



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Ninety-eighth session

### Summary record of the 2852nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 15 January 2025, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Skelton

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports of States parties** (*continued*)

*Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Honduras* (CRC/C/HND/6-7; CRC/C/HND/Q/6-7; CRC/C/HND/RQ/6-7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Honduras joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of Honduras to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **A representative of Honduras**, introducing her country's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports (CRC/C/HND/6-7) said that the coup d'état of 2009 had been a setback for human rights in her country, as it had ushered in a dictatorship in which the oligarchy and drug traffickers had conspired to capture the State. Between 2009 and 2021, the public debt had soared from \$3 billion to \$20 billion, while the poverty rate had risen from 54 per cent to 75 per cent. The situation had been compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and Hurricanes Eta and Iota, which had highlighted the country's vulnerability to climate change. The historic elections of 2021 had brought the dictatorship to an end and the country's first female President, Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, had assumed office. The new Administration had set about reinstating the rule of law, rebuilding public institutions and regaining public trust in human rights and democracy. The State recognized that children and adolescents were among the groups most in need of assistance, and it prioritized their protection and the realization of their rights.
4. Despite structural limitations, the State had increased public investment in services for children. The former Directorate for Children, Adolescents and the Family had been replaced with the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family, which had become the lead institution for public policy on children's affairs. The country's first ever National Policy on Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence had been adopted for the period 2024–2033. The policy had been developed in consultation with various stakeholders and was centred on four priorities: early childhood, migration, prevention of violence and deinstitutionalization.
5. In the legislative sphere, the National Congress had adopted several laws beneficial to children, including the National Children's Congress Act. Environmental and climate education had been included in the national curriculum. To promote the right to participation of children and adolescents, the National Congress had held three sessions, in 2022, 2023 and 2024, which had focused on the themes of the environment and climate change, food security, and art and culture. The legislative branch played an active role in mechanisms to promote measures for the protection of children's rights, including an inter-institutional committee for children.
6. To transform the country's health system and guarantee the well-being of the population, the Government had embarked on an unprecedented expansion of the hospital network, with the construction of eight general hospitals, four neonatal centres and several emergency units. At the same time, the Honduras Social Investment Fund had taken decisive steps to improve access to water and sanitation. Since 2022, the Ministry of Health had certified 17 hospitals – over half of the total number – as child-friendly. It was expected that the addition of new health facilities would improve coverage and reduce maternal and child mortality. The number of vaccines available free of charge had risen to 25. Nevertheless, the State faced persistent challenges related to healthcare gaps, structural factors and the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. In 2023, the School Meals Coalition had recognized the National School Meals Programme, which benefited 1.2 million children, as one of the best in Latin America. The Government was taking action to upgrade and renovate more than 5,500 schools, to distribute educational materials, and to implement the Solidarity Scholarship Programme, thus demonstrating its commitment to access to education and greater opportunities for children and adolescents.
8. In respect of migration, Honduras was a country of origin, transit, destination and return. The Migration Governance Council was reorganizing the institutional and legal

framework to address migration challenges, particularly those of emigration and irregular migration. The National Institute of Migration provided assistance and protection through its support centres for migrants in an irregular situation and returned migrants. Consular and civil registry services were being expanded for Hondurans in other parts of the world. Honduras and Guatemala had signed a protocol for the protection and care of unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents.

9. To ensure the right of children to recreation, more than 60 sports courts had been installed to high standards in vulnerable communities around the country. The Isy Obed Murillo Centre, which provided technological, educational and cultural resources and recreation and health services for vulnerable children and adolescents, had recently opened in Tegucigalpa. It was hoped that such initiatives would contribute to preventing violence and the stigmatization of children and adolescents.

10. In terms of the right to development, the State was working to improve the well-being of Honduran families through measures such as the provision of free electricity to more than 900,000 households, the implementation of the Bono Tecnológico Productivo Programme to support smallholder farmers, the expansion of the national road network and the granting of housing loans at low interest rates.

11. In the area of juvenile justice, the State had made alternatives to deprivation of liberty a priority and had strengthened the capacity of justice officials and developed comprehensive protocols for assisting and dealing with adolescents. Some challenges persisted, notably in terms of the infrastructure of educational internment centres.

12. Upholding the rights of children required, beyond legal and institutional reforms, the availability of sufficient resources. Given the loss of significant revenue through tax exemptions, Honduras required a new fiscal policy based on transparency and equity. The Government had therefore submitted a bill on tax fairness to the National Congress with a view to adopting a more progressive tax system and securing the resources needed to fulfil the State's obligations towards children, adolescents and families.

13. **Ms. Correa** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that she would like to know whether Honduras had a specific public policy aimed at strengthening the rights of children with disabilities and ensuring their equal opportunities and inclusion. She wished to know whether the State party had a system for detecting the ill-treatment of children and adolescents with disabilities at home, at school or in institutional settings. She would appreciate information on how the State party mainstreamed the rights of children with disabilities in its systems and policies for the protection of children's rights. Recalling that, in 2017, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had expressed concern that the State party's laws relating to children did not expressly include the principle of non-discrimination, she said that she wished to know whether that omission had been rectified. She would like to know what steps had been taken to prevent the abandonment and institutionalization of children with disabilities, what specific measures had been taken in relation to children with disabilities from rural areas and Indigenous and Afro-Honduran communities, and how many children with disabilities were living in institutions.

14. The Committee would like to know how the Government was preparing the population to deal with the climate crisis, and what steps were being taken to incorporate a child rights approach in environmental and climate risk management strategies. Furthermore, the Committee would like to know whether any steps had been taken to disseminate and implement the recommendations contained in its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change. The delegation might also explain why Honduras had not signed the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement).

15. **Ms. Aho** (Country Task Force) said that she would like to know when the new health facilities would become operational, and to what extent remote communities had access to health services. She wished to know why the country had such low breastfeeding rates, and whether mothers received adequate information and medical personnel adequate training on the subject. As it appeared that the COVID-19 pandemic had eroded public trust in

immunization, she wondered how the authorities tackled vaccine hesitancy and whether the cold chain extended to remote areas.

16. She would be interested to hear about cancer prevention and treatment programmes, given the high rates of cancer in the State party. In the light of reports that hospital patients relied on their families to provide food and medicine, she wished to know what happened to patients whose families did not have the resources to support them during their illness, and whether the State party provided any financial support in such cases. She would also welcome information on measures and arrangements to prevent tuberculosis, particularly among children, together with information on the HIV prevalence rate and measures to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

17. The Committee would appreciate an explanation of why Honduras had the second highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Latin America. It would be useful to know whether children were provided with information on sexual and reproductive health in schools and had access to sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception.

18. As exposure to drugs posed a significant problem, she wondered what had been done to prevent addiction among young people. She would be grateful if the delegation could describe the arrangements in place and the resources assigned to support drug-dependent youths.

19. She would also be interested to know whether any programmes had been introduced to combat the problem of obesity and overweight in the State party, as well as that of malnutrition. Lastly, the delegation might comment on efforts to increase access to clean drinking water, in the light of findings that the water supplied to half of all households was contaminated.

20. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Country Task Force) said that he was concerned to note that the State education budget had shrunk over a period of several years, while the number of school-age children was increasing. In that regard, he would appreciate information on the current trend and on the Government's plans and projections for the education budget at the preschool, primary and secondary levels. As it had been reported that schools were in a dire state, with some 8,000 schools lacking electricity, he wished to know more about the ongoing programme of school infrastructure renovation. He would welcome clarification of the duration of compulsory schooling in the State party. The delegation might also comment on reports that, despite the constitutional provision on free education, families were sometimes obliged to meet hidden costs, leading some poor families to take their children out of school.

21. In the light of high school dropout rates, caused by factors such as violence, gangs, poverty and poor infrastructure, the Committee would be interested to hear about any plans to maximize school enrolment and ensure that children who had dropped out could reintegrate and resume their studies. Similarly, the Committee wished to know whether the State party had a programme to support girls and adolescents who became pregnant. It would be useful to learn whether the State party had adopted any specific policies, programmes or plans to support the educational reintegration of internally displaced children, thus ensuring their safety and allowing them to rebuild their lives.

22. He would be grateful for additional information on early childhood education, including on the Government's policies and priorities and the financial support available to families. He was curious to know whether human rights education, including topics such as gender equality, non-discrimination and the rights of the child, formed part of the school curriculum. The availability of recreational facilities was particularly important, given that widespread insecurity prevented many children from participating in outdoor activities. He would like to know whether the programme for the construction of sport and leisure facilities would be rolled out nationwide.

23. On the topic of migrants and refugees, he would be grateful if the delegation could explain the State party's refugee status determination procedure, in particular with regard to the protection of children. Information on the identification of unaccompanied children and on age assessment procedures would be welcome. As some children had returned to Honduras after traumatic experiences, including expulsion, he wondered what steps the State party had taken to facilitate their return and ensure that their safety and well-being were

respected and their reintegration needs met. In the light of the former policy of the United States of America of separating children from their parents, he wished to know what had been done to support family reunification in cases where parents had returned to Honduras without their children.

24. The Committee would like to know what specific policies had been adopted for children from ethnic minorities, who were among the groups most likely to experience poverty and discrimination. It would also be useful to know whether the State party had a plan of action to combat child labour, including the worst forms of child labour, and whether inspection services were adequately trained to identify situations of child labour.

25. Recalling that the Supreme Court had handed down a historic ruling in favour of children in street situations, in which it requested the Directorate for Children, Adolescents and the Family to take measures to protect the rights of children in street situations, he wondered whether the authorities had followed up on the judgment.

26. The Special Justice System for Juvenile Offenders appeared to have insufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel to support children in conflict with the law in the implementation of restorative justice and other non-custodial measures. Since such shortages could result in increased use of deprivation of liberty, assurances that all children in conflict with the law had access to free legal assistance and that the lawyers assigned to their cases received specialized training would be welcome. Information about the protection and support available for child victims and witnesses in legal proceedings would also be useful. He would welcome details of any plans to raise the age of criminal responsibility so as to prevent children as young as 12 years old from being placed in detention facilities where they were likely to encounter older adolescents who had committed far more serious offences. Details of the measures imposed upon children under the age of criminal responsibility would be useful, as would an explanation for the marked increase in custodial penalties imposed upon minors in 2019 evident in the tables included in the periodic report (CRC/C/HND/6-7, para. 245).

27. In view of reports of torture and ill-treatment during interrogation, he would like to know what complaints mechanisms were in place, how reports of abuse were investigated and how often investigations led to prosecutions and convictions. Supporting statistical information would be helpful. He would appreciate the delegation's comment on criticisms from various sources, including the national preventive mechanism, indicating that educational internment centres for minors lacked appropriate resources for the provision of rehabilitation, education and training and that their buildings and fittings were not fit for purpose. As the Nuevo Jalteva Prison had attracted particularly intense criticism, despite being a modern structure, he wondered whether that facility would be closed and its residents transferred elsewhere. Education and training in the centre for girls appeared to be especially deficient, consisting primarily of crochet, jewellery and beauty workshops indicative of stereotypical gender perceptions. The State party might consider extending the training options available.

28. He would like to know how legislation intended to limit the volume of weapons in circulation was enforced and, more specifically, what was being done to ensure that minors did not have access to them. He would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that, at the military school, children as young as 12 years old might be involved in military exercises. Lastly, he wished to know whether the State party intended to definitively terminate the much-criticized Guardians of the Fatherland Programme and to amend legislation that allowed adolescents to be recruited into the military at the age of 15 in situations of armed conflict.

*The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 4.05 p.m.*

29. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Government had taken a new approach to disability whereby disability issues were mainstreamed in all areas. A recently introduced bill on the development of persons with disabilities, which enshrined the right to comprehensive development of all children with disabilities and provided for an inclusive education system, inter alia, had garnered cross-sectoral support, and dedicated resources were being earmarked for disability-related components of social services and programmes. As a result, of a total of 122,000 scholarships available for Honduran children, 13,000 had

been reserved specifically for children with disabilities; special provision for children with autism – the number of whom was rising – was now available in mainstream schools; and children with disabilities were given priority under the programmes run by the flagship Solidarity Network, through which around half a million children had received school kits, shoes and uniforms, among other benefits.

30. The National School Meals Programme was one of the most successful in Central America in terms of its coverage and efficiency, with around 1.3 million children in over 2,000 schools receiving free meals. Under the “Growing Together” programme, around 50,000 mothers in poor communities received early childhood support in the areas of nutrition, health, vaccination and early stimulation. The authorities had also been working hard to monitor adolescent pregnancy and identify where investment was needed. A new prevention policy to expand sexual and reproductive health education and facilitate access to the emergency contraceptive pill should be adopted by the end of 2025.

31. The Solidarity Network provided support for around 300,000 Indigenous and Afro-Honduran children under its various programmes. Additionally, the families of those children benefited from locally run microcredit schemes that allowed the country’s poorest communities to develop income-generating activities and gave priority to single mothers. Another newly introduced benefit was the allowance for children undergoing cancer treatment. In short, under the new Government, children were the priority in all social programmes and social protection interventions; as a further example, following Tropical Storm Sara, which had hit the country in 2024, great efforts had been made to keep schools open, and food rations had been distributed to around 150,000 families with children.

32. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Ministry of Education had trained over 30,000 teachers in the provision of support for children with disabilities and that school curricula and infrastructure had been adapted to the needs of blind children and those with motor or other disabilities. Teachers who spoke an Indigenous language in addition to Spanish were assigned to schools in areas where children’s first language was one of the country’s eight Indigenous languages, and special selection procedures, including quotas, had been established to encourage their recruitment. In a milestone achievement for the country, on 1 February 2025, a specialist preschool teacher training centre would open in Colón department – home to the largest concentration of Miskito and Garifuna communities – where instruction would be given in Garifuna and Miskito as well as in English and Spanish. On that same date, a comprehensive early childhood care centre providing health and educational services would open in Comayagüela.

33. The new Government’s efforts to ensure education for all extended to children receiving treatment in hospital; adults deprived of liberty and any children living with them, for whom adult education centres and early childhood care centres were being established in detention facilities; and child returnees. With support from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Government was also working to develop a learning passport to support the education of migrant children in transit through Honduras.

34. The Government’s commitment to education was further evidenced by an increase in the education budget from 31 billion Honduran lempiras under the previous Administration to 43 billion lempiras in 2025 and infrastructure improvements in around 5,500 of the more than 12,000 schools that it had inherited in very poor condition. The new Government had also managed to reverse the downtrend in school enrolment seen in the period 2016–2021. Enrolment rates had been rising since 2022 and, in 2025, there were expected to be a record high 2 million children in school. In addition, the dropout rate in 2024 had been just 2.46 per cent.

35. More than 39,000 teachers had received specific training on inclusion, and the promotion of children’s and human rights and civic education in school was accorded increasing attention. Two important programmes had been launched as part of efforts to counter violence – an agreement with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to promote football in schools and a national arts programme that included a choir in which over 1,000 children sang. Honduras had also recently become a member of the Scholas network led by Pope Francis. Lastly, the Guardians of the Fatherland Programme had been definitively abolished soon after President Castro had assumed office.

36. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Ministry of Health had adopted a programme-based organizational structure in June 2024 and had since launched a number of new programmes. They included a family and community healthcare programme, which addressed all child-related health concerns from conception to adolescence, a mental health programme, a nutrition programme, and a disability and rehabilitation programme. The Expanded Immunization Programme continued to operate, and the Ministry had also been making considerable investment in infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, which had the least access to healthcare. Six of the eight new hospitals under construction were in smaller cities or towns in the interior of the country and five new maternal and childcare units were being established in regions where maternal and neonatal mortality rates were highest. Additionally, 70 new emergency units were being set up in the areas most affected by poverty. Funding had been secured to renovate and improve the 70 maternal and childcare units already operating in rural areas. In conjunction with the National Breastfeeding Commission, those facilities would be specifically aimed at promoting and facilitating breastfeeding in line with the new law on breastfeeding, which was designed to address gaps in training and support, *inter alia*.

37. Although vaccination coverage had slipped from 95 per cent to 70 per cent during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authorities had been progressively recovering lost ground, ending 2024 with 80 per cent coverage. Outside of urban areas, however, significant gaps remained, and more than \$10 million would be invested in 2025 in a bid to reach all zero-dose children. Considerable investments had also been made to guarantee the cold chain and introduce new vaccines, including the chickenpox, human papillomavirus and dengue vaccines.

38. While the authorities were able to guarantee proper diagnosis in 98 per cent of childhood cancer cases, work to improve early detection continued. Support available now included help with transport and nutrition, and a new law adopted in May 2024 would make radiotherapy available in public sector facilities, among other advances. More than 70 child- and adolescent-friendly clinics were operating across the country and more than 2,000 healthcare professionals had been trained to use the new handbook on contraception methods, which covered use of the emergency contraceptive pill. Rates of mother-to-child HIV/AIDS infection remained low, at less than 1 per 100,000 births, and milk supplementation was available for any child that was infected. The authorities were also working hard to bring piped drinking water to the 10 per cent of the country that the network did not yet reach.

39. **A representative of Honduras** said that she was pleased to report that a law to provide care and assistance for internally displaced persons had been adopted in 2022, that \$150 million had been made available to address their situation and that the Ministry of Human Rights had already provided assistance to hundreds of families.

40. **A representative of Honduras** said that the Migration Governance Council, which was responsible for coordinating the Government's response to migration issues, included representatives of the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family. The administrative sanction for irregular entry into Honduras had been suspended, thereby benefiting over a million migrants in an irregular situation, including more than 250,000 children and adolescents. The National Institute of Migration, which provided assistance and support to migrants at entry and exit points, had invested over \$7 million in migration assistance programmes in recent years and, in June 2024, the Francisco Paz Migrant Centre had been opened, with the capacity to serve over 3,000 migrants in an irregular situation daily; it offered specialized services for children and adolescents, including interpretation services, as well as food, lodging, hygiene products and clothing. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had developed a national reintegration plan for returning migrants to be implemented by various institutions, including the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family, supporting their inclusion in public healthcare, education and financial support programmes. Following President Castro Sarmiento's visit to the southern border of the United States in September 2023, over 25,000 children and adolescents had been reunited with their families. The Ministry of Education worked with other authorities to facilitate the reintegration of internally displaced children and adolescents, and measures were in place to protect minors who were unaccompanied or had been separated from their families, including the provision of free legal advice and representation and community reintegration initiatives. The law provided for the special protection of child victims of forced recruitment, and the National

Internal Forced Displacement Response System provided differentiated responses with a human rights-based approach across various areas including healthcare, education, housing, land, property and humanitarian assistance; in 2024, it had provided assistance to over 100 families.

41. **A representative of Honduras** said that the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family had recently conducted the first national child labour survey in Honduras, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), in order to establish standardized indicators to monitor the child labour situation. The survey had been based on an ILO-recommended questionnaire, which included sections on hazardous working conditions. The results had revealed that 342,180 children were economically active, 472,983 were engaged in domestic work and 207,388 were engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The agriculture industry, particularly the coffee sector, had the highest incidence of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. In November 2024, all labour inspectors and supporting personnel nationwide had received training on child labour from a team of ILO experts. All inspections by the Ministry of Labour now encompassed oversight of general labour rights, occupational health and safety and child labour checks, which had not previously been included.

42. The Programme for Monitoring Labour Conditions was focused on eradicating child labour, with monthly child labour inspections of approximately 10 workplaces in various economic sectors selected randomly by the Ministry of Labour. The “Seal of Compliance with Child Labour Regulations” programme provided voluntary, free certification for workplaces to encourage compliance with labour rights, promote strategies and policies to prevent child labour in production processes, protect adolescent workers and foster best labour practices. The pilot project had begun with four coffee harvesting companies, which had undergone inspection and monitoring to qualify for certification. The National Commission for the Gradual, Progressive Elimination of Child Labour had recently been reactivated; it had established 30 local committees for child labour prevention, each with its own budget for monitoring and follow-up. The committees conducted community activities such as awareness-raising initiatives about child labour. The project would be expanded in 2025. In addition, the “CLEAR Supply Chains” project, in collaboration with ILO, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), aimed to eliminate child labour in supply chains, particularly in the coffee sector. The project involved training workshops to establish or strengthen existing child labour prevention committees and the establishment of regional subcommissions for child labour prevention in the coffee sector. Technical assistance was being provided to the Directorate General of Labor Inspection to enhance its capacity to prevent hazardous work in coffee supply chains and to the Directorate General of Social Welfare to review, promote, publish and disseminate updates on hazardous jobs for adolescent workers.

43. **A representative of Honduras** said that, in the juvenile justice system, the State applied a model of comprehensive care, with around 16 multidisciplinary technical teams that received ongoing training in juvenile justice. Restorative justice workshops were regularly organized. Ensuring that services were accessible and had the capacity to support adolescents remained a challenge, particularly in remote communities and those heavily influenced by organized gangs. A programme for disengaging adolescents from gangs had been launched, and coordination between civil society organizations, international cooperation bodies, ministries and the National Institute for Vocational Training was facilitating access to services for those communities. Although there had been discussion of the idea of further lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility, the current Administration was not considering any such proposal.

44. Reports of torture and mistreatment in educational internment centres, flagged by the national preventive mechanism and civil society organizations, had been referred to the justice system in accordance with article 289 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Between 2020 and 2023, approximately 30 complaints had been filed regarding cruel treatment, violations of the rights to health and personal integrity, riots in educational internment centres and infringements of the rights to family and recreation. Since 2019, the number of adolescents in detention centres had increased by nearly 50 per cent, which could be attributed in part to insufficient training among judges, prosecutors and others within the



juvenile justice system. Training efforts had significantly advanced, however, with an emphasis on detention as a measure of last resort. Currently, there were 97 adolescents detained in the country's five educational internment centres.

45. The Expert Committee on Juvenile Justice provided continuous oversight of the situation of adolescents in conflict with the law in both custodial setting and non-custodial programmes. It was made up of justice officials, juvenile judges, public defenders and prosecutors, alongside representatives of independent supervisory bodies such as the Office of the National Commissioner for Human Rights and civil society organizations. Educational internment centres' interdisciplinary teams had been strengthened, the scope of informal education workshops had been expanded and the Government had increased the budget allocated to the centres by 25 per cent to address unmet needs. Academic programmes were available at all levels, with 100 per cent of adolescent inmates currently enrolled in education and some pursuing university studies, either in person or online. Efforts were under way to relocate adolescents from Nuevo Jalteva Prison to a facility where their rights and rehabilitation would be assured. At the Sagrado Corazón de María Centre, workshops were tailored to the interests of the adolescents, which were identified through regular assessments. In 2025, hairdressing and computer workshops had been added based on expressed needs.

46. **A representative of Honduras** said that, regarding children deprived of their family environment, the Rights Protection Directorate of the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family had a specific unit for the evaluation and certification of alternative care arrangements. The certification manual had been revised in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, which granted operational permits for alternative care institutions, as part of ongoing work to develop regulations that would make certification mandatory. The Government's approach prioritized the right of children to a family over institutionalization. Training was being given to personnel in 33 residential care institutions, in order to improve the quality of services. Efforts were also being made to promote other arrangements, such as a fostering system. A pilot protocol for children requiring temporary protection measures had been developed and a survey of alternative care institutions had been launched by the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of the Interior, with support from UNICEF. So far, 136 organizations providing direct care to 3,500 children had been identified. In 2025, a consultation process had been launched with children aged 12 or older in alternative care institutions to gather their views on their situation and conditions. In 2024, training had been organized for 678 persons working in alternative care institutions and related municipal offices and councils, focusing on developing skills to protect children's rights.

47. **A representative of Honduras** said that, as part of measures to build resilience to climate change, adolescents from various schools had been involved in efforts to rescue Lake Yojoa, participating in activities such as a clean-up of the surrounding area. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment had carried out a number of awareness-raising initiatives to involve children in climate preparedness.

48. **A representative of Honduras** said that, further to one of the recommendations set out in the Supreme Court's ruling in favour of children in street situations, a mapping exercise and diagnostic study were currently being conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and the National Registry of Persons, in order to address historical difficulties in determining the exact number of children in street situations. According to the most recent statistical data, there were an estimated 16,000 children in street situations in the country, primarily in major cities. Another recommendation pertained to supporting institutions that worked directly with children in street situations by promoting the establishment of temporary shelters or homes. In 2024, the Ministry for Children, Adolescents and the Family had signed agreements with three institutions that provided direct care for children in street situations on technical assistance and resources for such institutions. The Ministry took a non-institutional approach to the issue, focusing on understanding the history and family background of children in street situations and making family reintegration a priority. In many cases, the families were found to be living in poverty. Programmes by the Ministry of Social Development and the Solidarity Network specifically targeted such families. Institutional protective measures were applied only in cases where family reintegration or support was not possible. In such cases, institutionalization was treated as a temporary measure to immediately remove the child from the street situation. During the child's stay in institution care, his or her situation was assessed

and he or she was referred to appropriate support programmes. In 2024, 119 outreach operations had been conducted in large cities, identifying 110 children in street situations. Protective measures had been taken in respect of each child. Regional and municipal authorities were actively engaged in identifying and supporting children in street situations.

49. **Ms. Correa** said that it was unclear how the draft legislation on the development of persons with disabilities took into account children with disabilities and how chapter four of the Children's Code would be applied, given that it enshrined the principle of subsidiarity rather than upholding the State's joint responsibility in the area of inclusion. She wished to know whether information was available on the number of children with disabilities not living with their families and on the reasons for that. She would be interested to hear about any public policies that were being developed concerning the risks posed by the climate crisis, as well as about any additional initiatives to educate children about environmental issues.

50. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** (Country Task Force) said that he would welcome assurances from the delegation that the military would not intervene in any crises arising in juvenile detention centres.

51. In the light of the fact that legislation permitting abortion had been abandoned at the last minute, he wished to know what specific measures the authorities had taken to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy.

52. In its judgment in the *Case of the Miskito Divers (Lemonth Morris et al.) v. Honduras*, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights had established that the State party should submit, within one year, a report on the measures adopted to comply with the judgment. Given that such a report had not been submitted, the Committee would welcome an update on the progress made in implementing the judgment.

53. The delegation might also comment on how the authorities were preparing for the possibility that the incoming Administration of the United States might forcibly return large numbers of migrants to the State party.

54. **Ms. Aho** said that she would be interested to hear about any mental health services for children. She also wished to know what specific steps were being taken to ensure that drinking water was clean and safe.

55. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** said that he wished to know what training was provided to police officers in dealing with children in street situations and whether leisure facilities were monitored by police. He would be interested to hear about any steps being taken to rebuild schools destroyed by tropical storms and to ensure that water and electricity were supplied to all schools.

56. **Ms. Correa** said that she would welcome more details of the process, leadership and time frame for the legal analysis of a range of bills to verify their compliance with treaties and conventions. She wished to know how the State party would ensure that the plans to amend the articles of the Family Code pertaining to the age of majority, parental authority and divorce and the dissolution of marriage would serve to guarantee children's rights and whether, as part of those changes, efforts would be made to bring the Constitution and other laws into line with international standards on, for example, the age of sexual consent and the age of criminal responsibility. It would be helpful to know more about how the authorities ensured the participation of children in the aforementioned legislative initiatives.

57. She would be grateful for more information on the roles and responsibilities of the institutions charged with protecting children whose rights had been violated. She would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on whether the child protection guarantees set out in the Children's Code were sufficiently robust. She wished to know why the State party had not yet ratified the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure and whether it had any plans to do so.

58. It would be useful to learn how the State party ensured that the Criminal Code was in line with the Convention and its Optional Protocols, including in terms of punishments that were commensurate with the severity of offences related to the sexual exploitation of children, as well as with respect to reparation and compensation for child victims. She wished

to know how sexual offences, including rape and sexual abuse, were defined in criminal legislation.

59. She would welcome further details of the causes of difficulties encountered in the training of prosecutors. The delegation might provide an update on the status of the new legislation and policy on social protection and also explain how the public security policy would be applied to children, with a particular focus on avoiding the criminalization of children. It would be interesting to learn what aspects had been considered in the design of a strategy to combat organized crime, particularly with regard to child victims.

60. She would like to know more about the public policy on preventing teenage pregnancy and protecting pregnant teenagers and about the bill on the “Aulas-Cuna” (mother and baby classrooms) programme designed to enable teenage mothers to remain in school. It would be helpful to understand how the authorities ensured that budget allocations for social and special protection reached their intended destination, as well as whether there were any plans to assess the results of investments in that area and what checks were in place to ensure transparency and accountability in financial decision-making.

61. She would welcome an account of any action being taken to collect and analyse data on the application of the Convention and its Optional Protocols and to ensure that children and adolescents in the State party were aware of the Convention. She wished to know what feedback and coordination mechanisms were in place to facilitate open dialogue between the Government and civil society.

62. **Ms. Aho** said that she wished to know what percentage of births were registered, what the time limit for registration was, what happened if the time limit was exceeded and what had been done to ensure the late registration of births during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic when civil registry offices had been closed. It was unclear why midwives played a role in birth registration. It would be helpful to learn how children born to Honduran parents outside the country could obtain a birth certificate and how much it cost to do so.

63. She would be interested to hear about any steps being taken to ensure that children who gathered to engage in peaceful activities were not harassed by police. She would also welcome details on Internet access and on how children were protected in the digital space.

64. **Mr. Pedernera Reyna** said that he wished to know how the Government would guarantee respect for the rights of children who were members of gangs in the context of the national plan to tackle violence against children and how it would assess the impact of the plan. It would be useful to hear about how the plan would be implemented in the various regions, with a particular focus on rural areas. He would welcome details of the reinsertion and rehabilitation mechanisms for children affected by violence, as well as of the budget allocated to the Comprehensive System for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Honduras for that task.

65. He would like to receive more details about the work of the committee that had been set up to monitor the state of emergency, including how it responded to violations of children’s rights. He would like to know whether the authorities planned to establish an independent commission to investigate complaints against the national force that had been set up to tackle gang violence, as well as what psychosocial and other support was provided to children who were victims of such violence.

66. He would welcome information about any strategies intended to ensure that schools were safe and to reduce the number of murders of children on their way to or from school. The delegation might comment on what was being done to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence and to ensure that such crimes did not go unpunished.

67. He wished to know whether the Public Prosecution Service and the police received sufficient training and resources to ensure that children could obtain access to justice. He was curious to learn about any measures being taken to prevent domestic violence, including sexual violence, and to avoid revictimization, as well as about any sexual violence prevention campaigns that used an intercultural approach suited to rural and Indigenous audiences. He would welcome the delegation’s comments on alternatives to family separation and institutionalization for children who were victims of domestic violence.

68. He would like to know what was being done to address child marriage, to implement the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, to prevent the sexual exploitation of children, particularly in the context of organized crime and in the tourism industry, and to ensure the early identification of child victims and provide them with psychological and legal support and reintegration services.

69. It would be useful to learn how the certification and quality standards for alternative residential care institutes were being applied in practice and what was being done to address staff shortages in such institutions and ensure that staff had appropriate qualifications and training. Greater efforts were required to ensure that suitable staff were hired to work for the Directorate for Children, Adolescents and the Family. He would welcome an update on the investigation into the sale of children involving a senior staff member of the Directorate and on the fate of the children concerned. He also wished to know what steps were being taken to ensure that children were not imprisoned alongside their mothers.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*