



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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

### Summary record of the 2893rd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 22 May 2025, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Kiladze

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

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

*Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Qatar (continued) (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** said that certain statistics and other information cited by the Committee at the previous meeting did not correspond to the data in the possession of the delegation, which would like to know the source of the Committee's information.
3. **A representative of Qatar**, responding to questions raised at the previous meeting, said that parents were responsible for raising their children without resorting to corporal punishment and that anybody who beat or otherwise abused his or her children was held liable under national law. The same applied to any guardian who committed such acts against persons who were unable to defend themselves, including persons with disabilities. Although there were no laws that specifically addressed domestic violence, national law included provisions that were intended to combat both physical and psychological violence of that nature. The domestic violence court established by the Supreme Council of the Judiciary was staffed both by judges and specialists in that area. A centre for training social workers and other professionals who worked with children and families was in operation.
4. **A representative of Qatar** said that steps to combat corporal punishment were taken not only in schools but also in children's shelters, where any physical or verbal abuse of children was prohibited and they benefited from the assistance of psychologists, social workers and other specialists. Under a project run by the Qatar Foundation, couples who were preparing for marriage received training in bringing up a family. The Qatar Foundation for Social Work worked with the Government to combat all forms of violence against children by making available multiple channels that they could use for reporting abuse, including the 919 helpline and the "Help Me" and "Tell Me" applications. Members of other vulnerable groups were also able to submit complaints. Psychological and social assistance was made available to such children and they were provided with shelter, food, legal assistance and other services. A rehabilitation team held sessions for parents and children and the authorities could carry out home visits with the aim of ensuring family stability. The public prosecution service, the local police and schools worked together and could intervene jointly in cases of child abuse. The "Aman" Social Protection and Rehabilitation Centre had been receiving reports of abuse for several years, during which between 20 and 30 such cases had been reported each year. A multidisciplinary team carried out comprehensive reviews with the aim of identifying issues that contributed to the problem of violence. In 2024, workshops and awareness-raising sessions on preventing violence had been organized for parents and teachers in collaboration with multiple stakeholders with the aim of reaching 23,000 persons. Activities held in 2024 with the aim of promoting the sharing of parental responsibilities had benefited nearly 5,000 persons.
5. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was committed to protecting students from all forms of abuse in schools and providing them with a stable and stimulating school environment. Strategies for combating abuse such as the "My School, My Community" programme were held with the participation of groups from across society. Social and psychological perspectives were taken into consideration in such efforts. In cases of violence or abuse, integrated action was taken to remove children immediately from threats. School directors were involved in responding to all incidents. Cases that could not be dealt with by schools were referred to a special department for student care. Between 2024 and 2025, individualized psychological and social support had been provided to more than 40,000 male and female students. Advice had also been provided to students as part of related awareness-raising activities. Almost 300 psychologists and 500 social workers worked in that area and all students, including students with disabilities, were able to receive care. Approximately 80 per cent of students, parents and teachers had signed a joint child protection agreement.
6. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government had developed advanced policies aimed at ensuring a safe and clean environment for future generations. The Qatar

National Vision 2030 included a number of policies and initiatives aimed at developing environmental and sanitary infrastructure with a view to reducing the impact of climate change on children, including children with disabilities. Efforts were being made to use renewable energy sources, limit industrial emissions and develop environmental monitoring mechanisms and early warning systems for pollution levels. Green spaces that were accessible to all children without discrimination were being created in urban areas. The Government was supporting the improvement of drinking-water and wastewater infrastructure and cooperating with international stakeholders with a view to employing best environmental and sanitary practices. In cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a summer club for students aged between 14 and 18 years aimed at raising their awareness about the environment and encouraging them to participate in environmental protection efforts would be held for the second time. Teaching about the environment was being integrated into school curricula with the same goals.

7. **A representative of Qatar** said that persons who wished to enjoy parks did not have to pay an entry fee. Football pitches and a number of parks had been equipped with air conditioning and environmentally friendly lighting with a view to attracting more visitors.

8. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government had taken the necessary measures to ensure the good quality of its drinking water. Monthly water quality assessments were carried out throughout the country, especially at private and public schools during term time and at childcare centres. Such assessments could also be carried out at public and private hospitals and healthcare centres on request. The Government worked with the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation to conduct analyses of groundwater and review State water policy. Efforts were made to raise young people's awareness of the importance of clean drinking water.

9. **A representative of Qatar** said that schools taught students about the importance of improving air quality and farmland, protecting endangered species, recycling more and reducing emissions, groundwater extraction and pesticide use. Children from both public and private schools took part in efforts to keep beaches clean and attended exhibitions on the environment. A sustainability week was held each year in September or October. Some 120 schools, 800 teachers and 1,150 students had been involved in a "carbon footprint initiative". Water and air quality in schools was monitored both before and during the academic year by laboratories reporting to the Ministry of Health. Private companies carried out necessary maintenance work. Food standards were approved by the Ministry of Health, the Qatar Diabetes Association and other bodies, and it was ensured that schools provided children with balanced meals.

10. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was committed to expanding green spaces in residential areas with a view to providing a healthy and sustainable environment for all children. The total area of such spaces had already been increased from approximately 8 km<sup>2</sup> in 2023 to 18 km<sup>2</sup> in 2024. In addition to locations such as Oxygen Park and the beaches of Doha Corniche, there were spaces that had been adapted for persons with disabilities, including a sustainable waterfront promenade for persons with a visual impairment. Seven cities were part of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and aimed to provide education and leisure opportunities for all. Qatar had several sustainable parks, including Ras Al Nasaa Park and Al Rayhan Park, which had been built using recycled materials from Expo 2023 Doha. More than 150 centres offered children a full range of leisure and sporting activities. More than 10 million trees had been planted and water recycling systems had been installed as part of sustainable urban planning efforts.

11. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government ensured that young people could express their opinions and that such opinions were taken into account in decision-making. As part of the national development strategy for the period 2024–2030, the Government had conducted visits to schools and childcare centres and had thus far listened to the opinions of more than 250 children, and had also met and consulted with parents and some 100 teachers. It had also conducted an electronic survey with a view to finding out about everyday challenges that respondents faced. Students participated in decisions that concerned them using platforms like the student councils, which had more than 8,000 members at different schools and enabled students to communicate with decision-makers at the Ministry of

Education and Higher Education. There were more than 200 student sustainability ambassadors who learned about the environment and took part in activities such as preparing reports and participating in mock international meetings. Students had also participated in the Hague International Model United Nations, which had helped prepare them for their role as the builders of the future.

12. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government placed an emphasis on educational services for children with disabilities in its strategic framework document for the disability sector for the period 2021–2025 and provided them with all the services that they needed to achieve academic success. Ten projects in that area had been begun in 2024 and would continue until 2030. A road map and development strategy for children with disabilities had been put in place and a survey on the situation of such children in all schools had been conducted. A unified database of children with disabilities in the education system had been established and five inclusive schools would be in operation in 2026. There were more than 9,000 children with disabilities at public and private schools and more than 60 per cent of schools were inclusive. An early detection system for children with disabilities had been established. Teachers who specialized in working with children with disabilities were being trained. A centre for helping children with disabilities to live independently had been established. In collaboration with the Qatar Foundation, an academy had been established for helping children with intellectual development disorders and children who were outside the education system. A childcare centre that could admit 500 children each year had recently been opened in cooperation with the Hamad Medical Corporation.

13. **A representative of Qatar** said that children also took part in an ambassadors programme, a United Nations delegates programme and the activities of the Advisory Council, in addition to meeting regularly with representatives of the executive branch, including ministers and directors from all sectors. A number of children had participated in the drafting of the country's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee.

14. **A representative of Qatar** said that children with disabilities had access to specialized healthcare, including rehabilitation services, psychological support and early detection procedures. Ten healthcare centres were tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. Clinics providing dental care, aural healthcare and family healthcare were also in operation. Children diagnosed with autism were sent to specialized centres. A programme for supporting young children with autism, known as the EarlyBird Programme, was being implemented with the support of the National Autistic Society of the United Kingdom. A programme for providing psychological support to children in schools was being implemented. A 60-hour training programme on mental health was made available to students, and teachers received training in managing students with mental health problems.

15. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was implementing the national development strategy for the period 2024–2030, which provided for a number of projects to improve integration, rehabilitation and diagnostic services for children with disabilities. A new model for diagnosis had been developed and a centre that conducted assessments relating to disabilities had been established. Training in disability-related issues was provided to social workers, healthcare workers and family members. The Government had established a programme to identify the vulnerable children who were most in need of care. Four centres provided care to children and teenagers with autism up to the age of 18 years. Children with mild to moderate developmental or intellectual disabilities attended centres where they interacted with other children and developed social skills. The centres worked with local communities to ensure that the children received a good education and would be able to enter the workplace.

16. **A representative of Qatar** said that legislators had made great efforts to ensure that the legal capacity of children with disabilities was recognized and that they enjoyed the right to healthcare, education and participation in society on an equal footing with others. The draft disability code contained provisions relating to non-discrimination and the integration of children with disabilities into the education system. On 30 April 2025, the Council of Ministers had decided that measures should be taken to exempt persons with disabilities from paying fees for certain State services.

17. Legislative measures had been taken to ensure access to complaint mechanisms for children, including children with disabilities, and their families. Complaints could be filed with a court through a website. Online hearings were held to save time and ensure efficient and effective access to justice. Victims of harm or abuse could submit a request for compensation to a court. A legal assistance committee appointed lawyers to defend the rights of children, including children with disabilities. The draft children's code had been approved by the Council of Ministers and was now under legislative review. The draft was in compliance with the Convention and the optional protocols thereto, including in respect of the age of criminal responsibility.

18. **A representative of Qatar** said that the school curriculum included modules intended to promote mutual respect, social skills, personal development and awareness of human rights. Students learned about human rights in general, children's rights and the State institutions responsible for protecting rights.

19. Human rights were taught through five subjects: Islamic education, social studies, computer science, English and Arabic. In social studies, children learned about their right to health; the concept of equality; the value of diversity and difference; women's and children's rights; *shura* and democracy; the rights of minorities under international conventions; and peaceful coexistence. Human rights concepts were incorporated into the Arabic language and English language curricula. Students learned about personal limits and freedoms, the freedom of the press, access to information and environmental conservation, among other subjects.

20. In information technology, children learned about cybersecurity, the protection of personal information, and the safe use of the Internet. Islamic education addressed the subjects of freedom in Islam and the status of women and children in Islam. The Ministry of Education worked with the National Human Rights Committee to disseminate information on human rights culture, including the right to education. In that connection, information booklets were published, media campaigns were conducted and, in 2020, an educational manual on human rights had been issued that addressed the questions of identity, recreation, equality and dignity, as well as the right to employment, the rights of women, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression. Students visited historical sites to learn about the country's history.

21. Training programmes and awareness-raising activities were conducted to raise awareness of children's rights among school administrators. The Ministry of Education had implemented a programme to promote the development of school leaders. A number of awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of the child had been conducted for all age groups. In recent years, the Government had implemented training courses on children's rights, sustainability and climate change. A total of 80 per cent of teachers had participated in the courses. The Ministry of Education cooperated with other State agencies to raise awareness of the rights of the child in schools. In 2024, for example, the Ministry of the Interior had organized a large number of awareness-raising campaigns and training courses on international standards relating to the treatment of children. The Ministry of the Interior coordinated with research and academic institutions to ensure the protection of children in cyberspace and within communities and families.

22. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government ran campaigns to raise children's awareness of their rights under the Convention, including in relation to domestic violence and violence against children. Two such campaigns – the “Don't Touch Me” campaign and the “Take Your Children to School” campaign – had reached more than 23,000 students. A follow-up to the “Don't Touch Me” campaign, conducted in 2020, had reached more than 5,000 students.

23. In 2021, the “Aman” Centre had implemented a campaign on social media to raise awareness of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). An international event on the rights of the child had been organized to mark International Children's Day. The “How to Protect Myself” campaign, launched in 2023, had included workshops and awareness-raising talks for students in public and private schools and their parents. The 919 helpline had been set up to receive complaints of violence.

24. In 2024, workshops and talks had been organized as part of a campaign to raise awareness of how children could protect themselves against cyberbullying. The campaign had reached over 23,000 students, parents, teachers and specialists.

25. **A representative of Qatar** said that a body known as the Alliance of Civilizations Committee had organized a course at Qatar University and an essay-writing competition for schoolchildren. Every year, the Committee arranged for between 15 and 20 foreign students to come to Qatar and interact with their peers in Doha.

26. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government attached great importance to children's health and employed a multisectoral approach to protect their health and promote early intervention and healthy behaviour. A comprehensive child-health screening system had been incorporated into primary healthcare services. Children between the age of two months and 5 years were entitled to receive nine free visits from a healthcare worker who monitored their growth and identified any disabilities or diseases affecting them. The system included a health education programme that encouraged exclusive breastfeeding until the age of six months. As a result, the proportion of children who were exclusively breastfed had risen significantly in recent years.

27. In 2024, the Ministry of Health had launched a national plan to combat obesity and diabetes with a view to reducing the rates of mortality resulting from those diseases by 36 per cent by 2030. A large number of programmes had been implemented in schools to raise children's awareness of health-related matters. One such programme was "Your Health First", which was focused on promoting healthy lifestyles by educating children about nutrition, improving school canteens and promoting physical activity. The programme had benefited more than 60,000 students in public and private schools. The Government had established nutrition clinics that provided specialist services to children, including individual treatment plans for managing body weight and dealing with eating disorders.

28. The Al-Noor Institute for the Blind implemented a specialized nutrition programme to promote the health of its visually impaired clients. Parents also received information on nutrition so that they could provide their children with healthy food at home. The National Obesity Treatment Centre provided specialized medical and surgical services to treat obesity in children with health complications. The centre had multidisciplinary medical teams, undertook comprehensive assessments and drew up treatment plans relating to healthy nutrition and physical exercise.

29. Act No. 22 of 2022 established that all residents of Qatar, whether citizens or expatriates, had access to health insurance and healthcare without discrimination. Under article 3 of the Act, employers were required to pay health insurance contributions for their employees and issue them with a health insurance card and proof of their coverage under the compulsory insurance system when issuing or renewing their residence permits. Criminal penalties were handed down to any persons who violated those obligations.

30. The Government had made efforts to raise awareness of mental health among children and had taken several measures to protect them from abuse and sexual violence. It had launched a website setting out guidance on how children should protect themselves against the dangers of the Internet, including bullying, exploitation and exposure to harmful content. The website could be used to submit complaints and request psychological support and legal assistance. Mental health counsellors assisted children in schools and an adolescent health programme was implemented to identify any physical, psychological or social problems that children might have so that they could be given the appropriate support, taking into account their right to privacy.

31. **A representative of Qatar** said that sex education for children began in primary school with a course that enabled children to distinguish between safe and harmful behaviour and encouraged them to report any unsafe situations. Sex education formed part of the curriculum from the sixth to the ninth school years and addressed a range of topics, including sexually transmitted diseases. In 2022, the Ministry of Health had launched a two-hour course on sexual health awareness for children aged 12 years and older. The committee responsible for delivering the course included representatives of the community police, the juvenile police, the Ministry of Health, a behavioural health support centre and the Naufar Addiction Treatment Centre.

32. The Sidra Medical Centre had organized 16 training courses in 16 schools, benefiting more than 1,500 students. The courses covered topics such as sexual health, sexually transmitted diseases, the effects of drug addiction and the rights and duties of students. Young people were shown how to gain access to counselling services and where they could request help if they were concerned about themselves or any of their friends.

33. A website providing guidance on the safe use of social media was being launched. The website covered five areas of risk, including pornographic content and sexual exploitation and abuse. It also provided guidance on how to obtain clinical, psychological or legal assistance and how to submit complaints.

34. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was committed to protecting the right to education in line with its obligations under international treaties. It did so by, among other things, protecting educational facilities from attack in times of peace and war.

35. Qatar had been one of the first countries in the world to ratify the Safe Schools Declaration and was committed to upholding the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. Qatar had sponsored General Assembly resolution 74/275, proclaiming 9 September as the International Day to Protect Education from Attack. Since the adoption of the resolution, the Government had organized an annual event at the United Nations offices in Geneva and New York to draw attention to the plight of millions of children around the world who were deprived of their right to education by attacks on schools during armed conflicts.

36. Qatari institutions ensured access to education for the most marginalized groups. One such institution was the Education Above All Foundation, which had enabled millions of children in more than 50 countries to enrol in an educational institution. Qatar hosted the Analysis and Outreach Hub on Children and Armed Conflict of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

37. **A representative of Qatar** said that Qatar had a diverse education system that included public, private and community schools. Families were free to choose the school in which they enrolled their children. Dozens of international curricula were licensed alongside the national curriculum, allowing Qatari parents to choose schools that taught in English or offered the International Baccalaureate or English A-Level programmes. *Assalam* schools, or “peace schools”, provided free education to low-income families, including families in difficult financial circumstances. Some *Assalam* schools taught the Qatari national curriculum, while others taught in English.

38. The right to education of children from war zones was upheld and measures were taken to integrate such children into society. Free education was provided to children affected by conflict, including children from the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan. The performance of public schools had improved significantly between 2007 and 2024 and the quality of education in Qatar was reflected by the high literacy rate.

39. The percentage of children not enrolled in primary education had fallen from 8 per cent in 2009 to 1 per cent in 2023 and the secondary school completion rate had risen to 86 per cent. The proportion of students attaining the expected level of reading proficiency in the fourth year of school had risen from 66 per cent to 80 per cent, while the proportion attaining the expected level of proficiency in mathematics had risen from 39 per cent to 46 per cent. Under the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the average reading score of public-school students had risen from 407 points to 419 points between 2018 and 2022, while the average science score had increased from 419 points to 432 points. Comprehensive digitization and professional development programmes for teachers were beginning to bear fruit in public schools.

40. **Mr. Van Keirsbilck** (Country Task Force) said that he would welcome clarification regarding the role played by the police in delivering sex education in schools and the exact content of the sex education curriculum. It would be helpful to know whether children had access to free legal aid at all stages of legal proceedings. The delegation might wish to comment on whether the State Party considered drug addiction among children to be a criminal issue or a health issue and whether children between 16 and 18 years of age were treated as adults within the justice system.

41. **Ms. Correa** (Country Task Force) said that she would welcome a reply to the questions she had put to the delegation at the previous meeting concerning the death penalty and the definition of the crime of sexual exploitation. She would also like to know how the State Party worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other organizations to generate data on violence in schools.

42. **Mr. Ekesa** (Country Task Force) said that he would appreciate up-to-date statistics on the number of unauthorized abortions that had been performed in the State Party, including on adolescents.

43. **Ms. Beloff** said that she would like to know whether the new Children's Act would contain a definition of a "child" that was aligned with the definition set out in the Convention.

44. **Ms. Aho** said that she wished to know if abortion was permitted in cases in which an adolescent had fallen pregnant as a result of rape or her physical or mental health was at risk. Information on the steps being taken to address the very high road traffic death rate among children would be welcome, as would a detailed explanation of the wastewater treatment process and the level of access to drinking water in the State Party.

45. **Ms. Taleb Moussa** said that she would like to know whether the State Party had established centres to provide social, legal and psychological support to girls who were victims of sexual violence, whether girls had access to contraception and whether children born as a result of rape were entitled to Qatari citizenship. It would be interesting to hear whether government institutions followed a gender-based approach in their work. She invited the delegation to explain whether spousal violence was criminalized under the State Party's law, whether the State Party had statistics on the issue and whether the victims had access to free legal aid.

46. **Mr. Jaffé** said that he would be grateful for information on the systems in place to ensure that complaints made by children through the 919 helpline were transmitted to the social services, health service and law enforcement authorities. The delegation might wish to describe what services were in place for children whose mother or father had been deprived of his or her liberty and whether such services were provided free of charge.

47. **Ms. Scerri Ferrante** said that she wished to know whether the State Party had adopted any measures to protect children from digital threats and the risks presented by social media, excessive screen use and artificial intelligence. Information on the support available to the children of individuals who had been sentenced to death would also be appreciated.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.*

48. **A representative of Qatar** said that the department of the Ministry of the Interior responsible for enforcing the law regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrants sought to protect and ensure respect for human rights at all times. Information on the action taken to address violations of that law was set out in paragraph 183 of the periodic report. In 2024, the Government had handled 22 cases involving the departure from the country of migrant workers who were accompanied by children without identity documents. The road traffic authorities had taken steps to address the road traffic death rate among children by organizing training sessions designed to help prevent road accidents. Individuals could not obtain a driving licence until they reached 18 years of age.

49. **A representative of Qatar**, replying to a question raised at the previous meeting, said that a special court, prosecutor's office and police force had been established to, among other things, prevent, identify and prosecute incidents of trafficking and other crimes against children at the 2022 World Cup. The implementation of preventive measures had helped stop any such incidents from occurring during the event.

50. **A representative of Qatar** said that psychological support was provided to children whose mother or father had been sentenced to death. Article 345 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provided for the suspension and, in certain cases, commutation of death sentences where the woman concerned was pregnant or breastfeeding. In the event that both of a child's parents were sentenced to prison terms, one of the parents' sentences would be suspended until the other parent had been released.



51. The minimum age of criminal responsibility was still set at 7 years. Crimes committed by children under 16 years of age were handled through the juvenile justice system, the objective of which was to rehabilitate children rather than punish them. Children under 16 years of age could not, therefore, be sentenced to death, hard labour, life imprisonment or flogging. Details of the alternative measures used were set out in paragraph 75 of the periodic report. While minors between the ages of 16 and 18 years were treated as adults, judges still sought to impose rehabilitative measures where appropriate. The law granted prosecutors and judges broad discretion to make decisions based on factors such as the minor's age and whether he or she was a first-time offender.

52. **A representative of Qatar** said that, while judges were authorized to hand down death sentences to minors between the ages of 16 and 18 years, the reality was that no judge had done so in practice.

53. **A representative of Qatar** said that Qatar had hosted more than 100,000 individuals who had been evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021. It had provided them with housing, education services and psychological support. Qatar Charity had worked closely with UNICEF to arrange care and mental health support for the hundreds of unaccompanied children who had been among the evacuees. The Government had also helped evacuate a large number of children from the Gaza Strip and had provided them with housing, education and health services, psychological and social support and opportunities to participate in recreational activities. Such services were available to all Palestinian children, including those who did not have identity documents. The Government had further demonstrated its commitment to protecting the rights of children affected by conflict by arranging for a six-year-old Palestinian girl who had lost her leg as a result of the hostilities to be transported to Doha so that she could be fitted with a prosthetic leg and begin a new life in Qatar.

54. **A representative of Qatar** said that, over a period of 15 years, Qatar had evacuated some 65,000 Afghans and their children and housed them for two to three weeks before facilitating their travel to third countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Austria, the United States and Canada, or providing them with longer-term accommodation. Qatar had been providing education and energy assistance to Gaza for at least 12 years and had welcomed some 1,500 children from Gaza; those children had been enrolled in local schools and had received free healthcare. The 45,000 Syrian families whom Qatar had hosted during the Syrian revolution had also received education and healthcare services.

55. **A representative of Qatar** said that Act No. 21 of 2015 established the conditions for entering and exiting the country. Migrants, for example, had to demonstrate that they had housing, a minimum income and health insurance; a breach of those conditions could result in expulsion.

56. **A representative of Qatar** said that sex education in schools was delivered by teachers and educators, not the police. A national workshop involving a range of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, psychologists, paediatricians and the social police, whose prime function was public education, had been launched in 2022 to improve sex education.

57. **A representative of Qatar** said that children or their parents could apply for assistance from the Legal Aid Office of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary in all legal matters, not only when a child was charged with a criminal offence. The Legal Aid Office had lawyers available to defend a child's rights from the outset of criminal proceedings. Domestic violence cases, which in Qatar referred to all types of conflict within a family, were heard by a special court, and legal assistance in such cases was provided by a specialized office.

58. As sharia was the source of law in Qatar, no criminal, civil or other legislation could conflict with its general principles. In that context, a fetus enjoyed the same right to life as an adult and, as a living being, must benefit from legal protection. Therefore, abortion was possible only when a pregnancy posed a risk to the mother's life.

59. Qatar had adopted legislation seeking to protect children and adults alike from the risks arising from the digital world. The Cybercrime Act punished all types of online

intimidation and threats, providing for harsher penalties when the victim was a child or person with a disability.

60. **A representative of Qatar** said that children of unknown parents, children who were the product of rape and children not recognized by their father were entitled to Qatari nationality.

61. **A representative of Qatar** said that Qatar had acceded to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). National legislation on domestic work banned the hiring of persons under the age of 18 and established protections from exploitation and poor working conditions. Foreign nationals wishing to become domestic workers in Qatar underwent identity checks and medical examinations in their country of origin before departing. Domestic workers enjoyed the same labour rights as others, including with regard to healthcare, working hours and conditions, ability to change employers and freedom to leave the country without their employer's authorization. They could lodge complaints with the Ministry of Labour, using a 24-hour helpline that provided live interpretation services in 11 languages; the identity of complainants was protected. Migrant workers in general were permitted to bring their children with them to Qatar, provided that they met visa conditions.

62. All forms of trafficking in persons, including the sale, sexual exploitation or labour exploitation of children, had been criminalized and penalties for trafficking offences were harsher when the victims were children, women or persons with disabilities, namely, 15 years' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 Qatari riyals. Labour inspectors were trained to detect breaches of the law, although no cases of forced labour had been identified since the enactment of the relevant law.

63. **A representative of Qatar** said that calls to the 919 helpline were answered by qualified and specially trained social workers and were triaged by issue, namely, psychosocial, medical, legal and miscellaneous, and by priority level.

64. **A representative of Qatar** said that the "Wifaq" Family Counselling Centre used various preventive and therapeutic measures to preserve family unity, including pre-marriage workshops, presentations on positive parenting, in-person and virtual counselling sessions and mediation services. It also defended children's best interests in divorce cases and provided psychosocial support to children of divorced parents. There were several ways of reporting cases of violence against girls to the "Aman" Centre, including through the 919 helpline, e-applications, the Centre's social media accounts, healthcare providers, educators and the public prosecution service. Cases were processed by a multidisciplinary group consisting of a doctor, lawyer and psychologist, which drew up a rehabilitation plan and then referred the case to the appropriate services.

65. **A representative of Qatar** said that the Government was working on legal provisions to protect children in cyberspace while focusing on their best interests and respecting their right to privacy and the cultural identity of Qatari society. The Ministry of Information and Communications Technology had launched the "Safe Space" platform to promote awareness of digital safety among families and society at large. In addition, Studio 5/6 had launched a programme aimed at upgrading young people's digital skills. The Artificial Intelligence Committee had been established in 2021 to lead government efforts to promote the use of artificial intelligence. Qatar had achieved the third highest score in the Information and Communications Technology Development Index of the International Telecommunication Union, reflecting its commitment to developing a fair digital infrastructure that respected human rights.

66. **A representative of Qatar** said that lawmakers were seeking to codify issues of child custody and maintenance in the Family Code, including to provide for mothers' custody rights and compel fathers to pay alimony and child support. The Supreme Council of the Judiciary had developed a judicial code of conduct that referenced international human rights law and provided for judges to receive human rights training.

67. **A representative of Qatar** said that national law addressed the concept of the consent of the child and was in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

68. **Ms. Sidikou** (Coordinator, Country Task Force) said that the Committee appreciated the State Party's efforts to protect and promote the rights of children and hoped that the dialogue with the Committee would contribute to furthering those efforts.

69. **A representative of Qatar** said that the dialogue was an extension of the country's positive cooperation with the Committee and that exchanging views, practices and experience, while bearing in mind religious, social and cultural specificities, was a vital basis for progressing in the realization of human rights around the world, and of children's rights in particular. Qatar encouraged the Committee to reflect the diversity of States Parties in its general comments and looked forward to using the Committee's concluding observations to enhance its policies and programmes for children, in cooperation with international partners, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

70. **The Chair** said that, while the Committee respected the cultural specificities of States Parties, no circumstances could justify violations of the Convention. The Committee looked forward to hearing in its next dialogue with the State Party how the implementation of the rights of the child had progressed in Qatar.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*