



Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Twentieth Meeting

Summary record of the 28th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 23 May 2024, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chair: Ms. Brands Kehris (Representative of the Secretary-General)

Chair: Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Opening of the Meeting by the representative of the Secretary-General

1. **The Temporary Chair**, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, said that the number of States parties to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography now stood at 173 and 178, respectively. The Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, however, had been ratified by only 52 States.

2. Since the previous Meeting of States Parties, the Committee had reviewed 48 reports but, because of obstacles linked to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a backlog of 78 reports remained. In addition, 98 individual communications were pending consideration. The Committee had, however, adopted 51 decisions on 53 cases in relation to 16 States parties under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure. It was currently conducting four inquiries. A visit to a State party had been conducted in 2023 and another would be carried out soon. The Committee needed additional resources in order to address the backlog related to reports and individual communications, as the financial resources allocated to the treaty body system had not kept pace with the increase in workload. The Committee also needed additional resources in order to conduct inquiries.

3. In the context of General Assembly resolution [68/268](#) on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the Committee had decided, in February 2023, to implement the simplified reporting procedure as from 1 January 2024. It was hoped that the new process would come into use by the end of 2025, when the backlog of reports was expected to be cleared. The fact that the next meeting of the pre-sessional working group had been cancelled, however, would delay the issuance of the lists of issues necessary to address the backlog of reports. In that connection, States must pay their assessed contributions to the United Nations in full and without delay.

4. Milestones in the treaty body strengthening process had included the adoption, in June 2022, of the conclusions of the Chairs of the treaty bodies at their 34th meeting; the issuance, in May 2023, of the working paper of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on options and guiding questions for the development of an implementation plan for those conclusions; and the adoption, in June 2023, at the 35th meeting of the Chairs, of their

conclusions on the working paper. Those milestones had been based on the recommendations of the report on the process of the consideration of the state of the United Nations human rights treaty body system ([A/75/601](#), annex), which had been co-facilitated by Member State representatives. It was hoped that the necessary decisions on the strengthening of the treaty bodies would be made later in 2024 through the General Assembly resolution on the matter and the implementation of the Chairs' conclusions on the working paper. A strengthened treaty body system was in the interest of States, as it would ease the reporting burden and avoid a backlog of reports, and of individual rights holders, whose complaints needed to be considered in a timely manner.

5. The Committee had adopted general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change. In response to a request for comments on the draft, it had received over 170 submissions from States, United Nations entities, national human rights institutions, civil society, children's organizations and experts, as well as input from thematic workshops and regional consultations in Asia and South America. An advisory team comprising 12 children aged between 11 and 17 had supported the consultations undertaken for the general comment, in the course of which 16,331 contributions had been received from children from 121 countries, through online surveys, focus groups, and in-person national and regional consultations. The Committee was now working on its general comment on children's rights to access to justice and effective remedies. The concept note and the details of how to participate in the process were on the Committee's web page.

6. On 11 October 2023, the Committee had issued a statement to clarify the concepts of parental guidance and the evolving capacities of the child, as enshrined in article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to explain how that article struck a balance between the rights of the child and the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents.

7. From 13 to 15 November 2023, as part of a follow-up visit to the Pacific region, the Committee had conducted visits to the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu, which had been reviewed during the extraordinary eighty-fourth session. The delegations had met with children, communities, governments and civil society to consider the implementation of the Committee's recommendations in the three countries. Following the visits, a regional experience-sharing workshop on the implementation of the recommendations had been held in Apia, where the

members of the Committee had met government representatives from 12 Pacific island countries.

8. In Geneva, the Committee held informal meetings with States every year during its session in January and February. Nearly 50 States had attended its fourteenth such meeting, held in February 2023, and its fifteenth such meeting, held in February 2024. In 2023, the meeting had been followed by a briefing on the inquiry procedure under the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

9. With respect to the elections, she recalled the provisions of General Assembly resolution 68/268 concerning the calibre of experts to be nominated by the States parties, the information to be provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the need for equitable geographical distribution and balanced representation in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies.

Election of the Chair

10. **The Temporary Chair** said that she had been informed by the Coordinator of the Group of African States that Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi) had been nominated for the office of Chair of the Meeting.

11. *Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi) was elected Chair by acclamation.*

12. *Mr. Maniratanga (Burundi) took the Chair.*

Adoption of the agenda (CRC/SP/55)

13. *The agenda was adopted.*

14. **The Chair** said that he had been informed that the Secretary-General had yet to receive proper credentials from a number of the States parties represented at the Meeting. He urged the representatives of those States parties to see to it that their credentials were submitted to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and suggested that they should be entitled provisionally to participate in the Meeting.

15. *It was so decided.*

Election of other officers of the Meeting

16. *Ms. Broderick (Ireland), Mr. Poveda Brito (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and Ms. Zoghbi (Lebanon) were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*

Election of nine members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as amended by General Assembly resolution 50/155 (CRC/SP/56 and CRC/SP/56/Add.1)

17. **The Chair**, drawing attention to paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of article 43 of the Convention, recalled that, in accordance with article 43 as amended, nine Committee members to replace those whose terms would expire on 28 February 2025 were to be elected for a term of four years by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties. The list was contained in document CRC/SP/56. The nomination of candidates from Benin and Burundi, which had been received after the deadline, had been included in document CRC/SP/56/Add.1.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **The Chair** said that the nomination of the candidate from Mali had been withdrawn.

20. *At the invitation of the Chair, Ms. Nyenpan (Liberia), Ms. Wells (Vanuatu), Mr. Gómez (Ireland) and Mr. Gurbanov (Azerbaijan) acted as tellers.*

21. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	190
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	190
<i>Number of representatives voting:</i>	189
<i>Required majority:</i>	95
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Ms. Moussa (Mauritania)	142
Mr. Ekesa (Kenya)	134
Mr. Lumina (Zambia)	134
Mr. Van Keirsbilck (Belgium)	134
Mr. Chophel (Bhutan)	130
Mr. Mezmur (Ethiopia)	121
Ms. Kiladze (Georgia)	120
Ms. Ianachevici (Republic of Moldova)	113
Ms. Scerri Ferrante (Malta)	112
Mr. Ali (Nigeria)	86
Ms. Jean François (Haiti)	84
Ms. Zara (Chad)	75
Mr. Youl (Burkina Faso)	62
Ms. Mwale (Malawi)	61
Ms. Adonon (Benin)	57
Mr. Ndayisenga (Burundi)	48
Ms. Kjostarova-Unkovska (North Macedonia)	35

22. *Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Mr. Chophel (Bhutan), Mr. Ekesa (Kenya), Ms. Ianachevici (Republic of Moldova), Ms. Kiladze (Georgia), Mr. Lumina (Zambia), Mr. Mezmur (Ethiopia), Ms. Moussa*

(Mauritania), Ms. Scerri Ferrante (Malta) and Mr. Van Keirsbilck (Belgium) were elected members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Other matters

23. **Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) said that it was regrettable that the Committee often departed from its core task, namely, helping States parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and its Optional Protocols. The Committee appeared to be increasingly arbitrary in its activities, especially in recent years, in a manner that not only served the interests of a particular group of countries but was actively encouraged by them. Instead of making rational use of the time allocated for meetings, the Committee spent a significant part of that time on non-mandated activities, such as issuing general comments that were then imposed upon States as some form of new mandatory standard. The Committee did not have rule-making functions; documents such as general comments reflected only the personal opinion of the Committee members and could not result in the imposition upon States of any obligations additional to those undertaken by them when ratifying or acceding to the Convention, unless otherwise declared by them on a voluntary basis.

24. In addition, the Committee members' free interpretation of their mandate hindered constructive dialogue with national delegations. For example, in May 2023, at the presentation of the Committee's general comment No. 26 (2023), States had not had the opportunity to speak, as the podium had been given over to some child delegates who had spoken of the Committee's activities in exclusively complimentary terms.

25. Another consequence of the Committee's arbitrariness was that it had accumulated a significant backlog of periodic national reports on the implementation of the Convention. For example, the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the Russian Federation had been sent to the Committee as early as July 2019, but had not been considered until January 2024, almost five years later.

26. His delegation wished to comment, in the light of its own practical experience, on the concluding observations of the Committee on those combined reports. The Committee had discharged its responsibilities in an unprofessional and politicized manner. His delegation once again recalled that the Committee had been convened pursuant to article 43 of the Convention, in order to review the progress made by States parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention.

27. An examination of the concluding observations showed that there had been no constructive dialogue with the Committee members. The assessments contained in the document clearly demonstrated political bias; the impression was that the recommendations had been prepared in advance and that the preceding consideration had been a mere formality necessary to comply with the existing rules of the game.

28. Some of the findings, such as the observations on independent monitoring and cooperation with civil society, were deliberately negative or exceeded the Committee's mandate. In other findings, such as those related to the allocation of resources, and to birth registration and nationality, the Committee demonstrated its one-sided approach to assessing the official information provided by delegations. The impression was that anything that did not comply with a certain norm was deliberately obstructed. In addition, some recommendations were in fact unsubstantiated allegations prepared using unverified data from biased non-governmental organizations. The experts placed too much trust in unfounded, unverified information provided by such entities.

29. As was well known, concluding observations should be based on dialogue between the Committee experts and the delegation concerned and should not, therefore, include passages that had not been discussed during the consideration of the report. That was the case, in particular, for issues of sexual exploitation and abuse.

30. Nevertheless, despite a substantive, fact-based discussion with the Committee members, the information provided by his delegation had been either characterized as insufficient or completely ignored in the paragraphs related to coordination; data collection; access to justice and remedies; social services; education, including vocational training and guidance; special protection measures for Indigenous children; and the administration of justice.

31. An example of the formulaic, biased thinking of the Committee's experts was the criticism of the normative content of the Russian laws on freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Rather than assessing the ways in which such issues, including the prohibition of discrimination of all kinds, were addressed in accordance with specific national and cultural characteristics, the Committee imposed, as what it considered to be the only effective option, ultraliberal approaches that were taken by a select group of countries and had not been endorsed in an intergovernmental format.

32. Further confirmation that the Committee was rubber-stamping carbon-copy recommendations was contained in the observations about corporal punishment and the alleged “significant worsening of the situation of trafficking in persons”, which bore no relation to the reality in the Russian Federation.

33. The numerous references in the concluding observations to the Committee’s general comments, including recommendations on the implementation of those comments, were inappropriate. His delegation would continue to be guided exclusively by the articles of the Convention in the follow-up to its implementation.

34. The Committee had also exceeded its mandate in the paragraphs of the concluding observations in which the experts called for the ratification of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the optional protocols to a number of human rights treaties. The Committee had no mandate to monitor the implementation of international instruments other than the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, environmental issues and, even more so, their interpretation, did not fall within the Committee’s remit, as they were not mentioned in the Convention.

35. The Committee’s practice of holding closed meetings with representatives of civil society ran counter to the principles of transparency and impartiality. On the basis of the positive experience of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, such events should be held as open meetings.

36. Individual recommendations would appear to indicate either that the experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child did not understand their responsibilities and the facts on the ground, or that they lacked impartiality and objectivity. It was cause for serious concern that the plight of the children of Donbass, who had been living in mortal danger since 2014, had been of no interest to anyone before the special military operation. For all those years, the Committee had remained silent about the Kiev regime’s crimes against its own citizens. In the past eight years, hundreds of children had been killed in Donbass as a result of shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Since February 2022, however, the topic had been raised exclusively in the context of so-called Russian

aggression, with no mention made of the victims among children in the territory of the Russian Federation as a result of shelling by a neighbouring State.

37. The reference to the Republic of Crimea and the federal city of Sevastopol as being “temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation” was also unacceptable, since it completely distorted the established political and legal realities stemming from the fact that those territorial entities were an integral part of the Russian Federation.

38. The Russian Federation, therefore, did not intend to follow the Committee’s recommendations, which contained the above-mentioned unacceptable provisions.

Closure of the Meeting

39. **The Chair** declared the twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child closed.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.