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Consideration of reports of States parties

Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its report submitted under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. Pakistan signed the Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography on 26 September 2001. The same was ratified on 5 July 2011 and entered into force on 5 August 2011 in accordance with Article 14 (2) of the Optional Protocol. This response to the List of Issues is submitted in terms of Article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol regarding the measures taken by Pakistan being a State party to implement the provisions of the Optional Protocol following its entry into force in 2011.
2. Government of Pakistan has adopted several measures to implement the Optional Protocol. In this respect, significant legislative measures have been taken by the Government of Pakistan. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2016 amended Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. For the protection of the child and in line with the provisions of the OPSC, the acts involving child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography and sale of child have been criminalized.
3. The implementation mechanism for the Optional Protocol includes several federal and provincial institutions/bodies. Among others, the National Commission on the Rights of Child is one of the core institutions working for the protection and promotion of child rights at national level.

Replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/OPSC/PAK/Q/1)

A. Reply to paragraph 2 (a)

4. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) has made significant progress in addressing the exploitation and trafficking of children. These efforts are supported by a multi-tiered and robust legal and institutional framework consisting of federal and provincial departments, independent commissions and law enforcement agencies. At the national level, the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) serves as the lead Ministry for policy direction and coordination on child protection while the National Commission for the Rights of Children (NCRC) functions as an independent oversight body promoting and monitoring children's rights across the country.
5. MoHR led consultations to set the legal marriage age at 18 for both genders, proposing necessary amendments to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929. A Private Member Bill on child marriage was introduced in parliament, and MoHR has urged provinces to align marriage laws at 18, with progress in various regions. Sindh set the marriage age at 18 through the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013 and established the Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA). Birth registration processes are being improved to prevent underage marriages. Punjab's Draft Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 2024 is under review while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's proposed bill seeks to raise the legal age to 18. Balochistan's Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2024 is under consideration.
6. The Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC) in KP plays a crucial role in managing and tracking child exploitation cases. Between 2022 and 2024, KP recorded 210 cases of sexual violence, 153 cases of forced labor, 97 cases of domestic labor and 11 cases of child trafficking. In addition, the KP Labour Department conducted rigorous inspections under the Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015, leading to over 1.3 million PKR in fines for violations. No bonded child labor cases were found during these inspections, reflecting the successful preventive measures. The District Vigilance Committees have also been instrumental, rescuing 113 children in 2023 and 2024 who were subsequently referred to the police for investigation.
7. Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act 2016 and the Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act 2016 have been vital in addressing child labor and exploitation in the province. Punjab conducted over 67000 inspections which led to the registration of 3940 FIRs. Additionally, more than 1200 children were referred to social services for rehabilitation. The provincial government focuses on addressing various forms

of exploitation, such as child beggary, trafficking and sexual abuse, led to 632 cases of child beggary, 281 cases of sexual abuse and 125 cases of early child marriage.

8. The provincial government of Sindh continues to address child labor particularly in agriculture and domestic work. According to the Sindh Child Labour Survey, around 12% of the child population is engaged in some form of work with 9.2% classified as child labor. The Directorate General of Labour in Sindh has been proactive in enforcing labor laws in industrial and commercial establishments. Sindh has also introduced specialized child protection legislation such as the Child Labour in Domestic Work Bill 2024 and established One Stop Centers for victims of sexual violence and abuse. Awareness programs like the "Zor se kehna, NAHEE!" initiative have been effective in educating children about abuse prevention and more than 1,000 children have been provided protection.

9. The government of Balochistan has made remarkable progress in tackling child labor and bonded labor through the enactment of the Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 2021 and the Balochistan Forced and Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2021. These laws align with international labor standards and the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Labour Department in Balochistan has conducted over 4000 inspections in the last three years with a continued focus on raising awareness about bonded and forced labor through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in collaboration with ILO.

B. Reply to paragraph 2 (b)

10. The GoP has taken significant measures to address the trafficking of children. In 2022, a National Coordination Committee on Trafficking in Persons was established to coordinate national efforts, oversee policy implementation and monitor anti-trafficking initiatives. Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) handles cases of trafficking involving children alongside other law enforcement agencies which also collaborate with Interpol to intercept cross-border traffickers.

11. Cases of trafficking in persons, including trafficking of children, are handled by special courts. Pakistan has enhanced border management through the Integrated Border Management System (IBMS), deployed at all immigration check posts, using IT technology, infrared cameras, cyber surveillance and border fencing. Measures such as the Machine Readable Passport regime and the publication of a Red Book of most-wanted traffickers, updated annually, have further strengthened prevention efforts. Additionally, a Case Management System (CMS) has been established for the computerization of crime data related to trafficking, including cases involving child victims.

12. The Management Information System (MIS) with the support of ILO has improved the coordination across agencies, enabling case registration, referral services and protection mechanisms for victims, particularly children. Sensitization efforts have been expanded: the FIA and UNODC conducted awareness sessions for provincial police forces, labour departments, social welfare departments and child protection bureaus on the new trafficking laws, child victim identification, support services and referral mechanisms.

13. The provincial police have been sensitized for effective enforcement of the TIP Act, 2018, alongside existing Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) laws. Islamabad Police circulated translated trafficking laws to all Station House Officers (SHOs), while KP Police distributed the translations with instructions to register internal trafficking cases under the new trafficking law. Sindh Police issued guidelines under the Victim Support Program to all police stations and Punjab and KP Police circulated investigation guidelines for handling cases involving women, children and other vulnerable groups.

14. Social Welfare Departments in Punjab and AJK circulated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for victim protection and provision of necessary support including legal, financial and psychosocial services to inmates and victims of trafficking and migrant smuggling residing in social welfare institutions. The departments also conducted trainings of officials to enhance the protection of child victims. Furthermore, the Child Protection

Bureau and Social Welfare Department in Punjab conducted specialized trainings for their officials on child labour, psychosocial support to child victims and related child protection themes.

15. In 2022, Pakistan acceded to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, reaffirming its international commitment. The Government is implementing the National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling 2021–2025, which includes specific actions on protection, prevention, prosecution and international cooperation with particular focus on child victims.

C. Reply to paragraph 2 (c)

16. The GoP has taken key measures to curb cases of child marriages, forced or bonded labour, child sexual abuse and exploitation for the purposes of production of pornographic material. However, the state party repudiates existence of offering, delivering, renting or accepting of children for the purposes of prostitution, engagement in forced labour, illegal adoption, organ transfer for profit, the production of child sexual abuse material or marriage.

D. Reply to paragraph 2 (d)

17. To combat the human trafficking, Pakistan has developed a legal framework comprising: The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Act, 2018; The Pakistan Penal Code (PPC); The Juvenile Justice System Ordinance (JJSO); and the special provincial laws for the protection of children. The federal government also developed a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Migrants Smuggling. The government established a specialized agency, Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Agency (ZARRA) which is mandated to generate immediate alert to concern departments for prompt actions in case of any information related to missing of children, kidnapping, trafficking, wrongful confinement etc. The concerned departments have adopted comprehensive SOPs for early detection, referral and rehabilitation of trafficked children. Multiple rounds of specialized trainings on these SOPs and the TIP Act have been conducted across all relevant staff to enhance institutional capacity.

18. The Federal & Provincial Governments operate shelter homes for vulnerable women and children, including trafficking victims providing psychological services, legal assistance and financial aid and educational training to victims. Furthermore, the Provincial Governments allocated funds for victim protection and assistance.

19. Additionally, the Government also operates helplines to assist trafficking inquiries, including the FIA helpline for victims of crime, the MoHR helpline 1099 remain available to provide legal support for victims of human rights abuses. The Child Protection Institute (CPI) Islamabad, Family Protection and Rehabilitation Centre (FPRC) and provincial Women and Child Protection Centers collaboratively focus on rehabilitation and reintegration services for children affected by labor exploitation, bonded labor, trafficking and related abuses.

20. Furthermore, Legal Aid & Justice Authority (LAJA) offers legal aid to victims, while CPI provides comprehensive support, including rescue, shelter, counseling and family tracing, to rehabilitate these children. The FPRC also provides free medical and legal aid to victims of violence and coordinates with relevant agencies to redress grievances of women.

21. The Government regularly provides in-person and online training, in collaboration with international organizations, police training colleges, federal and provincial prosecution departments, judicial academies, social welfare departments, labor inspectors and child protection bureaus on trafficking investigations, anti-trafficking enforcement, laws and SOPs for victim identification and referral. The FIA trained 3238 officials from various departments from 2021 to 2023. Provincial governments trained 36850 officials on anti-trafficking enforcement laws, including 22290 in Punjab, 2853 in Sindh, 510 in KP and 64 in Balochistan.

22. The GoP has also established 95 specialized courts, staffed by 116 Judicial Officers, to ensure speedy and sensitive handling of cases involving minors, such as child marriage, violence, abuse or forced conversions. In the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mobile courts extend access to justice for children in remote areas, addressing crimes like child marriage and abuse.

23. To further support child safety, the MoHR launched the Awaaz App, allowing users to report violations involving children directly, triggering coordinated responses from law enforcement agencies. Gender Protection Units (GPUs) established in police stations, such as Islamabad's model, provide a child-friendly environment staffed with trained female officers and psychologists, encouraging children to report abuse safely and without fear. Further, the MoHR and NCRC in collaboration with Meta introduced a digital app (Take it Down) to remove the obscene content related to children.

E. Reply to paragraph 3

24. To ensure the systematic collection and analysis of quality and complete data disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location, ethnicity, religion, nationality and socioeconomic background on the implementation of children's rights, the provincial governments of Pakistan have launched Child Protection Management Information Systems (CPMIS). These systems are designed to facilitate the real-time tracking of child protection cases, ensure centralized data storage and enhance decision-making capabilities. By capturing detailed and comprehensive data, CPMIS ensures that interventions are timely and targeted, addressing the specific needs of children based on these disaggregated factors.

25. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC) has successfully implemented a fully functional CPMIS. This system integrates data from Child Protection Units (CPUs) across the province, streamlining case management and ensuring systematic monitoring of children's rights violations.

26. Similarly, in Balochistan, with the technical support of UNICEF, a comprehensive assessment was conducted to explore the possibilities of developing an integrated child protection information management system and facilitating information sharing among key stakeholders, including the police, health, education, law and human rights sectors, as well as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Based on this assessment, a functional Child Protection Case Management and Referral System has been established. All child protection case data is now captured digitally, disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location, ethnicity, religion, nationality and socioeconomic background, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based and targeted. Under the Balochistan Child Protection Act 2016, the Commission overseeing child protection activities includes representatives from various government departments, the police, the Advocate General's office, local bodies and civil society organizations.

27. In Punjab, a Provincial Monitoring Unit at the Central Police Office Lahore oversees the integration of various information systems, including the Police Station Record Management System (PSRMS), Crime Record Management System (CRMS), Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) and Case Management System (CMS). IT-trained staff ensure daily reporting, analysis and monitoring. Regional and district control rooms further complement this system, with standard operating procedures and advisories regularly issued to field units to enhance data accuracy and coordination.

28. Sindh government has launched the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) through the Sindh Child Protection Authority. This system captures real-time child protection data from all 30 districts, allowing dynamic case management and reporting. Furthermore, the Labour & Human Resources Department Sindh is implementing a Labour Inspection Management System (LIMS) under the Annual Development Programme Scheme No. 1701 (2024–25), with dedicated funding already released. LIMS is expected to be operational in the next fiscal year to strengthen oversight of labour violations, including child labour.

F. Reply to paragraph 4

29. MoHR has notified the establishment of an Executive Committee for the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF). The NMRF serves as the central platform to enhance Pakistan's engagement with international human rights mechanisms, following UN guidelines. It coordinates the preparation of periodic reports to international and regional human rights bodies, monitors the follow-up and implementation of recommendations and promotes compliance with Pakistan's international human rights obligations, including obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols.

30. The NMRF's core functions include coordinating the drafting and submission of treaty body reports, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports and responses to special procedures; tracking and monitoring the implementation of treaty obligations and recommendations across federal and provincial levels; and engaging with stakeholders from government bodies, academia and civil society to ensure comprehensive and consistent reporting.

31. After the devolution, under the 18th Constitutional Amendment, child protection falls under the provincial subjects. However, the international treaties and national planning rests with the federal government, therefore, requiring an effective coordination and implementation mechanism among federal and provincial governments. Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) have been established at the provincial level for effective implementation, coordinated by TIC at the federal level. These TICs assist in the collection of data, monitoring of progress and coordination of reporting on international human rights treaties, including obligations under GSP+ and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The provincial TICs collaborate closely with the NMRF, ensuring that inputs from across Pakistan are systematically captured and integrated into national reporting and follow-up activities.

32. To support the systematic collection and analysis of disaggregated data on child rights, all provincial governments have also launched Child Protection Management Information Systems (CPMIS). These systems are designed to facilitate real-time tracking of child protection cases, enable centralized data storage and improve decision-making based on age, sex, geographical location, ethnicity, religion, nationality and socioeconomic background.

33. Parallel to these institutional and technological advancements, the MoHR is in the process of finalizing the draft Child Protection Policy for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to provide a comprehensive framework for the protection and welfare of children in the federal territory. Provinces are also in the process of developing or updating their respective child protection policies to ensure a coordinated and uniform approach across Pakistan.

G. Reply to paragraph 5 (a)

34. The GoP is implementing strategies and action plans for prevention of online crimes against children. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has launched a National Cyber Security Policy aimed at safeguarding the cyber ecosystem. The policy plays a critical role in securing national ICT infrastructure and raising awareness about cyber safety particularly for vulnerable groups like children.

35. Moreover, the National Task Force on Prevention and Control of Cybercrimes against Children, established by the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman's Office), plays a vital role in addressing online child sexual exploitation.

36. The government has also established multiple helplines to provide support to victims of cybercrimes, including online child sexual abuse. The FIA's 1991 cybercrime helpline and the MoHR 1099 helpline offer guidance, legal advice and referrals to relevant authorities. Additionally, civil society organizations like the Digital Rights Foundation operate helplines that focus on issues such as cyber harassment and child sexual abuse.

37. NCRC also plays a crucial role in advocating for children's rights including online protection. It conducts research, implements awareness campaigns on child online protection and collaborates with relevant stakeholders such as PTA (Pakistan Telecommunications Authority) and UNICEF to enhance awareness about online safety. NCRC also conducts surveys and organizes training programs for children, parents and educators to improve understanding of cyber threats and child protection in the digital space.

38. A joint initiative between Zindagi Trust, Meta, PTA, FIA and the NCRC as well as MoHR resulted in a digital campaign titled "Cultivating Digital Competence of Youth and Parents." This campaign aimed to raise awareness among youth and their parents about online safety, focusing on issues like online bullying, misinformation and hate speech.

39. Furthermore, GoP has enhanced its institutional framework for combating online child sexual exploitation and related offences. The Government has established the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) under Section 51 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, replacing the FIA's Cyber Crime Wing. The NCCIA now serves as the specialized national body responsible for investigating crimes such as online child pornography, child prostitution, trafficking of children through digital platforms and other forms of cyber-enabled exploitation.

40. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority also launched the "Safe Children Online" campaign, which emphasizes educating parents and children about online safety. This campaign is a part of Pakistan's broader effort to protect children from online risks such as sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, and sexual extortion. The PTA utilizes various media platforms to raise awareness, promote the use of parental control tools and foster open discussions about the dangers children face online. This initiative empowers both parents and children with the knowledge and tools to navigate the digital world safely. It also aims to address concerns over online crimes such as live-streaming sexual exploitation, unsolicited sexting and online sexual extortion.

H. Reply to paragraph 5 (b)

41. The Constitution of Pakistan and the legislation thereunder oblige all the citizens of Pakistan and public functionaries for adherence to the law of the land with regards to commission and omission of the acts in accordance with the law. The Section 44 of CrPC obliges that every person, aware of the commission of or of the intention of any other person to commit any offence punishable under relevant sections of the PPC including 364-A related to kidnapping or abduction of children. The following constitutional provisions and laws provide protection against child abuse.

<i>Province</i>	<i>Key Actions and Legal Frameworks</i>	<i>Exploitation Cases Recorded (During Reporting Period)</i>
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015 enforcement - District Vigilance Committees for child trafficking inspections - Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC) monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual Violence/Child Abuse: 210 cases - Forced Labour: 153 cases - Domestic Labour: 97 cases - Child Trafficking: 11 cases - Early Child Marriage: 31 cases - Child Pornography: 9 cases - Children Rescued: 113 - Fines: 1.3 million PKR for violations of child labor laws

<i>Province</i>	<i>Key Actions and Legal Frameworks</i>	<i>Exploitation Cases Recorded (During Reporting Period)</i>
Punjab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016 - Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016 - 67,000+ inspections - Labour Inspection Management System (LIMS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children Referred to Social Services: 1200 - Total Inspections (2022-2024): 67,712 - FIRs Registered: 3940 - Children Referred to Social Services: 1219
Sindh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One Stop Centers for victims of sexual violence - Sindh Child Labour in Domestic Work Bill, 2024 enforcement - Awareness campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Labour Prevalence: 12% (9.2% in hazardous labor) - Children Protected: 1000+
Balochistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balochistan Employment of Children (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 2021 - Balochistan Forced and Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2021 - Collaborative campaigns with ILO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Labour Inspections: 4000+ conducted - Efforts on Bonded and Forced Labour: Ongoing awareness raising - Collaborative Campaigns with ILO: To combat child labor

Constitutional Provisions (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973)

- Article 11: Prohibition of slavery, forced labor, and child labor.
- Article 25(3): State's responsibility to make special provisions for the protection of women and children.
- Article 35: Protection of marriage, family, mother, and child.
- Article 37(e): Provision of humane conditions of work for women and children, and ensuring they are not employed in vocations unsuited to their age or sex.

National Laws

- The Employment of Children Act, 1991
- The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992
- Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act 2010
- The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016
- The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 2016
- Hindu Marriage Act, 2017
- The Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018
- The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018
- The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018
- The ICT Child Protection Act, 2018
- The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Act, 2020

- Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguard) Rules, 2021
- The Anti-rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021
- Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2024

Relevant Sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC)

- Section 82: Act of a child under seven years of age (no criminal liability).
- Section 83: Act of a child above seven and under twelve years of age (dependent on maturity).
- Section 292: Sale of obscene books and materials to young persons.
- Section 293: Sale of obscene objects to young persons under 18.
- Section 328: Exposure and abandonment of a child under twelve years.
- Section 342: Punishment for wrongful confinement (including confinement of minors).
- Section 361: Kidnapping from lawful guardianship.
- Section 362: Abduction by force or deceitful means.
- Section 364-A: Kidnapping or abduction of a child under 14 for ransom or murder.
- Section 366-A: Procurement of a minor girl under 18 for illicit intercourse.
- Section 366-B: Importation of a girl from a foreign country for illicit purposes.
- Section 369: Kidnapping or abducting a child under 14 with intent to steal property from their person.
- Section 370: Buying or disposing of a person as a slave (trafficking).
- Section 371: Habitual dealing in slaves.
- Section 372: Selling a minor for purposes of prostitution.
- Section 373: Buying a minor for purposes of prostitution.
- Section 375 & 376: Rape and its punishments, including of minors.
- Section 377: Unnatural offences (including sexual abuse of children).
- Section 509: Insulting modesty through words, gestures, or acts (relevant to harassment of minors).

Provincial Laws and Frameworks

Punjab

- Punjab Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992
- Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act, 2004
- The Punjab Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissue Act, 2010
- Punjab Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2014
- Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Act, 2016
- Punjab Prohibition of Child Labour at Brick Kilns Act, 2016
- Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016
- Punjab Sikh Anand Karaj Marriage Act 2018
- The Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2019

Sindh

- Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011
- The Sindh Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissue Act, 2013
- Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2017
- Sindh Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act, 2013
- Sindh Hindu Marriage Act 2016

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority Act, 2014
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Prevention and Rehabilitation) Act, 2021

Balochistan

- Balochistan Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues (Amendment) Act, 2012
- Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014
- Balochistan Child Protection Act, 2016

I. Reply to paragraph 5 (c)

42. Significant financial and human resources have been allocated for the implementation of strategies and plans to curb online crimes and exploitation against children. Both the government and development partners, especially UN agencies, fund these initiatives. Institutions and authorities involved in child protection, human rights and combating cybercrimes are adequately funded and well-staffed.

J. Reply to paragraph 6

43. The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Child Protection Act 2018 and the Domestic Workers Act 2022 prohibit child domestic labour and provide mechanisms for protection, including shelter, psychosocial services and referral pathways. These laws also serve as tools for preventing violence and exploitation, particularly of a child in domestic settings. Moreover, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) plays a key role in supporting families facing hardship, helping uphold children's rights. Through Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs), BISP provides economic relief, reducing the risk of families losing parental care due to poverty. Additionally, BISP's Benazir Taleemi Wazaif program ensures that children from disadvantaged families access education by offering financial incentives for school enrollment and attendance, helping break the cycle of poverty.

44. The Benazir Nashonuma Program, a Conditional Cash Transfer initiative, focuses on improving health and nutrition for pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under two years old. It provides cash incentives for PLW and children, with conditions such as attending health checks and ensuring immunization and nutrition. The Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Project supports low-income students in public universities by providing scholarships for tuition, fees, and a monthly stipend. The program prioritizes female students and offers scholarships to differently-abled individuals. To date, over 102,000 students have benefited, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent access to education.

45. Furthermore, GoP has adopted comprehensive and effective strategies to address the needs of street children. Through initiatives such as Open Reception Centers (ORCs), children at risk are identified and registered, ensuring they receive basic education, counseling, and essential services. These centers, both permanent and mobile, are strategically located to minimize the time children spend on the streets, reducing their

exposure to harm and associated risks. Acting as referral points for lost, runaway, or abandoned children, ORCs exemplify the government's commitment to providing protection, support, and reintegration opportunities for vulnerable children across the country. Migrant and refugee children are afforded access to basic services, particularly education and healthcare, often in coordination with humanitarian actors. Afghan refugee children with Proof of Registration Cards or Afghan Citizen Cards are integrated into the public education system. Efforts to raise awareness of protective services and ensure universal access to birth registration have also intensified.

46. In Punjab, the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 and the Punjab Women Protection Authority Act 2017 provide a robust institutional framework to protect women and girls from violence, including domestic abuse. To operationalize these protections, Women Protection Centers have been established across districts and a comprehensive Violence Against Women Center (VAWC) in Multan offers one-window services, including post-trauma rehabilitation, medico-legal examinations, complaint registration, prosecution, shelter and psychological support. During 2023 alone, Women Protection Centers across Punjab provided psychosocial counselling to 4049 women, facilitated 1765 mediations, provided legal aid in 1703 cases and conducted 2507 medical examinations. In the first two months of 2025, these Centers had already provided over 2800 services, including 731 counselling sessions and 515 medical facilities, underscoring an expanding protection network.

47. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, under ZamungKor, Child Protection Officers (CPOs) rescue children from the streets or from situations of child labour, produce them before the Child Protection Court and subsequently place them in safe custody. After admission, children undergo psychological evaluation and therapy, while tailored rehabilitation is provided. Aggressive children, for instance, are enrolled in martial arts and boxing programmes to support behavioural management. Girls are engaged in vocational training such as tailoring, IT, art and craft, crochet work and handicrafts to enhance self-sufficiency and discourage exploitative domestic labour.

48. The Social Welfare Department in Balochistan promotes children's inclusion in family decision-making through parental awareness programs, support services like family counseling, and teacher training to value children's input. Children are encouraged to contribute to curriculum choices and participate in youth forums and child-led councils. Child-friendly spaces and digital platforms are developed to help children express their views, while workshops and training programs teach them about their rights and communication skills. Special attention is given to including marginalized children, ensuring that all voices are heard in family and community matters.

49. Sindh has adopted a comprehensive approach to securing children's right to grow up in family environments. The SCPA has developed an Alternative Care Policy promoting family-based options like kinship care, aiming to reduce institutionalization. It also provides support services to families in crisis and monitors the quality of alternative care, aligning its practices with international child protection standards.

K. Reply to paragraph 7

50. The Government has strengthened its legal and policy framework to address and prevent the sexual exploitation of children, including in the context of travel and tourism. The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016 marked a significant step in this regard by introducing comprehensive provisions in the Pakistan Penal Code that specifically criminalize various forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. These include Section 292A, which prohibits the exposure of children to seduction, and Sections 292B and 292C, which criminalize the production, distribution, and possession of child pornography, including through electronic means. These provisions help ensure that exploitative acts involving children, including those that may occur in travel-related contexts, are clearly defined and punishable by law.

51. Complementing national legislation, provincial initiatives such as the Punjab Culture Policy 2021 promote a safe and inclusive environment by encouraging community

engagement, cultural education and awareness initiatives that build tolerance and peace. While not limited to the travel sector, these measures contribute to creating a protective environment for children. Additionally, the Punjab Child Protection Policy 2024 outlines the responsibilities of collaborating departments, including the Information and Culture Department and law enforcement, in preventing child exploitation and ensuring child-sensitive practices across sectors. These efforts collectively enhance the protective ecosystem for children, including those who may be more exposed to risks in tourism settings.

L. Reply to paragraph 8

52. The GoP continues to raise awareness and promote education about offences under the Optional Protocol, focusing on breaking the stigma around child sexual abuse and encouraging victims to come forward. Efforts have also been directed towards creating safer environments for children, particularly girls, by addressing underlying issues such as discrimination, child marriage and barriers to education.

53. Awareness campaign led by MoHR has focused on promoting child rights through its comprehensive Human Rights Awareness Program. In last two three years, the Ministry conducted numerous awareness sessions on child rights, distributed 12,000 posters and broadcast public service messages on television and radio. Training sessions at institutions such as the National Police Academy and various provincial police departments further educated stakeholders on the legal framework protecting child rights. Additionally, the Ministry collaborated with Pakistan Railways to display banners promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, including children, during a transit advertising campaign.

54. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Child Protection and Welfare Commission has undertaken sustained awareness campaigns in schools and communities to address child sexual abuse, grooming and online exploitation. Key activities include dissemination of child-friendly IEC materials, school-based sensitization sessions, community engagement programs, and the operation of the helpline offering free, confidential support. Capacity-building sessions for parents, teachers and community members aim to strengthen early detection and timely response to abuse.

55. Punjab has taken wide-ranging steps through the School Education Department to integrate child protection and gender-sensitive themes into teacher training, policies and school management structures. Topics such as bullying, cyber harassment and corporal punishment are addressed through proactive monitoring and capacity-building. Significant financial allocations have been made for stipends for female students (PKR 6.689 billion in 2024–2025), provision of free textbooks (PKR 8.5 billion), and a Non-Salary Budget for school improvements (PKR 18.069 billion). Specific initiatives include "Zero Out of School Children" campaigns, the establishment of 6060 Learning Campuses enrolling 35000 out-of-school children, and school meal programs leading to a significant increase in enrollments. The enactment and enforcement of the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014, address corporal punishment and ensure child retention in schools, while outreach efforts involving religious and community leaders emphasize the importance of education. Creation of School Management Councils has enhanced community and parental participation in school affairs and E-Transfer policy initiatives have been aimed at supporting female teachers, including widows and divorced women. Amendments have also been proposed to address physical bullying, cyberbullying, corporal punishment and harassment at schools.

56. In Sindh, the Sindh Child Protection Authority (SCPA) implements regular awareness sessions in schools on good touch/bad touch, exploitation and the importance of reporting abuse. District-level education programs, media outreach and child protection staff training programs have been institutionalized. In Balochistan, the Balochistan Child Protection Commission has conducted awareness campaigns in schools and communities, with a strong focus on reporting mechanisms and community-level engagement.

57. Additionally, organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides empower children to develop leadership skills through various programs and activities. These organizations emphasize a "by the children, for the children" approach, fostering leadership roles where children take on responsibilities, make decisions, and contribute to their communities.

M. Reply to paragraph 9

58. Section 371-A of the PPC explicitly penalizes the sale of person as the law provides that whoever sell, lets to hire or otherwise disposes off any person with intent that such person shall anytime be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful or immoral purpose. The word and expression “any person” includes the children as well. Similarly, Section 366-B of the PPC deals with the importation of a girl from a foreign country for illicit purposes; Section 372 criminalizes selling a minor for purposes of prostitution; Section 373 criminalizes buying a minor for purposes of prostitution.

N. Reply to paragraph 10

59. The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 2010 prohibits the trade of organs, including those of children, for profit. Acts such as forced child labour, illegal adoption and child exploitation are criminalized under national laws, including the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 and laws prohibiting child labour, bonded labour, vagrancy and neglect of children.

60. The PPC criminalizes offences including child pornography, sexual abuse, cruelty to children under Section 328-A, kidnapping and abduction, trafficking and the sale or trafficking of women and children.

61. The PECA criminalizes child pornography and cyberstalking of minors. The Criminal Laws Amendment Act, 2023 enhanced punishments under PECA, raising imprisonment terms for child pornography to fourteen years, extendable to twenty years and increasing fines from one million up to five million rupees. It also introduced Section 30B to provide protection to victims and witnesses. Measures have been taken nationwide to ensure equal legal protection for both boys and girls, with clear definitions of child exploitation offences and penalties that are proportionate to the gravity of these crimes.

O. Reply to paragraph 11

62. The GoP has undertaken significant measures to protect the rights and interests of children who are victims and witnesses of crimes covered under the Optional Protocol. These efforts ensure that children are safeguarded at all stages of criminal proceedings, using child-friendly interview techniques, providing access to psychological assistance, establishing specialized child courts, and ensuring long-term support for reintegration and rehabilitation.

63. During judicial proceedings across all provinces, children's viewpoints are recognized and taken into consideration. Child Protection Officers' investigative reports often serve as the basis for formal complaints, and special attention is paid to ensuring that children's participation in legal processes is meaningful despite potential social and psychological barriers. Efforts are made to prioritize the welfare of children at every stage of the decision-making process related to their custody, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

64. Under Section 17 of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Child Protection Act, 2018, specific measures have been mandated to protect child victims and witnesses during judicial proceedings. The law requires that children be provided with counseling services, safe housing, continued educational support, and access to social assistance programs throughout and after the judicial process. Mechanisms have been established to ensure that child victims are not stigmatized and receive efficient, adequate, and long-term support aimed at their full reintegration into society and their physical and mental rehabilitation.

65. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Child Protection Welfare Commission plays a central role in facilitating child-sensitive procedures. Children are supported by trained staff using child-friendly interview techniques and psycho-social assistance. Eight exclusive Child Protection Courts have been established under the KP Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010, operating in Abbottabad, Mardan, Peshawar, Bannu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat, and the merged district of Mohmand. These courts are designed to create a safe environment

and protect children from re-victimization during judicial proceedings. As a result of the Commission's advocacy, the powers of these Child Protection Courts were extended to District Sessions Judges under Section 15 of the KP Child Protection and Welfare Act, 2010, enhancing children's access to justice.

66. In Punjab, the police have implemented reforms in line with the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018. Police officers dealing with juvenile cases are required to be of the rank of Sub-Inspector or above, and their investigation is conducted under the supervision of a Senior Police Officer (SP or SDPO). Juvenile interrogations are carried out according to specialized procedures that prioritize the psychological well-being and legal rights of children.

67. Further, a comprehensive capacity-building programme has been initiated for Investigation Officers (IOs) across Punjab. Between 2024 and 2025, 1,959 officers were trained specifically on the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018. Training courses focus on legal frameworks, rights of juveniles, procedures before child courts, child abuse awareness, liaison and advocacy, and the role of probation officers. Despite challenges posed by the shortage of IOs (9,621 total IOs in Punjab), the training drive continues through Regional Training Centers (RTCs) and Police Training Colleges (PTCs). In addition, 849 probationer class course trainees (684 male and 165 female) have completed relevant training.

68. The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) in Punjab further supports legal proceedings through its legal section. Prosecutors and legal officers supervise cases involving special offences against destitute and neglected children under the PDNC (First Amendment) Act, 2007. They ensure rescued children are produced before courts within 24 hours, obtain legal custody in the child's best interest, assist courts in reunification efforts, and maintain continuous liaison with various forums, including High Courts and administrative departments.

P. Reply to paragraph 12

69. The Constitution of Pakistan under Article 4 provides legal protection to all the citizens and any other person in Pakistan for the time being. The child protection mechanism including ICT Child Protection Institute and provincial child welfare bureaus / authorities extend their assistance to all children including unaccompanied children.
