementation and submitting progress reports. Progress has been incorporated into the present report.

Conclusion

297. Pakistan remains committed to implementing its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Government is pursuing measures to further align its policies with the Convention and assure its commitment to operationalising the rights of the child as enshrined in the Convention.