



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 2892nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 21 May 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Kiladze

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

Consideration of reports of States Parties (*continued*)

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Qatar (CRC/C/QAT/5-6;
CRC/C/QAT/QPR/5-6)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Qatar joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Qatar**, introducing the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Qatar, said that the Government acted to protect children and promote their development, not merely in fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but in enactment of the values of sharia, which undergirded the country's Constitution and which enjoined justice, equality and the protection of human dignity. Indeed, the principles enshrined in the Convention had been incorporated into articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution, which underscored the importance of protecting children against exploitation and neglect, and those constitutional principles had in turn been embodied in laws governing education, healthcare, social protection and juvenile justice.
3. The legislative and institutional human rights infrastructure had been strengthened and human rights had been incorporated into the Qatar National Vision 2030, which specifically addressed the rights of children, persons with disabilities and migrant workers in areas such as healthcare, education, the environment and the empowerment of women. Human rights had also been incorporated into the first and second national development strategies, and children's rights were a major component of the current third strategy for the period 2024–2030, which sought to uphold equality and non-discrimination. Other sectoral strategies focused on education, healthcare, the environment and early childhood protection.
4. A number of legislative advances had been made in the period since the submission of the previous periodic report. Notably, the 2021 National Healthcare Act had come into force, under which healthcare coverage was extended to all children. Also, the 2014 Cybercrime Act had been amended to criminalize the sexual exploitation of children, in line with the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Qatar had also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. The draft of the new Children's Act, which had been approved by the Council of Ministers, was in the process of being reviewed.
5. The Ministry of Social Development and the Family, which had been set up in 2021 as the national body responsible for children's rights, had a number of specialized departments dealing, inter alia, with family matters, community care and social protection. Most recently, in April 2025, the Ministry had set up an online safety committee which sought to raise awareness among youngsters about the safe use of the Internet. For its part, the newly created National Committee for Women, Children, Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities also worked to uphold children's rights within a unified and regulated national framework.
6. The Qatar Foundation for Social Work had developed a procedural guide for care homes which explicitly prohibited all forms of violence and included provision for oversight and reporting mechanisms. The recently established National Planning Council was responsible for the implementation of public policies, including those affecting children and their rights, and campaigns were run to make children themselves better aware of their rights.
7. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education strove to improve the quality and coverage of education and to ensure equality of opportunity for all children, including those with disabilities, irrespective of their socioeconomic condition. Thanks to the Ministry's efforts, enrolment in compulsory education stood at 97.5 per cent. In addition, five "peace schools" had been opened, which were intended for children of different nationalities, and particularly those from countries in turmoil.
8. A national health strategy for the period 2024–2030 aimed to improve child health generally, with a specific focus on preventing chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes, and encouraging breastfeeding and oral and dental hygiene. Child-friendly hospitals and paediatric clinics had been set up in seven regional centres run by the Primary Health

Care Corporation. In 2016, Sidra Medical Centre had formed a team which operated at the national level to protect children against violence and neglect. The team, which handled around 500 cases a year, undertook case studies, implemented prevention and early intervention policies and ran programmes to protect the health and safety of children in the country.

9. Juveniles also enjoyed protection against exploitation under the Labour Code. The private sector was involved in protecting and raising awareness about children's rights, notably through the Qatar National Programme for Social Responsibility, while the rights of children as consumers were duly protected under the Consumer Protection Act and the Food Control Act. The Ministry of Health regularly monitored pollutants, particularly near schools and in residential areas, in order to ensure a healthy environment for children. The public prosecution service had created a special unit for offences involving juveniles.

10. Judges, teachers, doctors and others whose professional duties brought them into contact with children had received training in the Convention and its Optional Protocols. The State sought to promote the involvement of children in the formulation of public policy and encouraged them to express their views through representative organizations such as student councils. The State constantly sought to improve its data-gathering capacities in order to enable it to formulate effective evidence-based policies for children. To that end, it had conducted a multiple indicator cluster survey in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and, in 2022, UNICEF had opened an office in Doha.

11. Qatar also acted to protect and promote the rights of children beyond its own borders, particularly in countries affected by conflict such as Syria, Somalia and Yemen, and it had worked to reunite children with their families in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Programmes run by the Education Above All Foundation had benefited 17.2 million children in over 65 countries across the world. Qatar Charity and the Qatar Red Crescent had been instrumental in providing food and healthcare to more than 150,000 persons in Gaza, particularly women and girls. Qatar would continue to cooperate with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in particular the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to protect the rights of children across the world.

12. **Ms. Sidikou** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that she wished to commend the State Party for its ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children, notably in the field of education and healthcare. She wished to know the reason for the reservations to articles 2 and 14 of the Convention, which Qatar maintained despite the fact that equality of rights and duties was enshrined in articles 34 and 35 of its own Constitution. She wondered how, if it persisted in upholding the reservations, Qatar intended to combat all the forms of discrimination from which children in the country suffered.

13. The Committee would be interested to learn why its concluding observations of 2009 and 2017 had still not been put into effect. She was concerned, moreover, that the draft of the Children's Act seemed to be in a constant process of finalization and approval but had not yet reached the statute books. It would be helpful to know to what extent the Act was consistent with the Convention and, specifically, if it envisaged increasing the age of criminal responsibility from 7 years and abrogating the provisions under which sentences of life imprisonment, flagellation or forced labour could be handed down against children as young as 16.

14. The delegation should explain any action being taken to create a formal child protection system with sufficient means to ensure that children in situations of vulnerability received proper care. She would also be interested to hear whether the National Human Rights Committee and the National Planning Council had the human, technical and financial resources they required to function properly. Was there any mechanism to coordinate actions taken to protect children's rights across different sectors?

15. Although budget allocations for education and healthcare had increased between 2022 and 2024, they remained below internationally recommended levels. In that connection, she hoped to hear more about budgeting policies that were sensitive to the rights of children, notably those born outside wedlock, those with disabilities, migrant children and children from minority groups. It was unfortunate that data-gathering efforts on the part of the authorities had produced little information about children in situations of vulnerability,

including those deprived of their liberty. She wondered what was being done to rectify that situation.

16. It would be helpful to know what confidential and independent mechanisms existed to enable children in schools and other institutions to report any violence or discrimination they might suffer. What measures were taken to provide children with age-appropriate information about their right to submit complaints? She also hoped to hear about any programmes to train persons working with children about the Convention. Did training and awareness-raising about children's rights also extend to civil society, the media and the public at large? She wondered if the National Committee for Women, Children, Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities was also mandated to receive complaints related to children's rights, including those of migrant children.

17. She would appreciate it if the delegation could inform the Committee about measures to promote cooperation between State institutions and civil society organizations in the formulation and implementation of policies affecting children. It would also be helpful to know if regulations existed to ensure that the private sector duly respected national and international child-protection norms.

18. She wished to know if any efforts were made – notably in the form of approaches to religious leaders and the media – to change the negative social norms and traditional beliefs that lay behind the multiple forms of gender-based discrimination faced by girls in Qatar. She would be interested to hear of any overarching piece of legislation that prohibited all forms of discrimination, notably in the light of reports that children in situations of vulnerability, including children of foreign fathers or of migrants, were discriminated against in relation to Qatari children in their access to education and healthcare. In that regard, she wished to know if any action was being taken to allow Qatari mothers to transmit their nationality to their offspring.

19. She wondered if any training was provided to persons who worked with minors to help them identify the best interests of the child and to apply that principle coherently in all relevant procedures. It was a matter of the utmost concern that children could be condemned to death in the context of *qisas* offences, and she hoped that the delegation could reassure the Committee in that regard by describing steps taken to ensure that no one was condemned to death for acts committed before reaching the age of 18. She hoped to hear more details about the structures that enabled children to engage in discussions on matters that affected them. Lastly, she wished to know what was being done to improve digital know-how among families and teachers with a view to protecting children against online risks.

20. **Ms. Correa** (Country Task Force) said that she would be interested to learn how the State Party measured the impact of the administrative and awareness-raising measures it had taken to prevent the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline. She would welcome an account of the obstacles preventing the State Party from taking action in follow-up to its acceptance of a recommendation made in the context of the third round of the universal periodic review in 2019 for it to ban all forms of corporal punishment. She would be grateful for further information on the legislation criminalizing all forms of physical assault against children, including the date of its adoption and the number of people who had been successfully prosecuted under it, as well as more precise details concerning the exception for contact sports described in paragraph 76 of the State Party's report.

21. It would be useful to know what involvement academics and psychologists had had in the studies conducted to assess the impact of corporal punishment and what additional legislative steps had been taken, since the drafting of a bill in 2012, to institute an effective ban on the use of corporal punishment against children in all settings, including schools. It would be interesting to learn about any studies conducted to ascertain the reasons for children's violent behaviour in school and about any measures taken to address the problem.

22. She wished to understand the interplay between the implementation of the national policy for the protection of children's rights and the work of the newly formed National Committee for Women, Children, Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities. She would welcome clarification as to why certain child protection functions were performed by private or charitable enterprises and how the performance of those functions was regulated and

monitored. The delegation might comment on any plans to establish a system to ensure the comprehensive protection of children's rights.

23. She would be interested to know how the Sidra Medical Centre's child advocacy programme worked and how it was monitored. She would be grateful for details of the number of children who had benefited from the programme and the results obtained.

24. She wished to know how the authorities ensured that the "Aman" Social Protection and Rehabilitation Centre remained impartial in the delivery of its services, given that it was reportedly involved in both implementing and monitoring child protection policies and programmes and investigating complaints of violations and abuses.

25. The delegation should clarify whether the sexual exploitation of minors was criminalized in the State Party. She would welcome an account of the legislative measures in place to deal with offences covered by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

26. She wished to know what obstacles the Government faced in banning child marriage for girls on the same footing as for boys.

27. It would be useful to receive details of how the online case-tracking system for children in care institutions or host families worked, how host families were assessed and how any weaknesses in the system were detected and addressed.

28. Lastly, she wished to learn about any measures taken to ensure the well-being of children whose parents were in prison and to provide such children with social and psychological support, as well as about any policies that were in place to protect them from discrimination.

29. **Mr. Ekese** (Country Task Force) said that, while the Committee welcomed the series of rights set out in the 2004 Persons with Disabilities Act, it was concerned that access to inclusive mainstream public education did not feature there. It was unclear whether the authorities had continued to use the United Nations Children's Fund/Washington Group Child Functioning Module after the population and housing census conducted in 2010 and the multiple indicator cluster survey conducted in 2016.

30. He would welcome details of any plans to roll out inclusion modules to all educational institutions in the country, with a view to assessing and removing environmental barriers to education for students with disabilities. He invited the delegation to provide statistical data, disaggregated by sex, on the number of children with disabilities enrolled in public and private schools and on the number of such children who were not in school.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

31. **A representative of Qatar** said that the reason why Qatar had entered and maintained reservations with respect to articles 2 and 14 of the Convention was that the country's laws and education system were based on sharia. In inheritance rights, there was no discrimination on the basis of sex.

32. **A representative of Qatar** said that the rights of Muslim and non-Muslim families alike were safeguarded in the Constitution. In fact, the majority of the inhabitants of Qatar were foreign nationals.

33. **A representative of Qatar** said that legislation was in place to protect children's rights, in line with international instruments. A child protection register had been created and reports of abuse had been received. Care centres were provided with the necessary tools and services to care for vulnerable children, including approximately 3,000 who had suffered from abuse or neglect. The Qatar Association for Social Care had introduced rehabilitation services in 2020. In 2024, more than 4,000 children had received psychological support and 3,000 had received educational support.

34. **A representative of Qatar** said that a bill specifically aimed at implementing the Convention would soon be published. Its adoption had been delayed by a number of factors, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

35. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Sidra Medical Centre's child advocacy programme had been granted 1 million Qatari riyals to investigate cases of suspected violence against children. Suspected perpetrators were referred to the child protection authorities. The programme, which encompassed all aspects of the handling of such cases, including rehabilitation of the victims, benefited between 500 and 600 children each year. Around 30 per cent of cases reported were found to concern verified instances of violence. A total of 980 confirmed cases had been dealt with between 2018 and 2024. Cases of serious violence were dealt with under a separate programme.

36. The national team responsible for protecting children from violence and neglect was made up of 13 members and was responsible for submitting to the Ministry of Health recommendations for improving child protection mechanisms and services. Cases were reported by hospitals, schools or police stations or via a confidential community helpline which received 300 calls annually, 60 per cent of which were made by children. Awareness-raising campaigns were organized in schools and other public places to highlight children's rights and encourage people to report any mistreatment of children. Public officials were also educated on the topic, including through a conference held in 2020 on the theme of combating violence against children, which had attracted 2,000 participants. Medical professionals had also been invited to a conference aimed at the exchange of best practices in dealing with cases of violence against children.

37. **A representative of Qatar** said that in 2016, a system had been set up to regularly inspect schools and hospitals to ensure that no human rights violations occurred there. Approximately 150 complaints had been received concerning violations of the right to education and the right to hold identity documents. Efforts were being made to raise awareness of the Convention among the general public. Work was also under way to determine how children could make use of artificial intelligence tools in a safe manner.

38. **A representative of Qatar** said that public institutions used the State budget to the benefit of all population groups, without discrimination. Educational provision for children was made within the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Approximately 25 per cent of the budget allocated to social development was earmarked for awareness-raising activities to prevent violence against children. Portions of the budget of the Ministry of Social Development and the Family were allocated to the provision of support for children with disabilities and orphans.

39. **A representative of Qatar** said that the National Human Rights Committee monitored the impact of business activity on the rights of workers with a focus on occupational health and preventing child labour, in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It had not registered any complaints of child labour or cases thereof. It had worked to raise awareness of children's rights through international conferences, including a regional conference on business and human rights held in the Arab region in October 2024 with the participation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and regional international bodies. At the third national forum on protecting children's rights in the digital environment, held in September 2024, businesses had been called on to ensure that the services and products they provided upheld children's rights and protected their safety, in line with the principles of transparency and accountability.

40. **A representative of Qatar** said that efforts to promote effective communication and coordination between the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enabled them to respond better to the needs of children at the levels of policy and field programmes and increased their capacity for monitoring and addressing violations. The Ministry of Social Development and the Family had signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Human Rights Committee on promoting cooperation and exchanging expertise. National consultations had been held with UNICEF with a view to drafting a work plan for the third national development strategy for the period up to 2030. The Ministry of Social Affairs had worked with NGOs to conduct campaigns promoting family cohesion and projects to establish an education centre and a social work programme. Recommendations provided by the National Human Rights Committee played an important role in supporting communication and collaboration. Its balanced membership, which included eight

representatives of civil society and five from the Government, facilitated discussions on human rights issues.

41. **A representative of Qatar** said that, under article 17 of the Family Code, marriage contracts could be concluded only for boys aged 17 years or older and girls aged 16 years or older, unless there were circumstances which by law permitted a contract involving younger children to be concluded with the parents' consent and the authorization of a judge, who took societal interests into account in his or her decision. Such exceptions were very rare. Marriage ceremonies were in most cases held only once both parties had reached the age of 18 years. A committee had been set up to review the Family Code, including the minimum age for marriage.

42. **A representative of Qatar** said that, despite societal customs, it was very rare for parents to give their consent to their children marrying even at the age of 18 years.

43. **A representative of Qatar** said that approximately 6 per cent of the State budget was allocated to the education sector, which reflected the country's commitment to improving infrastructure and training personnel with a view to developing education in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

44. **A representative of Qatar** said that 25 per cent of the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs was allocated to efforts to uphold and raise awareness of children's rights. In 2024, more than 88 million Qatari riyals had been allocated to such programmes. The Ministry of Social Development and the Family and other entities received additional funding that they used to provide members of vulnerable groups with a decent living. More than 245 million riyals had been disbursed to support more than 6,300 orphans and children with disabilities. Through the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, 1.6 million Qatari riyals had been allocated for such efforts and had been used to assist the work of the "Dreema" Children's Centre in particular.

45. **A representative of Qatar** said that health and education were among the priority areas of the Qatar National Vision 2030. Education rates in Qatar, especially among girls and women, were high. A programme to educate 50 million children in the world's poorest countries had been sponsored by Sheikha Moza and the Emir. By 2023, 2 million of its beneficiaries had graduated from university.

46. **A representative of Qatar** said that the principle of equality between members of society, including both Qataris and non-Qataris, was clearly enshrined in the Constitution. The Government countered discrimination by adopting legislation that safeguarded the values of justice, freedom, equality and moral rectitude. The Penal Code, the Cybercrime Act, the 1979 Publications and Publishing Act and other national laws prohibited incitement to hatred and discrimination on the basis of religion, race or any other grounds. Persons who incited, aided and abetted or consented to such discrimination were held criminally liable.

47. A decision issued by the Ministry of Health in 2022 set out the rights and obligations of patients with a view to ensuring equality in that sector. Patients had the right to receive healthcare in a dignified manner and without discrimination at all times in accordance with the availability of resources.

48. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education ensured that its policies, regulations and guidelines on student behaviour were in no way discriminatory and endeavoured to promote gender equality at all educational levels. The enrolment rate at the primary and secondary levels was the same for boys and girls. In 2023, the literacy rate for girls between the ages of 15 and 24 years had been 99.6 per cent. The first secondary technical school for girls had been opened in 2020 with a view to providing them with educational opportunities that had formerly been reserved for boys; other technical schools admitted both boys and girls. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education ran awareness campaigns annually to promote a culture of equality among students in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee and UNICEF. In 2024, it had adopted regulations under which schools were compelled to ensure equality in activities and academic programmes for all students without discrimination on the basis of sex, disability or social background.

49. The Qatar Foundation for Social Work had endeavoured to eliminate all forms of discrimination against children and ensure gender equality through a programme aimed at

promoting the enjoyment of all rights by all persons without discrimination. The Ministry of the Interior sought to provide services to children in a manner that took the needs of different age groups into consideration and preserved their dignity without discrimination on any grounds. A department for juvenile affairs within the Ministry provided training for personnel on principles for avoiding discrimination against children.

50. **A representative of Qatar** said that health and education services were provided to all Qataris and non-Qataris without discrimination. Although sufficient public-school places were available, many Qataris sent their children to private schools. Employers were obliged to provide foreign workers and their family members with health insurance valid at either public or private hospitals.

51. **A representative of Qatar** said that the 2005 Nationality Act was a sovereign law with its basis in the Constitution and the principle of kinship. The adoption of that Act and the 2018 Permanent Residency Act had contributed significantly to reducing the number of cases of statelessness in the country. The practices of Qatar in that area had been commended at many international forums.

52. **A representative of Qatar** said that national laws permitted children who had committed or contributed to the commission of offences to be heard and to defend themselves and for child victims of crime to receive compensation. Juvenile courts for trying crimes committed by and against children had been set up and children could have their opinions taken into account in proceedings. The 2022 Victims and Witnesses Protection Act provided for measures to be taken to protect child witnesses of crimes and to help children to be less afraid of reporting crimes and seeking justice before the courts. Court translation and interpretation services, including specialist interpretation services made available through cooperation with foreign embassies, helped ensure that children's opinions were heard and taken into account. The juvenile police department investigated all cases involving minors, including minor offenders. The police also monitored the enforcement of penalties handed down to child offenders and kept files on them. Reports on such children were submitted to the juvenile courts on a regular basis.

53. **A representative of Qatar** said that, in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure, persons who were unable to afford a lawyer were provided with one in cases involving serious offences such as murder and drug-related crimes.

54. **A representative of Qatar** said that student councils had been established at all schools with a view to strengthening the values of democracy and equality. Such councils attempted to respond to students' questions and assist them with problems. They led activities inside and outside schools with the aim of strengthening links between students, parents and teachers. They were also active in areas such as environmental protection, culture, education and volunteering and prepared studies and reports in collaboration with the school administration. Each student council consisted of between 25 and 50 elected members. In 2025, the Government had launched a training programme in collaboration with UNICEF that was aimed at strengthening students' contribution to school life. It had also strengthened its partnership with other organizations that worked with young people, such as INJAZ Qatar. An initiative to lower carbon footprints had been launched and environmental ambassador roles had been established at a number of schools. The curriculum covered a range of environmental issues.

55. A supportive atmosphere for all persons had been created in the education sector. Public and private schools were open to Qataris and non-Qataris alike. There were a number of private schools, and the fees they charged varied. Girls were encouraged to participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes and in four "science incubators" operated by the Government. Human rights principles were integrated into the curriculum in accordance with the Qatar National Vision 2030. Statistics for the period 2020–2025 showed that 51 per cent of schoolchildren were boys and 49 per cent, girls. The Qatar Foundation for Social Work conducted awareness-raising campaigns on the contributions to society made by women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, with the goal of challenging gender and ability-based stereotypes.

56. **A representative of Qatar** said that children's rights were addressed in articles 21, 22 and 68 of the Constitution in particular. Article 68 provided that international instruments

like the Convention, once ratified, had the force of law in the country. The Cybercrime Act provided that offences committed against persons aged under 18 years carried more severe penalties. Offences of trafficking in persons against victims below that age also carried more severe penalties. In place of corporal punishment, reference to which had been removed from legislation when Qatar became a Party to the Convention, there was now a range of measures for managing children under the age of 16 years with behavioural difficulties that included placement in centres run by the Ministry of Social Development and the Family; psychological treatment was also available at dedicated centres. Juvenile offenders received less severe penalties for crimes normally punishable by death or life imprisonment and the authorities could be flexible in applying them. In no event was the death penalty applied to children under 16 years of age.

57. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Juvenile Code provided that neither the death penalty nor flogging could be applied to juvenile offenders.

58. **A representative of Qatar** said that any violation of physical integrity was an offence under national law and that parents who used corporal punishment on their children could be held criminally liable. Any act that threatened the life of a child was liable to criminal prosecution.

59. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was committed to ensuring that children's best interests were taken into account and to providing an alternative, family-like environment in juvenile detention centres, in compliance with national and international standards. Children at the centres had access to health and education services and their psychological and everyday needs were cared for. The well-being of such children was monitored, and support was available for difficult cases.

60. **A representative of Qatar** said that corporal punishment had been prohibited in public and private schools since the 1990s. Alternative methods for managing behaviour, such as dialogue, were now used, and teachers were trained in such methods in collaboration with UNICEF. Awareness-raising campaigns about such methods were conducted and inspections were carried out to check that corporal punishment was not being used. Schools aimed to create a suitable and stimulating environment for children.

61. **A representative of Qatar** said that cases of sexual exploitation of children were normally reported by the children themselves, their parents, relatives or school, or by hospitals. The public prosecution service intervened to provide care for children in cases of conflict with their guardians. Children were interviewed in the presence of a psychologist and evidence of any wrongdoing was gathered by the public prosecution service. Individuals accused of sexual exploitation of children appeared before the juvenile court or another special court. Confidentiality was maintained and the children concerned were supported by social workers and other specialists. Those convicted faced more severe prison sentences, were forbidden from working with children and had their name placed on a serious offenders' register.

62. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education attributed great importance to inclusive education, which it undertook to provide to all children, including children with disabilities, in line with its obligations under the Convention. Curriculums were adapted accordingly and the Picture Exchange Communication System and Applied Behaviour Analysis therapy were used as part of inclusive education for children with autism. More than 9,000 children with disabilities attended specialized schools; there were also 16 specialized centres. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education was working to establish an additional four such schools. Vocational programmes for persons with disabilities had been put in place.

63. **A representative of Qatar** said that complaints relating to corporal punishment could be reported using a free helpline set up to combat neglect and assault. The Government worked continually to raise awareness of the helpline in schools and the community. Child victims were registered at hospitals and healthcare centres. Child protection teams were informed of incidents and parents were provided with guidance on how to manage bad behaviour. The Ministry of Social Development and the Family was participating in efforts to set up family training programmes in alternative, preventive strategies for disciplining children based on the principles of positive education and interactive activities.

Awareness-raising efforts were carried out through programmes, publications and talks for families. A parental training centre had been established as part of the national development strategy for the period 2024–2030.

64. **Ms. Correa** said that she would be interested to hear the delegation's views on the relationship between violence among children in schools and their upbringing at home. She wondered whether reporting mechanisms and care centres were in place for handling such violence. She would welcome an update on the proportion of children who had suffered from some sort of harassment at school.

65. It would be useful to learn how the notions of sustainability, climate change and other environmental concepts were being integrated into children's education. She wished to know what initiatives were in place for ensuring that all children without distinction could have access to safe parks with clean air. She would appreciate details of the impact of the climate change crisis on Qatari children and policies adopted to mitigate its effects. It would be helpful to know how Qatar was working with the international community to prepare for climate change and what steps it was taking to promote the involvement of children of different ages in developing environmental policy. She wondered whether the State Party had a national action plan for implementing the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action. She would be grateful to learn how Qatar was ensuring that children received all the nutrients and vitamins necessary for their development and whether it monitored the success of such efforts.

66. **Mr. Ekesa** said that he wished to know how many children with disabilities were not in school. He would welcome clarification as to the measures Qatar was taking to meet its objectives under the family strategy and the national strategy for the integration of children with disabilities into schools and the mechanisms it was using to ensure accountability and track progress. Did the State Party plan to launch additional four-year plans with those goals? He would like to know what steps the State Party would be taking to ensure that all children with disabilities were enrolled in schools, and he would appreciate details of the strategies it was using to encourage their integration into mainstream education. He would welcome the delegation's comments on the State Party's efforts thus far to develop a national plan of action for human rights education, as the Committee had recommended in its previous concluding observations ([CRC/C/QAT/CO/3-4](#)).

67. He would like to know if children and adolescents would receive targeted attention under the national health strategy for the period 2024–2030. He would welcome information on steps taken to address disparities in access to healthcare, particularly with regard to non-Qatari children, and data on reported cases of abuse, inadequate safety standards and barriers to justice that hindered the protection of children's rights.

68. It would be helpful to know if a bill on persons with disabilities that had reportedly been prepared included a provision that prohibited discrimination against children with disabilities and provided for their full inclusion in the education system. He wondered whether, given the leading role played by the State Party in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 74/275 proclaiming the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, the Government had adopted any laws or policies or provided any training with the aim of protecting schools during armed conflicts.

69. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Country Task Force) said that he would be interested to hear why, given its commitment to preventing discrimination, Qatar had not yet ratified the Convention against Discrimination in Education. He wondered what steps the State Party took to prevent discrimination between Qataris and non-Qataris in access to education, particularly at free public schools. He wished to know why, given the availability of such schools, families paid to send their children to private schools. It would be useful to hear what steps were being taken to address the cost of education beyond tuition fees, and he would be grateful to learn what the overall budget allocated to education was. He wondered how the "peace schools" programme and other efforts to prevent children from dropping out of school functioned, whether children reached by such efforts had returned to school, and what related measures were in place in schools. It would be helpful to know if there was an official and comprehensive sex education programme in schools, how many hours of education in that subject were provided, whether it was provided in all schools for all

children, and who provided it. He wished to know what support children with disabilities in mainstream education received, how much of it was specialized and whether the State Party had any disaggregated data in that area. How much was a 12-year-old child in Qatar likely to know about his or her human rights, and to what extent was he or she likely to be able to exercise them? It would be useful to hear what steps the State Party took to ensure that all children had access to safe, accessible and inclusive spaces for play and socialization.

70. He wished to know how many children the State Party was detaining for migration-related reasons each year, for how long and at what facilities they were detained and whether there were any plans to end that practice. Did the State Party have any plans to amend its legislation on family reunification with a view to making that process more accessible and less discriminatory, especially for workers with low-wage jobs and women? He would like to know more about the State Party's plans for regularizing the status of children born in Qatar with no nationality. How many members of the Al-Ghufran clan remained deprived of their nationality? And did the State Party have a plan for resolving the matter? He would be grateful to receive confirmation that all children, including undocumented children, could attend school without any difficulties.

71. He would like to know how many complaints regarding child domestic workers had been received, what efforts had been made to follow up on such cases and prosecute those responsible and how many children, especially girls, were still working in that capacity. He wondered what services were available to help children who were in conflict with their families or otherwise at risk of running away. He would welcome detailed information on the results of adopting the 2011 Anti-Human Trafficking Act and related memorandums. In that connection, what measures had been taken to prevent, identify and prosecute incidents of trafficking and other crimes against children at the 2022 World Cup?

72. He would be grateful to learn when the bills on the administration of justice in cases involving children would be adopted. He wondered whether, in the drafting process, the Government was taking into consideration the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system and relevant guidance provided by the Committee to the State Party. It would be helpful to know what sentences could be handed down to children below the age of 16 years. He would like to know how many children under the age of 18 were deprived of their liberty, for how long and in what facilities, and whether they were separated from adults. He wished to know whether the State Party planned to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to establish a national preventive mechanism covering all facilities where children were deprived of their liberty. He would be interested to learn whether children were informed about, and supported in, submitting complaints to the National Human Rights Committee. Lastly, he would like to know what the minimum age for enrolment in military school was and whether the State Party planned to become a party to the Safe Schools Declaration.

73. **Ms. Sidikou** said that she wished to know whether Qatar had a mechanism for coordinating and ensuring synergy between different sectors that worked to uphold children's rights. Were there any sources of data on the realization of children rights other than the multiple indicator cluster surveys conducted by the Government? Had any steps been taken to build the capacity of actors involved in determining the best interests of the child?

74. **Ms. Correa** said that she would be interested to learn what actions the State Party had taken to ensure that, in accordance with article 18 (1) of the Convention, parents shared equal responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, particularly in situations in which a mother remarried and consequently, in accordance with national law, lost custody of her child. She would appreciate clarification as to whether the death penalty could be applied to children between the ages of 16 and 18 years. She would welcome an explanation as to whether, under articles 280, 284 and 296 of the Criminal Code, women over the age of 18 who were the victims of sexual exploitation could then find themselves liable to criminal prosecution.

75. **Mr. Ekesa** said that he wished to know whether the State Party had any reports on the problems of obesity, early-onset type-2 diabetes and hypertension among adolescents. He wondered what steps the State Party was taking to ensure that children, and particularly adolescents, had access to mental healthcare services.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.