



Convention on the
Rights of the Child

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Thirty-second session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 834th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 13 January 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the thirty-second session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It was the last session at which it was made up of 10 members, since membership would be increased to 18 as from May.

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Mr. RAMCHARAN (Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights) drew attention to the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387), which contained a specific chapter on strengthening the human rights system and made a number of suggestions with regard to human rights treaty bodies. The High Commissioner had written to the chairpersons of all committees seeking their views. Although reform was not an easy issue, all concerned shared the aspiration to make the treaty bodies function even more effectively. The Office of the High Commissioner hoped to organize a consultation with the treaty bodies to discuss the various recommendations. He looked forward to the deliberations which the Committee on the Rights of the Child would hold with States parties towards the end of its session.

3. With regard to the enlargement of the Committee's membership, 30 States parties had submitted nominations for the forthcoming elections.

4. There had been a number of new developments affecting human rights treaty bodies. In December 2002 the General Assembly had adopted an Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment establishing a preventive system of visits to places of detention in order to strengthen protection of persons deprived of their liberty, including children.

5. The parliament of Timor Leste had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, but had yet to deposit an instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General. Timor Leste had also indicated its intent to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In December 2002 the United States of America had ratified the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but had indicated that it would not be bound by the parent instrument. There were currently 44 parties to the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and 45 to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

6. The Secretary-General was in the process of appointing an independent expert on violence against children. It was as a result of the outstanding work of the Committee's expert group on the issue of violence that the General Assembly had approved preparation of a study on violence against children. The Office of the High Commissioner, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), had been active in preparing the groundwork for the study. Fund-raising was about to start, and it was envisaged that a small secretariat would be established in Geneva. Once appointed, the

independent expert would consult all interested parties, including the Committee, States, non-governmental organizations, academics, professional groups and individual experts, to discuss ways of cooperating. Great expectations had been placed in the process initiated by the Committee 18 months previously.

7. He commended the Committee for setting new standards in supervising States parties' compliance with the Convention.

8. The CHAIRPERSON said that one indication of the importance of the rights of the child was that later that week the Security Council would discuss the issue of children in armed conflicts. He hoped that that discussion would result in a resolution urging States parties that had not yet done so to ratify the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CRC/C/122)

9. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES (agenda item 3)

10. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Committee, since its previous session, had received two initial reports, from Papua New Guinea and Liberia, five second periodic reports, from Kyrgyzstan, Croatia, Austria, Luxembourg and Togo, and its first third periodic reports, from Sweden and Bolivia, bringing the totals to 172 initial reports, 68 second periodic reports and two third periodic reports. Of those, the Committee had considered 191. To date, 19 initial reports and 113 periodic reports were overdue.

METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (agenda item 6)

11. The CHAIRPERSON noted that the Committee would continue to discuss the revised set of guidelines on reporting.

GENERAL COMMENTS (agenda item 7)

12. The CHAIRPERSON said the Committee would consider general comments on the minimum age of criminal responsibility, on HIV/AIDS and the rights of children, and on adolescent health and development. That was an ambitious programme which it might not be able to complete at the current session.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.30 a.m.