



**Convention on the
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**WRITTEN REPLIES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON CONCERNING
THE LIST OF ISSUES (CRC/C/LBN/Q/3) RECEIVED BY THE COMMITTEE
ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION
OF THE THIRD PERIODIC REPORT OF LEBANON (CRC/C/129/Add.7)***

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* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

2005

(The data and statistics required in connection with this topic are attached to this document.)

In addition to the tables and statistics required, which are attached to this document, we enclose the following observations on question No. 2, on national and regional budgets, and specifically on paragraph (f), relating to the budget for programmes to prevent child abuse and combat child labour; question No. 7, on criteria for poverty; and question No. 10, paragraph (c), on the number of children involved in child labour. These observations are as follows:

National and regional budgets/budget for programmes to prevent child abuse

The contribution from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in support of institutional and legislative capabilities in the field of juvenile justice was US\$ 350,000 from 2002 to the end of 2005. The planned budget for 2006 was US\$ 150,000.

National and regional budgets/budget for programmes to combat child labour

The contribution from the Ministry of Labour between 2001 and 2004 to fund the programmes to combat child labour was US\$ 16,550.

As for the contribution from the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) to the budget of the Ministry of Labour in connection with the programmes to combat child labour, between 2001 and 2004 it was 61,399,686 Lebanese pounds. The proposed budget for 2006 in the Ministry of Labour in connection with this issue is US\$ 165,450. This budget runs until March 2008.

The proposed budget for the IPEC programme during 2006 for the second phase of the Ministry of Labour institution-building project for the elimination of child labour was US\$ 102,100.

Criteria used in relation to poverty

On the basis of the Population and Housing Survey for 1996, poverty was defined in accordance with a methodology based on the number of unmet basic needs. Given the lack of data on rent and expenditure and the lack of health indicators, the following indicators were selected: housing, water and sanitation, education, and indicators related to rent, by means of which thresholds were defined. Subsequently, a points system was created, ranging between 0 and 2, with 0 representing the state of extreme deprivation as regards the need in question, and 2 the state of maximum satisfaction as regards the same need. The threshold point was 1 in all cases, so that the families which obtain a score below 1 are below the threshold, i.e. they fall short as regards satisfaction of the need in question.

Finally, each family obtains a composite score related to the guide to the standard of living, used to group families in five categories depending on the degree to which basic needs are met (very low; low; average; high; very high). In order to facilitate the analysis, a three-category

classification was adopted, combining the categories *very low* and *low* in a single category, and the categories *high* and *very high* in a single category, leaving a third category known as *average* unchanged.

Nevertheless, in the Report on Human Development in Lebanon 2001-2002, there is a regional disparity as regards the poverty rates for 1996, since the proportion of inhabitants suffering from deprivation ranges from 6.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent, in Beirut and Mount Lebanon respectively, to 14.3 per cent in northern Lebanon.

It should be pointed out that a multi-purpose survey is soon to be published which will supply scientific statistical data on poverty and will indicate the number of poor children in 2004.

A. Special protection measures: paragraph (c), working children.

Comprehensive recent statistical studies on working children in Lebanon have not yet been carried out. The most recent study on this topic was a study on the status of children in Lebanon in 2000, which was used in drawing up the third periodic report on the situation of children in Lebanon for the period 1998-2003.

However, we should point out in this regard that many Ministry of Labour training centres and development services centres reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs, as well as the non-governmental organizations operating in the field of eradication of child labour (we might mention as examples, but not exhaustively, the Social Movement, the Sidon Association of non-governmental organizations, the René Moawad Foundation, etc.), offer intensive vocational training to working children who are legally old enough to work (between ages 14 and 18) in the various regions of Lebanon.

According to Ministry of Labour data, the number of working children receiving vocational training in the two training centres of Ad-Dikwana and Al Hadaz, which report to the Ministry of Labour, was 144 in 2003, 252 in 2004 and 201 in 2005.

We also set out below data on the number of working children who are legally old enough to work (age 14 to 18) and received intensive vocational training through the Lebanese Employment Office, part of the Ministry of Labour, between 2003 and 2005:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2004	222	120	342
2005	455	249	704
Overall total	677	369	1 046

Some of the specialized areas in which these children received training were: secretarial skills, graphic arts, computer programming, nursery assistant, textile spinning, industrial tailoring, women's hairdressing, beauty salon, nursing assistants, reservation and travel agents, jewellery, maintenance of wired and wireless equipment, graphic design, television production techniques, traditional Arab confectionery, maintenance of computer systems, heating and refrigeration, kitchen hand, electrical installations in buildings.

B. General measures of implementation

1. Activities meant to implement the recommendations contained in the Committee's previous concluding observations on the second periodic report of Lebanon (CRC/C/70/Add.8) which was submitted to the Committee:

(a) Independent monitoring

The third periodic report on the situation of children in Lebanon for the period 1998-2003 indicated that a non-governmental organization has set up a complaints office for children, but that it is limited in scope. Other organizations have followed that example, receiving complaints and following them up. However, there are no independent institutions at the national level. In this regard, the Higher Council for Children held a meeting with the parties concerned to study the proposals for independent monitoring machinery which would harmonize local data and the various proposals (relating to an independent monitoring centre, the children's ombudsman, the National Foundation for Human Rights, etc.).

On International Human Rights Day (10 December) in 2005 the presentation of the draft National General Plan for Human Rights was announced, in coordination with the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme. The Commission is currently working to prepare a national strategy which will follow up human rights issues and seek to set up independent monitoring machinery (the National Foundation for Human Rights has a unit which deals specifically with children).

(b) The issue of the low age of criminal responsibility

Intensive efforts are under way in the Ministry of Labour to set up a commission to carry out a legal study which will put forward proposals for the amendment of various provisions of Act No. 422/2002 on the protection of minors in conflict with the law and minors at risk. One of them involves raising the age of criminal majority to 12 years.

Four years after the Act was adopted, it may be said that there is broad agreement on the need to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility. To this end, a number of meetings have been held with senior legal officials and legal experts.

In February 2006, the Higher Council for Children held a conference on juvenile justice under the motto "Raising the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12". The Union of Children's Rights Organizations, OHCHR and the Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace cooperated in the conference.

The Council sponsored the activities of the Joint Committee on Juvenile Justice, which produced various amendments, including one for the raising of the age of criminal responsibility. This Committee organized a number of supporting and advocacy activities in favour of amending the Act to bring it into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the international covenants on the issue.

There are also some non-governmental organizations which, under a project funded by the European Union, carried out a comparative study of Act No. 422/2002, which highlighted the need to raise the age of criminal majority and held an extensive campaign to collect signatures from persons demanding the raising of the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years. A poster on the issue was also produced.

(c) Right to a nationality

Work is currently under way on the preparation of a proposal by the Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Women and Children in relation to the right of Lebanese women married to foreigners to transmit their nationality to their children. The proposal will be submitted to the Parliamentary Speaker, who will process it in accordance with current procedures and forward it to the parliamentary commissions for consideration, as laid down in the Parliament's rules of procedure.

Many non-governmental organizations, especially women's non-governmental organizations, are initiating campaigns to solicit support and assistance from the competent authorities so that Lebanese women are granted the right to transmit their nationality to their children.

It should be mentioned that the Ministry of Social Affairs, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination in the enjoyment of social welfare by children, has taken the initiative to grant the children of Lebanese mothers the right to receive social welfare assistance from the Ministry, in keeping with agreement No. 121/1 of 21 May 2005 on the identification of sectors eligible for social welfare.

(d) Right to be protected from torture and aggression

Conduct of a study to assess the nature and scope of child abuse and aggression against children

The Higher Council for Children sought assistance from the UNICEF office in Lebanon during the conduct of an overall study to analyse the situation as regards child abuse in Lebanon during 2004. The conclusions of the study will form the basis for action under the National Plan for the Protection of Children to deal with all forms of violence.

However, owing to the lack of research institutions capable of carrying out the study to a deadline and obtaining and compiling all the data, it was decided to commission the University Centre for Family and Community Health of the University of Saint Joseph to carry out a theoretical study as a preliminary phase of the overall study. This theoretical study is designed to identify the forms taken by violence against children, define the concept of violence in Lebanese society, compile and analyse existing documents and studies, address legal issues and seek advice from those working in the field, in order to arrive at a technical and scientific opinion on the approach to be followed during the second phase, concerning a study of the scale of the phenomenon, establishing its limits and strong and weak points. For this purpose a technical advisory committee has been set up, with members from the competent public agencies and a few non-governmental organizations.

Coordinating Committee to Combat Violence, reporting to the Higher Council for Children

In May 2005, a national workshop was held on protection of children from all forms of exploitation, abuse and neglect. Its purposes were:

- To institute cooperation to draw up a national strategy for the protection of children from all forms of exploitation, abuse and neglect;
- To create a general national framework for efforts and coordinate them through the management commission set up for the purpose;
- To set up specialist sectoral commissions to achieve the objectives set out in the proposed lines of work, in keeping with the related international covenants.

During the national workshop the management commission was appointed, including specialists and activists in the field of child protection, one of its priorities being the drafting of a national strategy for the protection of children from all forms of exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Sectoral commissions were also set up (the legal sectoral commission, the sectoral commission for research, studies and monitoring, the sectoral commission on programming and training, the sectoral commission on sexual exploitation, the sectoral commission on communications media, support and general relations, and the sectoral commission on participation by children), and the framework for their work was discussed in the context of the main lines of the international study on violence against children.

(Subcommissions of the Commission on Violence against Children, reporting to the Higher Council for Children: annex 1)

Initiatives

- In March 2006, the Ministry of Social Affairs produced a television spot on violence against children, which was broadcast on all media in Lebanon.
- In coordination with a non-governmental organization, the Ministry of Social Affairs is preparing for 2006 a series of publications (leaflets, posters and spots) on the issue of violence in the family.
- A few non-governmental organizations (two to be precise) have set up a 24-hour telephone line which children can call to report cases of abuse.
- The Higher Council for Children, in the framework of the activities carried out in cooperation with Save the Children Sweden in 2006, conducted an analytical study on existing capacities and institutions for the creation of a helpline at the national level.

- A non-governmental organization is currently preparing for the opening of a residential care centre specializing in the rehabilitation of children who have suffered abuse and violence. It will also assist and provide care for the family by furnishing social and educational services, programmes of support and psychological recovery, health and medical assistance, legal advice and awareness and information programmes.

Steps taken to protect victims during legal proceedings

In cases of sexual aggression against children aged under 18, the Office for the Protection of Decency, which is part of the internal security forces, takes a statement from the child in a specially equipped room in the law courts set up on 8 September 2004. A social worker must be present during the recording of the statement.

The juvenile court judge guarantees protection of children who have been the victims of criminal offences and takes appropriate steps in accordance with the decisions of the social worker responsible for monitoring the case on behalf of the court. Before taking any decision, the juvenile court judge hears the child victim and his or her friends and family, as well as any person concerned, if the child's age prevents an appearance before the court, or if the best interests of the child so dictate.

Corporal punishment in school

In December 2005, the Higher Council for Children organized a specialist national symposium on violence against children in school, in cooperation with Save the Children Sweden and the René Moawad Foundation, the aim of which was to shed light on the problem of corporal punishment in school and create awareness of the need for united efforts to devise practical proposals, in the context of a general strategy to be adopted by the agencies concerned in the public and private sectors in the various fields, to eliminate all forms of violence in school.

The recommendations of the conference formed a framework for efforts by the Ministry of Education. Work is currently under way on holding round tables with the agencies concerned in order to adopt practical steps, and especially amendments to rules and administrative decisions and laws which must be approved in order to secure the abolition of corporal punishment in school as a means of eliminating all forms of violence against children.

Programmes of psychological care and retraining

In 2004 an agreement was signed by the Minors Unit of the Ministry of Justice, with financing from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Association for the Care of War Children, in order to provide psychological care for child victims of sexual aggression. This Association provides individual psychological follow-up for every child victim of sexual aggression as well as the child's family. Psychologists carry out various expert tests during which the child victim is given a hearing. Work under this agreement will continue until 2006.

Protection of refugee children and Palestinian children

A national commission reporting to the Council of Ministers and chaired by former Ambassador Khalil Malawi was recently set up to study the humanitarian situation in the camps for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. For this purpose, a ministerial delegation conducted field visits to familiarize itself with the actual situation and the needs of the Palestinians. Neither refugee children nor Palestinian children are excluded from the programmes and activities carried out by the Higher Council for Children in pursuance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in cooperation and coordination with the non-governmental institutions and organizations and international organizations which deal with refugee children and Palestinian children. Similarly, it represents these children in the activities and meetings organized by the Commission for Participation by Children and Young People, which forms part of the Higher Council for Children.

The Office of the Director-General for Refugees in the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs has also recently computerized the records of all the refugees registered with the agency in the Office of the Director-General for Personal Status, under an agreement with a specialist company. During 2006 a team from the Office of the Director-General is being trained to monitor the process of computerization. They are also about to conclude the work relating to the issue of an electronic identity card for refugees.

The Palestinian children who currently live in Lebanon as refugees also fall under the auspices of the international community, represented by UNRWA.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

According to the latest statistics (February 2006), the number of Palestinian child refugees in Lebanon aged under 18 stands at 126,834, taking boys and girls together. The Agency offers many health and education services to a broad cross-section of such children in Lebanon.

Educational services

The education programme guarantees free education and school support (textbooks, writing materials, etc.) to Palestinian children from first grade (age 6) to the twelfth. UNRWA schools follow the Lebanese curriculum laid down by the Educational Centre for Research and Development.

The number of successful pupils in UNRWA schools in 2005/2006 at the middle primary and secondary level was 39,290, taking boys and girls together.

Vocational training

Some of the Palestinian children who have completed their middle and secondary studies benefit from vocational training provided by the UNRWA institute of vocational training, located in Sibliin region.

Integration of children with special needs

The educational curriculum includes a project to integrate children with special needs into the schools. In 2005/2006 there were 115 children with special needs.

Support services

The Palestinian children enrolled in UNRWA schools and in the Institute of Vocational and Technical Training receive additional services in connection with the following subjects:

- Health-related school activities;
- Orientation and guidance;
- Human rights; conflict resolution;
- Sports activities and summer camps;
- Activities to halt truancy.

Children living below the poverty line

UNRWA works in Lebanon, under the social services programme, with women, refugees with special needs and young people, through long-term development projects which boost economic and social self-sufficiency. The programme covers the persons with the most pressing needs throughout the year, and monitors the growing economic and social burden imposed on women and children belonging to marginalized sectors.

At the end of 2005, UNRWA set up a Special Hardship Cases Department to provide coverage to the largest possible number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA. At the time of writing, the number of cases of special hardship was 18,372 Palestinian refugees aged under 18 (9,308 boys and 9,064 girls).

Total assistance amounted to \$743,700, out of an estimated \$4,006,368 budgeted for food deliveries.

Health services programmes

The health services programmes in UNRWA include a basic health programme. These programmes cover children from birth to the age of 18, and are directed towards prevention, protection and awareness of the health situation of children and young people.

The overall budget allocated for health services in UNRWA for the year 2005 was \$15 million, and includes the following services:

- Child health-care services. These include medical examinations for newborn children; monitoring of child development from birth to age 3; early detection of disabilities; immunization; health information; and guidance and advice on various aspects of health care;

- School health services. These form part of the basic health programme, and include medical examinations on entry into school; immunization in school; follow-up to medical care; dental care and distribution of leaflets warning of the dangers of smoking and AIDS.

Activities and programmes carried out by various international and non-governmental organizations working with Palestinian refugees

These agencies play a dual role in relation to Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon, namely the provision of services and the protection of their rights. A non-exhaustive list of these organizations includes:

Danish Refugee Council

The Danish Refugee Council began its activities in Lebanon recently, in 2004. Since then it has been cooperating with its local partners, the General Union of Palestinian Women, the An-Nayda Social Association and Popular Assistance for Relief and Development, through a wide range of activities aimed at addressing the situation of Palestinian children who have not been registered with UNRWA, as follows:

- Provision of legal assistance: children and young people can obtain documents confirming their identity;
- Mobilization and influence: children cooperate by taking photographs and eyewitness accounts which are displayed in various locations;
- Humanitarian assistance: school equipment; items and cleaning products for the home, heating equipment and assistance in securing medical treatment for urgent cases;
- Vocational training for children and young people;
- A practical and awareness-raising workshop on human rights: children and young people participated in this workshop.

In cooperation with other concerned agencies, the Council increased awareness of human rights by creating a game which is designed to publicize human rights among children and young people, and which, in English and Arabic, is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, since it is aimed at under-18s, including refugees. The game was distributed to UNRWA schools, youth centres, non-governmental organizations and the Higher Council for Children.

In 2005, the Council, with the help of the European Union's Department of Humanitarian Assistance, also carried out a study of humanitarian needs in illegal settlements. It also carried out another study on the situation of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, in which it benefited from support from UNHCR.

Eighty per cent of the budget of the Danish Refugee Council is earmarked for activities aimed at children.

The group of undocumented refugees in Lebanon is made up of about 3,000 persons, or roughly 600 families. The Danish Refugee Council is currently working with 175 families, or 875 persons, of whom some 80 per cent are aged under 18 (700 children and young people of both sexes: 45 per cent boys and 55 per cent girls).

Nabaa Association (Manatial)

Many Palestinian and Lebanese non-governmental organizations are working to meet the needs of Palestinian children, including the Nabaa Association, with which the Higher Council for Children cooperates in carrying out various activities to benefit Palestinian children.

The Association provides many services and offers programmes to Palestinian children. These services and programmes include the programme for the eradication of truancy (remedial teaching, help in reading, out-of-school activities), aimed at the 6-15 age group. The number of beneficiaries was as follows:

- 2003: 450 children (85 disabled children and 55 children with learning difficulties); 2004: 756 children; 2005: 654 children; 2006: 654 children;
- Out-of-school activities; aimed at the 6-12 age group, and the beneficiaries were, in 2004, 2,250 children; in 2005, 3,265 children; in 2006, 3,265 children;
- Programme for work with young people (training in design, voluntary work); aimed at the 13-18 age group. The number of beneficiaries during 2004 was 522 children; in 2005, 634; and in 2006, 634;
- Vocational guidance programme; aimed at the 13-18 age group. During 2003, 140 children benefited; in 2004 there were 67 children;
- Programme for work with families; aimed at the 17-55 age group; the number of beneficiary families in 2003 was 1,453; in 2004 there were 1,650; in 2005, 1,801; and in 2006, 1,801;
- Programme for work with marginalized young people; aimed at the 15-25 age group. The number of beneficiaries during 2003 was 375 girls; in 2004 there were 477; in 2005 and 2006, 567;
- Programmes on the rights of the child (rights networks, promotion, children's commissions); aimed at the under-18 age group. These are programmes being implemented between 2003 and 2006 and those benefiting a good number of Palestinian children;
- Programme of education for integration; aimed at the 6-12 age group. During 2005, 3,600 children benefited, the same as in 2006;
- Programme on early childhood; aimed at the 3-8 age group. In 2005, 489 persons benefited, the same as in 2006.

UNHCR office in Lebanon

The UNHCR office in Lebanon implements its programmes and activities through the Middle East Council of Churches. It also cooperates with certain international institutions and organizations and non-governmental organizations, such as Caritas Lebanon, Medicus Mundi Internationalis, the Danish Refugee Council and the Lebanon Institute of Human Rights, as well as the Higher Council for Children.

The Office of the High Commissioner handles non-Palestinian refugees and asylum-seekers in Lebanon.

At the end of 2005, 2,528 persons (refugees and asylum-seekers) were registered with UNHCR, of whom 20 per cent were minors (56 of them girls).

The total number of refugees registered with the UNHCR office in Lebanon in 2005 was 1,078 persons, of whom 30 per cent were children (45 per cent girls).

As for asylum-seekers registered with the UNHCR office, at the end of 2005 there were 1,450 persons, of whom 13 per cent were minors (and of them, 42 per cent were girls).

Most of the asylum-seekers are of Iraqi nationality (96 per cent). All of them are under UNHCR protection by virtue of a memorandum of understanding signed with the official authorities (the Office of the Director-General for Public Safety), including those not registered with the UNHCR offices.

In 2005, UNHCR offered various non-governmental organizations, such as Caritas Lebanon and the Chaldean church, limited funding for the programmes which provide services to the Iraqi refugees and the asylum-seekers.

1. General situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Lebanon

Under the memorandum of understanding signed in 2003 by UNHCR and the Government of Lebanon, refugees and asylum-seekers are not entitled to work in Lebanon.

2. Basic services

UNHCR provides basic services in education and health, as well as material and social support.

The child-related programmes offered by UNHCR include:

- Primary and supplementary education for refugee children;
- Vocational training for refugee children and young people;
- Courses in health care;
- 85 per cent coverage in relation to medical services, and 100 per cent in critical and serious cases.

Services of the UNHCR Development Centre:

- Courses in English and French for children aged 7 to 12;
- Leisure and spare-time activities for refugee children and young people;
- Support for families with greater needs;
- Provision of psychological counselling;
- Opportunities to participate in national events, such as the children's parliament, organized by the Higher Council for Children on the occasion of the drafting of the third periodic report on the situation of children in Lebanon, the Biennial International Drawing Competition, the Beirut international marathon, etc.

The proposed budget for 2005 for educational services and leisure activities stands at 166 million Lebanese pounds; between 300 and 400 children will benefit from those services. To this should be added the budget of the Centre for Development and Services in the Health Sector.

3. Developments in the Lebanese Government

Together with UNHCR, Lebanon's Higher Council for Children encouraged participation by non-Palestinian refugee children and asylum-seekers in many activities. This part of the child population was represented in meetings of children and young people from the regions to express their views in the context of the activities of the Commission for the Participation of Children and Young People, part of the Higher Council for Children.

UNHCR also participated in all the activities organized by the Higher Council for Children and the Ministry of Social Affairs in relation to child participation, violence against children and education.

In the sphere of education, ministerial decree of 1999 was enacted on "The right to a school place", under which numerous measures were adopted to ensure that all refugee children and asylum-seekers have a place in school.

The memorandum from the Office of the Director-General for Public Safety in 2003 on the granting to children of Lebanese mothers married to foreign fathers of a temporary residence permit in Lebanon for a period of three years.

Middle East Council of Churches

The Middle East Council of Churches works to offer services through programmes of services to refugees, displaced persons and emigrants. The programme is not confined to meeting the direct needs of these groups, but works to address some of the deep-seated causes of emigration, through awareness-raising, promotion campaigns and skill promotion activities. The Council of Churches is also a partner in the implementation of the UNHCR projects.

Through its “Life and Service” department, the Council provides assistance in the field of human development, training, development of human resources, studies and data exchange, advisory courses, talks on refugee-related issues aimed at local groups, development of awareness of society in general on issues relating to emigrants and promotion of change in positions and mentalities. It also carries out home visits to refugees and visits to persons held in detention centres and prisons, provides educational and medical support and offers vocational training.

- The number of refugees who benefited from the joint projects of the Council of Churches and UNHCR up to the end of 2005 was 1,389, or 315 families. Most of the beneficiaries were Iraqis (908 persons), followed by Sudanese (305) and Somalis and refugees of different nationalities. These receive allowances, medical and educational care, repatriation and help in returning home;
- In 2004 the Social Development Centre was inaugurated, giving refugees access to the development of educational skills, trades and youth activities. The programme includes activities relating to the English, Arabic and French languages, literacy courses and information technology. To date, 23 child refugees, 14 young people, 48 women and 50 men have benefited from the centre;
- Help is offered to refugee mothers and newborn children;
- Networks have been set up for the exchange of experience and data;
- Regional cooperation has been instituted to tackle the challenges related to the issues of emigration and asylum-seekers, and to problems of local integration;
- The activities being carried out by the Council of Churches include the following:

2005

- Marking of Refugee Day on 21 June 2005 in cooperation with UNHCR;
- A regional practical workshop on promotion campaign techniques, entitled “Promotion of services to displaced persons”;
- A training course for members of non-governmental organizations working in prisons, in cooperation with the Rumia prison administration;
- A course of practical training on “alternative justice”, in cooperation with the Lebanon Institute of Human Rights. The workshop was attended by 65 participants, including lawyers, judges and court officials, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations;
- University students (from the University of Saint Joseph and the Haigazian University) were received for training in the field for the development of work with refugees;

2006

- Practical course on “Rights denied: protection of the rights of underprivileged and dispossessed persons”.

2. Status of the draft legislation referred to in the third national report

Draft amendment of Decree No. 110/1983, of 16 September 1983, concerning a ban on the marketing of breast milk substitutes

In 2005, the Ministry of Health forwarded this draft to the Parliamentary Assembly and subsequently to the specialist commissions (the Parliamentary Commission on Health and the Commission on Women and Children) for consideration in accordance with established procedures.

The preparatory processes included the conduct of a study on boosting natural breastfeeding and ways and means of restricting promotion of the use of breast milk substitutes in some hospitals and children’s clinics. These activities were suspended for lack of funds.

Draft amendment of the decree on regulation of nurseries

Decree No. 12268/2004 of 14 April 2004, on conditions for the granting of licences for the opening and operation of private nurseries, was adopted and promulgated.

Draft amendment of the Labour Act to bring it into line with ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182

The bill amending the Labour Code was forwarded by the Ministry of Labour on 20 December 2004 (No. 3625/3) to the Council of Ministers, which passed it to the Ministry of Justice (Office of the Director-General for Legislation) on 31 January 2005 (No. 281/m.s) with a request for its opinion. The Office of the Director-General for Legislation delivered its legal opinion No. 54/2005. The bill was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice for approval and adoption of the appropriate measures.

Bill granting non-governmental organizations dealing with children’s issues the right to lodge complaints in cases of violation of children’s rights

In pursuance of the consultations and negotiations held during the meetings of the Higher Council for Children, the Union of Children’s Rights Organizations in Lebanon submitted to the Minister of Social Affairs and Chair of the Higher Council for Children a proposed bill granting the Higher Council for Children the right to lodge complaints in cases of violation of children’s rights (since it includes representatives of the public and private sectors). This is a proposal which is to be forwarded to the appropriate parliamentary commissions for study.

Bill to raise the age of compulsory education to 15

A bill raising the age of compulsory education to 15 was drafted. The bill was prepared by a special commission reporting to the Parliamentary Commission on Education. However, the bill remains a draft until it is forwarded to the Speaker of the Parliamentary Assembly in accordance with established procedures.

3. Direct invocation of the Convention in the domestic courts

The provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been incorporated into Lebanese legislation, and notably into juvenile law, which means that, since the courts base their sentences directly on Lebanese law, they are indirectly applying the provisions of the Convention.

4. Establishment of a research, information and documentation centre for childhood within the Higher Council for Children

Support has not yet been forthcoming from UNICEF for the establishment of a research, information and documentation centre within the Higher Council for Children, as required under the cooperation agreement.

In 2003, however, UNICEF provided support to the Council in setting up the “Child Info” programme on indicators relating to children, and in training a Council task force to take charge of its implementation. This programme is regarded as forming the core of the research, information and documentation centre for childhood, as the computer system does in fact sort and output indicators on trends in the various sectors (health, education, social).

The purpose of the programme is to establish national indicators and a global database; analyse related data at the local, national and regional levels; monitor progress in the implementation of the Convention; and devise and evaluate strategies and programmes.

The programme covers the following sectors: demographics, health, education, the environment, protection, children in conflict with the law, child labour, drugs, disability, self-help, sexual exploitation, accidents, refugees, care institutions, women, nutrition, economics, early childhood and communications.

A technical mini-commission has been set up to monitor work relating to the programme, drawn from the Higher Council for Children, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Educational Centre for Research and Development, the Central Statistics Office, the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, UNDP and ESCWA.

The following measures have already been taken:

- A practical workshop was organized, in cooperation with UNICEF, to present the programme and demonstrate how decision makers and experts can make the best use of it;
- Practical training in the programme;

- The secretariat of the Higher Council for Children was put in charge of the Child Info programme and management of its database;
- The Council secretariat was provided with computers and Internet access;
- A technical mini-commission was set up comprising some of the parties interested in obtaining indicators;
- The database was created for the third periodic report on the situation of children in Lebanon, which will form the core of the national database once that is approved;
- 200 indicators were introduced.

Work on adoption of the Child Info programme came to a halt, however, in early 2004, when the United Nations switched to the “Dev Info” programme, which is to be set up in the Central Statistics Office.

The Higher Council’s task force nevertheless continues to use the Child Info programme for certain applications.

5. Higher Council for Children: activities and plans for 2003-2006

The Higher Council for Children worked on numerous plans, programmes and projects related to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child during the period 2003-2006, focusing on the following priorities:

(a) National plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon

Lebanon’s Higher Council for Children is currently working on a national strategy, using the national mechanism adopted for preparation of the third periodic report on the situation of children in Lebanon for the period 1998-2003. The main priorities and areas of concern to be included in the national plan of action will revolve basically around the principles of the Convention, *A World Fit for Children*, and the Arab Action Plan for Children.

The Council has already taken some initial steps in preparing the national plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon: it has proposed a mechanism for preparation of the plan, and written to request the Council of Ministers to include the National Plan for the Advancement of Children in Lebanon as an item on its programme of work, give the green light for work on the plan to begin, and circulate it to the ministries concerned, with a view to obtaining the support of the political decision-makers and thus smooth the path for each stage of preparation and implementation of the plan.

Based on the principle of joint participation by the various State and private bodies dealing with children, and concerned that those bodies should be represented in the preparation, monitoring and implementation of the national plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon, the Higher Council for Children set up 13 subsidiary coordinating commissions covering all sectors involved with children, in accordance with the guiding principles contained in the Convention. All the ministries and non-government organizations working with children’s issues, as well as a number of universities and experts on children, are represented on these

commissions. Programmes of work are now being prepared for them, along the lines described in Lebanon's third periodic report, and based on *A World Fit for Children*, the Millennium Development Goals and the Arab Action Plan for Children, which will all be discussed within the commissions.

The commissions cover the following areas: legislation; research and documentation; people with special needs; health; the media and public relations; culture and recreation; participation of children; the protection and prevention of violence and abuse; children in conflict with the law or at risk of delinquency; education; early childhood; the family and alternative care; and street children.

No commission on child labour was created, as there is already a National Commission against Child Labour, of which the Higher Council for Children is a member and which was set up within the Ministry of Labour by decree of the Council of Ministers.

The Council's task force coordinates the work of these commissions and ensures that it is progressing smoothly and in the right direction.

The proposed mechanism provides for children to participate in the preparation of the plan, by creating a commission on the participation of children and young people.

The practical course will provide training on children's rights and the guiding principles of the Convention to those members of the Council's coordinating commissions who are involved in preparing the national plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon.

The proposed mechanism for preparation of the national plan emphasizes the local as well as the central dimension, giving broader powers to local authorities and devising local programmes of work as a means of decentralizing the plan, which will make for more effective implementation on the ground. To this end, the implementation mechanism will include courses in the provinces to raise awareness of the ways in which municipalities can help improve the situation of children.

The mechanism for preparation of the plan will also provide for media support at all stages, which will mobilize support during and after implementation of the plan.

Preparation of the national plan has not started yet, owing to the security situation prevailing in Lebanon in recent months.

Preparations will get under way, however, during the first quarter of 2006.

(Proposed mechanism for preparation of the national plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon: see annex 2)

(b) National strategy on early childhood care and development in Lebanon

Work on a national strategy for the early childhood care and development is currently under way, with the following broad themes:

- Establishment of a national framework to facilitate participation, coordination, communication and the creation of networks linking all the agencies dealing with early childhood, through a subsidiary commission of the Higher Council for Children established in 2005 and representing all those partners who deal with early childhood; the commission carried out a field study on the departments and services in the area of early childhood in Lebanon in 2005;
- The securing of support for early childhood and the establishment of pressure groups to lobby for changes in the law;
- The setting of national standards of excellence;
- Support for pioneering initiatives and successful experiments in the area of early childhood.

(c) National strategy for the protection of children from exploitation and violence

The Higher Council's commission on the protection of children from exploitation and violence has prepared a strategy which will focus on the following themes:

- A national survey to assess the extent of the problem and the forms it takes, and elucidate the causes;
- Preparation of a national plan for the protection of children from all forms of exploitation, abuse and neglect, in coordination with and supervised by a special commission of the Higher Council for Children;
- The programme of work of the specialized agencies;
- Support for rehabilitation and psychological recovery programmes for child victims of violence and aggression, and for families;
- Skills training for those in the front line of work with children.

(d) National strategy to prevent juvenile delinquency

Work is complete on the re-evaluation of the draft national plan to combat juvenile delinquency, prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1996.

(e) National plan to combat truancy

The "Education for All" plan promulgated by the Ministry of Education in January 2006 includes a mechanism to eliminate truancy in Lebanon's schools. The measures for implementation of this plan will be carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children, the Ministry of Education and the Educational Centre for Research and Development, in cooperation with other bodies.

(f) Plan to seek support for the adoption of decrees implementing the Free Compulsory Primary Education Act

A proposal has been prepared for a mechanism to implement this plan, which will be put into effect through cooperation between the Higher Council for Children and the State and private agencies concerned.

In 2005, the Higher Council organized five regional workshops in Akkar, Zahle, Nabatiye, Sinn Al-Fil and Burj el-Barajne, on the right to education (“Quality, universal, compulsory, free education and non-attendance at school”), in cooperation with the Lebanese Union for Child Care and with the support of Save the Children United Kingdom and the René Moawad Foundation. The aim was to analyse the obstacles hampering implementation of the Act and ways of overcoming them, and to formulate specific recommendations on the four areas of work.

These regional events culminated in a national conference on 26 May 2005, with the slogan “Proper implementation of the Free Compulsory Education Act is the responsibility of all”. The conference put out a series of recommendations which are being acted upon by one of the Higher Council’s coordinating commissions, comprising representatives of ministries and non-governmental organizations monitoring the proper implementation of the Act. It should be noted that children also took part in these events.

(g) Programme of cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs in order to give municipalities an effective role in issues relating to children

The Higher Council for Children has signed a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs in order to give municipalities and local authorities a real say in the implementation of children’s rights, and the broad outlines of the plan of action to be put in place in cooperation with partners in the area of local development and children’s rights have been drawn up.

The following action has been taken to date:

- A questionnaire has been sent round all municipalities to find out how much they allocated to children in 2004 and 2005;
- A national practical course has been prepared for local mayors and others concerned, to raise awareness of the important role the municipality can play in realizing children’s rights, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs; the course will be held in May 2006.

(h) Construction of a website on the Higher Council for Children

This project was launched in March 2006. The purpose of the website is:

- To make available to children, families and all institutions working for children, information on the Council’s mission and work, and the factual data it can provide;

- To disseminate the latest statistics, research and reports on children;
- To establish direct contact with families and children and offer advice;
- To publish a newsletter in which associations working with children can provide general information and advertise programmes and symposiums.

(i) Reading project

This project aims to encourage children to read and use books. It is to run throughout 2006 and focuses on the following areas:

- Attracting children to public libraries to encourage them to read;
- Organizing regional meetings with appearances by storytellers.

(j) Plan for the participation of children and young people

A commission on the participation of children and young people has been set up within the Higher Council for Children. Its members represent all concerned State and private-sector agencies and international organizations.

In 2005, this commission drew up a national plan of action to increase the participation of children and young people, and it is now working on practical measures to boost their participation in various regions of the country. One aspect of the work planned for 2006 with Save the Children Sweden is raising awareness of the importance of involving children at all levels and providing training on activities, programming and planning.

The Council also hosted the national session of the Arab Children's Parliament on 17-18 November 2005, at which discussion centred on the importance of children's participation.

(k) Child labour project

The Higher Council for Children works to prevent child labour and to raise awareness of its risks and of the worst forms of child labour, in cooperation and partnership with all State and private-sector bodies working to combat child labour, as well as with international organizations.

The following examples illustrate this work:

- In 2005 the Council helped prepare and organize a symposium on child workers, in cooperation with the Union of Children's Rights Organizations in Lebanon, the Ministry of Labour, ILO, the René Moawad Foundation, and various concerned non-governmental organizations. This event involved a meeting attended by 60 working children, at which all aspects of the problem of child labour were discussed. In their discussions the children addressed decision makers and those working to combat child labour. The symposium relied on the children's full and effective participation at every stage, from the opening ceremony to the formulation of recommendations. In the next phase, the respective teams will work on the implementation of the recommendations made by the symposium;

- A media campaign to raise awareness and rally support around the issue of child labour in Lebanon: a cooperative venture coordinated by the Higher Council for Children, ILO, the René Moawad Foundation and the Union of Children's Rights Organizations in Lebanon, the campaign will attempt to open up the issue in the audio-visual and printed media;
- The Higher Council for Children took part in a project to organize political activity around the elimination of child labour, which was carried out with community cooperation and funded by the Catholic Relief Services in Egypt. The project was set up in four Arab States, namely, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco and Egypt, in 2005. The project was coordinated in Lebanon by Caritas Lebanon, which established links between national organizations, non-governmental organizations and universities working in the area of child labour. A coordinating group was set up in Lebanon, in cooperation with the Higher Council for Children and the People's Social Support Movement, the Children's House, the University of Saint Joseph and the American University of Beirut.

This group implemented a programme comprising four phases:

- A meeting in the Sinn al-Fil and Burj el-Barajne region to sensitize families and working children to the dangers of child labour;
- A meeting in the Tripoli and Bab at-Tabbana region to sensitize families and working children to the dangers of child labour;
- A meeting in the Sidon region to sensitize families and working children to the dangers of child labour;
- An information meeting at the American University of Beirut, on measures taken under the project.

Once these measures become standardized, they will be incorporated into awareness-raising programmes covering all those regions where there is a need.

Cooperation programme for 2006, agreed between the Higher Council for Children and the René Moawad Foundation as part of the Access Mena project

This project centres around a range of initiatives to prevent and combat the spread of child labour by providing support to schools on an ongoing basis: literacy courses, academic support, reading reinforcement, rapid vocational training and life-skills courses, children's rights awareness and training, and a practical workshop for children, families and community leaders on the importance of education and the prevention of truancy and child labour (in the southern regions, the north and metropolitan Beirut).

Following signature of the cooperation programme, the Higher Council for Children helped organize five regional practical courses in Sidon, Nabatiye, Tripoli, Wadi Khaled and Sinn al-Fil in April 2006. The course was entitled "Awareness-raising for community leaders on

the importance of educating working children, or the dangers of non-attendance at school, and their role in intervention measures”, and was presented in cooperation and coordination with the organizer, the René Moawad Foundation.

(Access Mena project: annex 3)

(l) Gathering support and backing

The Higher Council for Children works with concerned bodies to establish pressure groups and set up programmes to promote and rally support for:

- Legislation on employees’ status;
- Adoption of the draft prohibiting the sale of breast milk substitutes;
- Prohibition of all forms of punishment in school;
- Adoption of the decrees implementing Act No. 220, on persons with disabilities;
- Adoption of the decrees implementing Act No. 422, on the protection of minors in conflict with the law and minors at risk;
- Adoption of the draft amendments to the Labour Code;
- Adoption of the regulatory decrees on free compulsory education and measures to raise the school-leaving age to 15, in order to guarantee equality of educational opportunity;
- Promulgation of decrees implementing article 50 of the General Budget Act, on child admission fees to tourist sites;
- Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

(m) Coordination and creation of networks

In 2005 and 2006, the Higher Council for Children had two meetings with non-governmental organizations and international organizations working with children in Lebanon, to arrange coordination and to set up networks to facilitate cooperation with the Council and ensure contact with donor bodies.

The Council also sent non-governmental organizations a form on which to submit innovative experiments for inclusion in a directory, and announced a prize to be awarded annually for the best of these experiments.

6. ILO/IPEC's time-bound programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour

The plans for the joint State-ILO project to eliminate child labour were based on the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and a national strategy to combat child labour was drawn up on the basis of the objectives approved by the Council of Ministers. These focus on the gradual elimination of child labour, with priority given to the worst forms of child labour, and particularly girls' labour, by means of the following measures:

- Gathering data on child labour;
- Developing the skills needed to implement the national strategy to combat child labour;
- Building greater awareness of child labour and applying more effective methods of promotion;
- Creating a more inclusive and adequate education system;
- Eliminating financial insecurity among the families targeted by socio-economic policies and measures;
- Improving legislation and enforcement.

As to the second phase of the international programme to combat child labour, which was launched in the last quarter of 2005, the focus is on helping to eradicate the worst forms of child labour in Lebanon by preparing and implementing a national strategy. The project also aims to ensure that the national context is brought more closely into line with the national strategy, and to take direct action to limit the adverse effects of the worst forms of child labour.

Four specific objectives have been set:

Objective I: To bring the legislative framework on the worst forms of child labour into line with international standards and strengthen enforcement mechanisms;

Objective II: To build national capacity to implement the policies and programmes on the worst forms of child labour and create a database;

Objective III: To increase awareness of the adverse effects of the worst forms of child labour in Lebanon and of ways of combating the problem;

Objective IV: To take 3,400 children out of situations where they are being exploited in the worst forms of child labour and prevent another 3,500 children from falling into such situations, by exemplary direct action (this objective to be attained by the end of the project).

The expected outcomes are:

- Preparation of a list of the worst forms of child labour, to be submitted to the Government for ratification;
- Submission of draft amendments to current legislation to the Government for ratification;
- Creation of a database which takes account of gender issues;
- Creation and implementation of a national child labour monitoring system;
- Skills training for departments working with child labour, other concerned bodies and labour inspectors;
- Establishing the mechanisms and capacity required to set up preventive and training services for children who have been taken out of the labour market;
- Provision of institutional and non-institutional educational services and rehabilitation for the children involved in the programme;
- Provision of vocational training for the children involved;
- Provision of support to schools in the targeted regions, to help make them “child labour-aware”;
- Provision of income-supplementing opportunities for the families of working children at risk of dropping out of school;
- Inclusion of the families of working children and children at risk of dropping out of school in local and national social security networks.

The following are some of the results obtained by the unit for combating child labour, set up by the Ministry of Labour under the joint IPEC-Ministry of Labour cooperation programme:

- Awareness-raising programmes on the dangers of child labour, which reached some 105 children between 2003 and 2006;
- Submission of complaints and claims from members of the public concerning violations of the legal provisions on child labour;
- Construction of a database on child labour;
- Creation of a special child labour office;
- Construction of a website on child labour;

- Development of vocational training programmes for child workers;
- Organization of non-specialist training courses for people dealing with child labour.

The Occupational Health and Safety Plan relating to hazardous children's jobs contains the following measures, applied jointly by the Ministry of Labour and IPEC:

- Preparation of a national list of dangerous jobs and identification of dangerous tasks;
- Review of available statistics and of the national study on child labour published in February 2005, and preparation of a report on dangerous children's work;
- Establishment of a regulatory framework for a body responsible for prevention, health and safety in the workplace, and child labour, in the Ministry of Labour;
- Update of plans relating to dangerous children's work, and teaching of those plans in Lebanese schools;
- Imposition and enforcement of sanctions;
- Further sensitization through the creation of instruments to raise awareness of dangerous children's work;
- Sensitization of policymakers and opinion-formers, with a view to triggering changes that will improve children's lives, through tailored programmes and awareness-raising programmes at all levels;
- Creation of support commissions (National Commission on Prevention, Health and Safety in the Workplace) and designation of experts;
- Training of 75 labour inspectors and assistant inspectors, who will receive training adapted to their areas of specialization;
- Removal from dangerous jobs, and rehabilitation, of 500 full-time child workers aged between 7 and 15.

7. Juvenile justice reform in Lebanon

D. Main developments in juvenile justice

(a) New decrees:

- Decree No. 11.859/2004 of 11 February 2004 on the establishment of an institution for juvenile prisoners in Dahr al-Basheq public hospital;
- Decree No. 12.832/2004 of 3 July 2004 identifying general criteria and conditions for the assignment to organizations of certain tasks set out in Act No. 422/2002 of 6 June 2002 on the protection of children in conflict with the law or at risk;

(b) Circulars from the State prosecution service and the Judicial Inspectorate:

- Publication of Circular No. 85/S, issued by the President of the Judicial Inspectorate on 18 October 2005, establishing that compliance is mandatory with the provisions of articles 40, 33, 31 and 42 of Act No. 422/2002 concerning the best interests of the child, in all measures relating to the trial, interrogation and detention of minors and with respect to the specific situation and the confidentiality of the proceedings, and establishing that it is mandatory for the social worker and the attorney to be present during the trial;
- Distribution of Circular No. 14/S/2005 issued by the State prosecution service at the Court of Cassation on 14 February 2005, establishing a central investigation facility in the Beirut Palace of Justice to act as a specialized centre to receive the statements of children who are victims of sexual assault; the facility is equipped with closed-circuit television and audio-visual equipment;
- A circular was issued on 28 September 2004 by the State prosecution service at the Court of Cassation calling for educational measures to be included in judicial decisions adopted by the public prosecutor and the examining magistrates. These measures include:
 - A compact with the minor, who must sign it in person before the social worker, so as to develop his or her spirit of responsibility and ensure that he or she complies with the measure that is imposed;
 - A document attesting the handover of the minor and setting out guardianship commitments, that the person receiving the minor shall sign in the presence of the social worker overseeing the handover;
 - Issuance of a circular dated 18 July 2003 from the Office of the Director-General of the Ministry of Justice and addressed to all criminal courts (of first instance and of cassation), to the prosecuting body, to the State prosecution service at the Court of Cassation and the Office of the Director-General for Pretrial Investigations, on the need to comply with article 415 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which specifies that a person convicted of an offence may not be imprisoned for failure to pay judicial costs if he or she was a minor at the time of the offence;
 - Publication of a circular from the President of the Judicial Inspectorate dated 23 March 2003 establishing that it is compulsory to comply with the provisions of articles 33 (applicability of measures for minors in ordinary courts if the minor aided and abetted an adult in the commission of a repeat offence); 40 (confidentiality of proceedings); and 42 (obligation to be represented by an attorney in criminal and other cases) and its procedural applicability in all courts;

(c) New institutions:

- On 11 February 2004 the Initiative Centre was inaugurated. This is a correctional institution for juvenile offenders located in Dahr al-Basheq public hospital. The centre is the result of cooperation between the ministries of justice, the interior and municipal affairs and health, and enjoys the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
- On 8 September 2004, a centre for child victims of sexual violence was opened; it has been furnished with the latest technical and audiovisual equipment and is located in the Palace of Justice in Beirut. The centre was set up in cooperation with UNODC, and with funding from Switzerland and Canada;

(d) Recently implemented programmes:

- An agreement was signed with the Society for the Protection of Children during War, to provide psychological support to child victims and their families as part of a legal protection project for children at risk; it has the support of UNODC;
- At the end of 2005, an agreement was signed with two non-governmental organizations to support implementation of alternative measures; this is a public service initiative to provide vocational training, and has the support of UNICEF;

(e) Strategies:

- A national strategy has been drawn up to train young girls who are in conflict with the law and are at risk; it is being implemented at the Initiative Centre at Dahr al-Basheq hospital;

(f) Publications:

- In 2003 an information handbook was published to accompany the new procedures and measures contained in Act No. 422/2002; it includes the following subjects: the Ministry of Justice and persons working in the labour field; juvenile offenders; educational measures; and young persons at risk and exposed to abuse;
- A flyer has been published on educational measures that may be used as an alternative to the deprivation of liberty. It sets out the general framework of alternative measures, their advantages, conditions, criteria and suggested duration of educational and administrative measures, examples of the form to be filled in by the minor and for the education compact, and regulations for the minor's behaviour;

- A study on the situation of minors at risk or exposed to abuse was conducted between January 2000 and June 2003 and has been published as part of the legal protection project conducted by the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with UNODC;

(g) Follow-up to all questions related to the interests of the child:

- The situation of foreign minors who have completed their sentences but are still incarcerated in Romia prison pending their repatriation is being monitored;
- The correct application of the law and compliance with its provisions were verified, especially in respect of article 48 of Act No. 422/2002, which prohibits the dissemination of photographs of minors and the publication of information on the investigation and trial, or summaries relating to them, in books, periodicals and films;
- Special emphasis has been placed on preventing officers from striking minors when they take their statements;
- There has been follow-up to ensure application of the provisions of memorandum 207/304, issued by the Office of the Director-General of the Internal Security Forces, on the need to send the investigation report to the department together with the social report and to summon the youth worker, who must be present during the investigation.

8. Activities to disseminate the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the third periodic report of Lebanon and the previous concluding observations of the Committee

The Higher Council for Children is continuing its efforts to disseminate the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In cooperation with UNICEF, it is publishing more copies of the “Children first” booklet, which includes the full text in Arabic of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some 5,000 copies were printed in 2003 and 2006. In addition, some 7,000 copies have been printed of a simplified brochure on the Convention intended for children, entitled “I have the right”, in addition to some 7,000 copies of a simplified brochure on the Convention intended for young people, under the title “Our rights”.

The Council has distributed these publications to all institutions and non-governmental organizations, and also to official and local bodies and specialized centres dealing with children, schools and universities, through national and provincial workshops, conferences and symposiums held in 2003 and 2006.

Also, in 2004 and 2005, the Higher Council for Children, in cooperation with the Fares Foundation, carried out numerous awareness-raising activities on the rights of the child in the Akkar region, which is considered one of the poorest and most marginalized regions

in Lebanon. A painting contest was held on the rights of the child at 27 schools in Akkar, and 15 teachers were given training in how to teach children about the rights of the child, adopting training methodologies and plans designed by staff of the Higher Council for Children. In the next phase, 500 teachers and social workers from various parts of Akkar will be trained. A simplified document has been drawn up for children, in Arabic, based on “*A World Fit for Children*”; it contains colouring exercises that facilitate comprehension of the contents and objectives of the text’s main articles. This simplified version has been distributed to schools and non-governmental organizations, as well as social clubs and municipalities in the Akkar region. The Council is also distributing this document to interested persons through its various activities and the symposiums, conferences and workshops that it organizes.

The Higher Council for Children held a practical workshop on the concluding observations issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child following consideration of the second periodic report of Lebanon, covering the success achieved and obstacles encountered, in cooperation and coordination with the Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children; this event was held at the Lebanese Parliament on 20 November 2003. The objective of the workshop was to highlight the success achieved and emphasize the tasks that remain to be done to assure follow-up to activities aimed at implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Council published the third periodic report in book form and a summary of the report in Arabic and English. This was done in cooperation with World Vision International. The book was published in Arabic in 3,000 copies, and 2,000 in English, and another 3,000 copies of the summary were published in Arabic and English.

The report was introduced at a national conference chaired by the First Lady of Lebanon, with all groups and individuals working on child-related matters in attendance. The event was held on 18 July 2004 at the Monroe Hotel in Beirut.

Ten meetings were also held in the country’s various regions with the help of development services centres and non-governmental organizations; these were attended by the local mayors and by governors, as well as social actors. The meetings were aimed at highlighting the most important new developments relating to children in Lebanon, as set out in the third periodic report; some 1,000 copies of the report were distributed at these events.

Additionally, during its activities, symposiums, conferences and workshops in 2003 and 2006, the Council distributed copies of the report to all bodies working with children in the public and private sectors and to international organizations.

As for awareness-raising activities, in 2003 and 2006 the Council, in cooperation with the Department for Information on Development, oversaw the organization of information campaigns on the rights of the child in the press and broadcast media. The campaigns covered various subjects, including health, child abuse, education and teaching, child labour, culture, guardianship and alternative care.

In addition, the Council issued various publications in 2004 and 2005, including:

- The proceedings of a conference entitled “The media and the child in Lebanon”, which had been held in 2004;
- The proceedings of a conference entitled “Childhood education: a vision of the future” (2005);
- A calendar on the rights of the child, including drawings on the rights of the child by various children (2005).

The Higher Council for Children also worked to disseminate information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to raise awareness through its technical and cultural activities, including the song “The Arab child” (2003) and a play about child labour (2004). The Council is currently working to produce a play on street children and the right of children to an education and to health care and treatment.

Also, art competitions are being promoted and supported in cooperation with specialized non-governmental organizations, with a view to discovering talents and developing creativity among children and young people.

In 2004, contests were held for drawing, poetry and music, in cooperation and coordination with the Lebanese Union for Child Care, the Fabriano Foundation, the Hamza Wasl Association, the Makhzoumi Foundation and the Lebanese Association to Encourage Breastfeeding. In cooperation with the Lebanese Union for Child Care, a drawing competition was held on the theme of children’s rights, under the slogan “I have the right”; 1,980 children from all the country’s regions took part. Four drawings were selected and published as greeting cards in 2005. The Council also selected various children’s drawings for its 2005 calendar.

The Council was also involved in drawing and art competitions for children outside Lebanon (in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates) between 2004 and 2006.

At the beginning of 2006 the Council awarded prizes to university students in a competition entitled “Better communicative artwork for human rights”, held in cooperation with various Lebanese universities. Together with the Lebanese Association for Early Childhood Development, it also awarded prizes for drawings about breastfeeding.

9. Training for children and adults and raising awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and human rights in general

In 2003 and 2006, various training courses and awareness events were held, as well as practical courses on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and human rights in general, both for government bodies and for non-governmental organizations and international organizations in Lebanon.

2003

Practical courses:

- A workshop on occupational safety and health designed for inspectors of the Ministry of Labour and organized in cooperation with ILO;
- A workshop held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council on budget allocations for social issues, held in coordination with the National Democratic Institute;
- Specialized workshops on subjects related to human rights training, intended for social workers in development services centres and non-governmental organizations, organized jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Al Hadaz social training centre;
- A workshop on theatre and the Convention, held at the Medina Theatre, and organized by Jordan Scenic Arts Company;
- A workshop presenting the report on the situation of children in Lebanon in 2000, held at ESCWA and organized by the Central Statistics Office and UNICEF;
- A practical course on the role of education in combating poverty and the establishment of an appropriate educational environment to eradicate poverty, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- A practical course on mobilizing non-governmental organizations in support of the Education for All plan, organized by UNESCO;
- A practical course on the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the second periodic report of Lebanon, organized by the Higher Council for Children;
- A practical course on the role of the private sector in implementing the Convention, held jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Lebanese Union for Child Care;
- A practical course entitled “Better treatment of children”, attended by members of the internal security forces, the General Security Department and the Civil Defence Service, organized jointly by ILO and the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs.

Training courses:

- Training course for leaders and coordinators of projects for street children, carried out jointly by the Arab Council for Childhood and Development and UNESCO;

- Training course on combating child labour among street children, for members of the Civil Defence Service, the Beirut police, the gendarmerie and officers of the internal security forces, given at the Al Hikma school in Baabda, and organized by the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs;
- Three-day training course on the preparation of the strategic plan on projects, organized by the Mennonite Central Committee in Lebanon;
- Four-day training course carried out jointly by UNICEF and Save the Children Sweden, on measures to defend the rights of the child;
- Four-day training course organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the rights of the child and skills development;
- Training, with the book “Workshop for adults and children about early childhood”, organized by the Arab Resources Collective;
- A training course designed for a group of non-governmental organizations in the northern province on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the René Moawad Foundation;
- Training for trainers on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the René Moawad Foundation;
- A follow-up and evaluation meeting, with 25 heads of the development services centres run by the Ministry of Social Affairs, concerning an earlier course on the Convention on the Rights of the Child organized by the Higher Council for Children in cooperation with the Social Training Centre;
- Training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the eradication of illiteracy, carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Objectives Foundation;
- Training for trainers on the use of exercises during sessions to raise awareness of the domestic violence prevention project, organized by the Higher Council for Children in all provinces;
- Training for trainers on child labour, organized by ILO in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour;
- Training courses for inspectors of the Ministry of Labour, organized by ILO in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour;
- Training courses on the treatment of street children, for the internal security forces, the Public Security Department and the Civil Defence Service, organized jointly by ILO and the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs;

- Training courses organized by the Ministry of Justice for students of the Department of Health and Social Guidance at the Lebanese University who are part of a volunteer group, enabling them to attend preliminary investigations in the event that the youth worker of the Minors' Association cannot attend;
- Training courses on alternative measures, for judges in their personal capacities and for court social workers, organized by the Ministry of Justice.

2004

Practical courses:

- Practical course on the participation of children and young people, organized by Save the Children Sweden in Lebanon;
- Practical course on indicators for monitoring progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, organized by the Central Statistics Office of Lebanon;
- Practical course entitled "Skills development for people working with children", organized by the UNESCO regional bureau;
- Practical course on defending the rights of the child, organized by the Arab Resources Collective;
- Practical course on children who are marginalized at school, organized by UNESCO;
- Practical course on basic health care, organized jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Ministry of Health;
- National practical course on the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), organized jointly by ILO and the General Union of Workers;
- Launch party for the child labour booklet, organized jointly by ILO and the Association of Lebanese Industrialists;
- A national practical course on potential sharing of tasks for the time-bound programme (second phase) organized by ILO, in cooperation with the groups concerned;
- An IPEC donors' meeting, organized by ILO.

Training courses:

- Training course on the Child Info project, organized by UNICEF;
- Training courses on the prevention of drug abuse, organized by the University of Saint Joseph;

- Practical regional training course on the Dev Info database, organized by UNICEF;
- Training course on the rights of the child and techniques for teaching illiterate children, organized jointly and coordinated by the Higher Council for Children, the National Literacy Commission and the René Moawad Foundation;
- Launch of the training programme on the rights of the child at the SOS Children's Village Foundation, to provide training to social workers and staff of the Foundation. Training was given to 92 social workers and to the SOS Children's Village mothers, who raise children otherwise deprived of family care. Training was given to all the mothers and staff of all the SOS Children's Villages. In addition, the children were taught about the rights of the child through numerous educational activities and taking advantage of new technology;
- Training courses for social workers on the subject of the child as a victim, organized by the Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
- Training courses for judges who graduated from the Institute of Judicial Studies, organized by the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with UNODC;
- Training courses for juvenile judges on Act No. 422/2000, organized by the Ministry of Justice;
- Training courses for 28 social workers on how to deal with and listen to child victims when taking their statements at police stations, organized by the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with UNODC;
- Training courses for 32 members of the judicial police on judicial protection, organized by the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with UNODC;
- Training courses for juvenile judges, public prosecutors and investigating judges on the objectives of Act No. 432/2002 and its basic principles, non-custodial punishment, children at risk and unlawful acts carried out together by minors and adults, organized by the Ministry of Justice.

2005

Practical courses:

- National practical course, "Combating the worst forms of child labour", organized by ILO/IPEC;
- Practical course, "Awareness of the situation of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon", organized by the Ministry of Justice;

- Practical course, “Time management and communication skills”, organized by the Lebanese Association for Task Management;
- Practical course, “The Arab child subject to various cultural influences”, organized by the Higher Council for Children, in cooperation with the National Organization for the Lebanese Child;
- National practical course, “Preventive measures and protection of children from all forms of exploitation, abuse and neglect”, organized by the Higher Council for Children;
- Specialized symposium on legislation relating to children, organized jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace;
- National specialized practical course on violence against children in school, “Towards a mechanism for the eradication of corporal punishment”, held jointly by the Higher Council for Children, the René Moawad Foundation and Save the Children Sweden;
- Practical course, “Remedial justice and prison regimes”, organized by the Middle East Council of Churches and the Human Rights Institute;
- Practical course, “Children’s education: A vision of the future”, carried out in coordination with the Higher Council for Children and the National Organization for the Lebanese Child, with the participation of numerous university professors and individuals with an interest in painting and writing;
- Practical course for children on “culture”, with a view to increasing child and youth participation, organized by the Higher Council for Children;
- Regional practical course on alternative reports and follow-up to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, organized by the Arab Resources Collective, with the participation of numerous Lebanese and Arab non-governmental organizations;
- Practical course and final evaluation of the first phase of IPEC, organized by ILO.

Training courses:

- Training courses on the global and comprehensive approach to early childhood, organized by the Arab Resources Collective, which included numerous schools and Lebanese and Palestinian non-governmental organizations. The programme provides periodic training for individuals interested in methodology, so as to put to the test the training that they receive in their work. It began in 2005 and will continue throughout 2006;

- Training courses to build the capacities of seven associations working with Palestinians in the field of early childhood (60 days of training), organized by the Arab Resources Collective, in cooperation with the Welfare Association;
- Training course on the comprehensive approach to early childhood, for 22 participants from five nurseries, organized jointly by the Arab Resources Collective and the Najdeh Association;
- Two training courses on the “Child to Child” programme for teachers and staff from non-governmental organizations, organized by the Arab Resources Collective;
- Training courses on child abuse, held at the University of Saint Joseph, with the support of UNODC;
- Training courses on child participation, held jointly by the Higher Council for Children and Save the Children Sweden;
- Training courses on “Defining violence: Means, causes and consequences”, for a group of social workers, organized jointly by the Higher Council for Children and World Vision International;
- Training courses for a group of social workers on non-violent methods of dealing with children, carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children and World Vision International;
- Training courses on the early detection of children with special needs and early intervention, organized jointly by the Higher Council for Children and Save the Children UK;
- Training courses on street children, for the Children of the World Association (Iraq), organized by the Higher Council for Children;
- Organization of a series of talks and activities on the protection of children and women from any form of violence, for local communities (children, families, volunteers, local young people);
- Training courses for literacy teachers on modern literacy techniques and the rights of the child, organized by the René Moawad Foundation, in cooperation with the Higher Council for Children;
- Train-the-trainers courses to eliminate truancy, held jointly by ILO, the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Director-General for Vocational and Technical Training and the Nabatiye Centre to Combat Child Labour.

2006

Practical courses:

- Practical course entitled “Towards a national strategy to protect teenagers from drugs”, carried out jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the University of Saint Joseph. The course was held for some 30 non-governmental organizations and other interested bodies, and was aimed at obtaining an overview of the status of the national strategy to protect teenagers from drugs;
- Practical course on laws to protect street children in Lebanon, held jointly by the Higher Council for Children and the Arab Council for Children and Development, with support from UNICEF;
- Practical course entitled “Education: facts and prospects - the role of municipalities in education policy”, organized by the Social Movement.

Training courses:

- Series of workshops on early childhood in relation to the training handbook “Kids and adults learn together”, held for some 20 students from non-governmental organizations and other bodies dealing with the rights of the child and with early childhood, and organized by the Arab Resources Centre;
- Training courses on the comprehensive approach to early childhood, for 12 students, held in cooperation with the Arab Resources Centre and the Nabaa Association.

10. International cooperation in efforts to implement the Convention

The Lebanese Government cooperates with United Nations bodies and international organizations in numerous programmes and projects, most of which are priority areas for the implementation of the Convention. We would mention the following in this respect:

Programmes and activities of the World Bank

1. Education Development Project

This project is aimed at supporting the Government’s efforts to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Education and the management of the education sector, and restoring credibility to the public education system.

2. Community Development Project

This project is aimed at establishing an effective and sustainable instrument to improve the living conditions and economy in the Lebanese regions affected by serious social problems, offering marginalized sectors the opportunity to have access to basic social and economic services in the fields of education, health and the environment.

The Council for Development and Reconstruction is the project's implementing agency. Its implementation mechanism is established by the non-governmental organizations present throughout the country. The project has two main components: a regional development programme and a sectoral programme, which implement practical social programmes in a gamut of sectors and attempt to meet the special needs of specific social groups such as women, children, the disabled and the elderly.

In this respect, we should mention the cooperation and coordination that exists between the Higher Council for Children and the Council for Development and Reconstruction/Economic and Social Development Fund Project, as part of a joint cooperation programme run by the Council with the Ministry of the Interior and Municipal Affairs, and which is aimed at revitalizing the work of municipalities in the implementation of the rights of the child.

3. Small grants programme

The World Bank issues small grants to non-governmental organizations for projects aimed at ensuring citizen participation among marginalized groups in the community. Some of the projects that it has financed so far have touched on various aspects of the situation of children and young people in Lebanon.

OHCHR programmes and activities

The OHCHR office implements various activities and programmes as part of its cooperation with ministries, the Higher Council for Children and United Nations agencies, specifically UNICEF and ILO, in the field of children's rights. Among these programmes and activities are the following:

- The regional human rights summer camp held in 2005: A summer camp was held in coordination with the American Technological University and the Arab Institute of Human Rights for university students from Lebanon and other Arab countries and for representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society, international organizations and the ministries concerned. One of the basic themes addressed in the camp's programme was the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the right of children to be protected against all forms of exploitation;
- Visit to Lebanon by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children: The Special Rapporteur, Ms. Sigma Huda, prepared a report on the situation of trafficking in persons in Lebanon after she had interviewed government representatives from the ministries of the interior and municipal affairs, justice, social Affairs and labour and representatives of non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies, and after visiting prisons, juvenile correctional facilities and juvenile detention centres.

The Higher Council for Children, the Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace and the Union of Children's Rights Organizations in Lebanon worked together to launch a comparative study of the Act on the Protection of Minors in Conflict with the Law or at Risk (Act No. 422/2002) from the perspective of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the standards and guiding principles of the United Nations (2005).

- It worked with ILO/IPEC on a practical course entitled “Combating the worst forms of child labour” as part of the national strategy to combat this phenomenon in Lebanon (2005);
- It is a member of the National Commission to Combat Child Labour, of the Ministry of Labour, which also includes representatives of the ministries concerned, the Higher Council for Children, non-governmental organizations and international organizations, the General Union of Workers, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists and the Social Insurance Fund. The objective of the Commission is to follow-up on the implementation of the projects and plans for combating child labour in Lebanon;
- It took part in a coordination meeting with non-governmental organizations, held by the Higher Council for Children, with the aim of studying the framework for networking and contacts between the Council and all bodies working in the fields of children’s rights and human rights (2006);
- It held a conference in Qatar for national human rights institutions from the Arab world, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Commission of Qatar, under the title, “A culture of human rights”. The Chair of the Human Rights Commission of the Lebanese National Assembly represented Lebanon at the conference, along with representatives of bodies involved in human rights and children’s rights in Lebanon. One of the basic themes that was highlighted during the conference was the introduction of human rights and children’s rights education in school curriculums (2006);
- Jointly with the American University in Beirut, it held a practical course which was attended by 60 university students from all regions of the country; the course was intended to shed light on the problem of trafficking in women and children;
- It established a youth team (pressure group) within the group of United Nations bodies in Lebanon and in cooperation with UNICEF; the team is working on a draft national plan of action on youth policy in the country, in cooperation with the authorities and civil society;
- It is working to implement a national plan of action for human rights, in cooperation with the Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights.

Programmes and activities of Save the Children Sweden

Studies

Study on government efforts to eradicate violence against children at school (2004) was used in the mobilization plan drawn up by the Higher Council for Children and the René Moawad Foundation to combat violence in schools.

In addition, the organization carried out a study of the situation of Palestinian children, which will be published in 2006.

Activities to obtain support

- It took part, with the Higher Council for Children and the René Maowad Foundation, in the conference on violence against children in schools;
- It took part in the Commission for Participation by Children and Young People, which forms part of the Higher Council for Children;
- It worked with the Higher Council for Children on questions related to the prevention of and protection against violence, participating in the commission established by the Council for this purpose and in supporting numerous activities in this field: a field study on the situation of non-governmental organizations, the preparation of teaching material on this subject and the organization of seminars and conferences;
- Since 2002, Save the Children has supported the Social Development Training Centre in the implementation of training activities for teachers, students, families and some non-governmental organizations, as well as staff in UNRWA schools, with the aim of improving their communication skills, providing them with conflict management and resolution mechanisms and replacing punishment in schools with educational methods that are not detrimental to the child's dignity and development. In 2004, the Centre developed the "Ambassadors of Peace" initiative. It is now working on disseminating this experience to extend it throughout Lebanese schools and those of UNRWA.

Integration programmes

Since 2002, Save the Children has taken part in activities intended to mainstream children with special needs. It has organized campaigns to raise awareness of the rights of these children, and has helped establish a network of organizations working in this particular field. In 2004, the network received a donation from the World Bank to implement a series of programmes over a three-year period. Also in 2004, Save the Children gave children a chance to express their opinions and speak out about their needs in a series of theatrical and cultural events, produced a documentary entitled "Our voice" and supported a summer camp for about 100 children.

The right of children to express themselves and to participate

In 2004, Save the Children financed two training workshops designed to increase children's participation. It worked in cooperation with the Children and Youth Centre and the Palestinian association Nabaa, and supported the implementation of projects carried out by children and the organization of a summer camp for children with special needs. It also organized a reading week, which was attended by 1,700 children and 82 youth leaders in four Palestinian refugee camps. In 2004, it gave 200 children lessons in how to increase their participation at the municipal level.

Save the Children, through its Palestinian partners, has undertaken to improve the quality of teaching at various schools run by UNRWA, and supported the Union of Palestinian Associations in drawing up an alternative third periodic report on the situation of Palestinian children.

Training in the rights of the child

Save the Children is working with the American University of Beirut to prepare a programme on the rights of the child, which is to be made public in 2006. In 2004, together with UNESCO and OHCHR, it helped run a practical training course on the rights of the child, and it is currently working with the Arab Resources Collective to translate into Arabic training handbooks aimed at raising awareness of the rights of the child.

Programmes and activities of the World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO) supported the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), the first results of which were published in 2005, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Central Statistics Office.

WHO also helped finance the AIDS project of the Ministry of Health.

One of the main programmes for children is the school health programme, which is carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and which includes, in addition to medical check-ups, lessons on health-related subjects.

Programmes and activities of Save the Children UK

2003

- In the past four years, Save the Children UK has worked with the Ministry of Social Affairs (development services centres) on a project aimed at eliminating school dropout among children under 11 years of age, concentrating on the children who drop out of school for one or two years and on those who have never attended school. Such children must follow a six-month social and academic training programme, and are later integrated into the mainstream education system;
- Save the Children UK, working with the Higher Council for Children and in cooperation with UNICEF and the Lebanese Union for Child Care, organized a conference on the best interests of the child, which shed light on the importance of childcare in the family. The conference highlighted the concluding observations that the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued following consideration of the second periodic report of Lebanon;
- It also organized a series of practical courses in cooperation with the Higher Council for Children and the Lebanese Union for Child Care on the “Handbook on integration in Arab countries”.

2004

- Organization of a programme, working with the Higher Council for Children, on training for trainers, given to 10 social workers at the Ministry of Social Affairs;
- Organization of two workshops, together with the Higher Council for Children, on early detection and intervention, for 12 social workers and directors of development services centres working with small children;
- Drafting of a handbook and CD-ROM on early detection and intervention, in Arabic and English, for persons working in the field of childcare.

2005

- Practical guide to compulsory education (see section B, “General measures of implementation”, reply to question 9).

11. Priorities in the implementation of the Convention

Poverty continues to be among the main problems with a direct impact on the enjoyment of many of the rights of the child, and this calls for a national effort to be carried out as part of a comprehensive social development policy. In addition, since certain laws are still incompatible with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other pertinent instruments, it is necessary to amend them and to enact new ones.

In the national children’s rights strategy, the objectives and phases are clearly set out for all those taking part. The strategy is also a priority activity that can effectively contribute to improving the quality of work of the groups concerned, without eclipsing the importance of mechanisms for the establishment of networks, especially at the local level. At the national level, it is necessary to work to cover the institutional needs in the field of child protection (a monitoring centre, an ombudsman, a national human rights body, etc.).

The working methods of non-governmental organizations, the improved performance of public bodies and the adoption of a scientific approach based on specialization, coordination and complementarity have helped to improve the lot of children in Lebanon. There is no doubt that the stability of the domestic political situation and the genuine commitment to an ambitious national development effort have brought new opportunities to give effect to the rights of the child.

Part II

Only the Arabic version of the Convention is currently available.

Part III

Brief information on:

1. New bills or enacted legislation

Please see section B, "General measures of implementation", part 2, on the status of draft legislation.

2. New institutions

The following are some of the new centres and institutions created since 2003:

A. Centre to Combat Child Labour, Bab at-Tabbana, Tripoli

The René Moawad Foundation established the Centre to Combat Child Labour in Tripoli (Bab at-Tabbana), in cooperation with the Italian ARCI Foundation. The Bab at-Tabbana district was chosen because it comprises the poverty belt containing the greatest number of child workers and school dropouts anywhere in Lebanon. The centre's mission is to improve the standard of living of these child workers and dropouts, and it aims to provide educational, social and cultural services to child workers and offer them a chance to move back into the mainstream education system or vocational and technical training.

Around 120 children aged between 8 and 16 are currently in receipt of academic support, literacy and vocational training services provided by the centre.

The centre offers six academic support, literacy and employment preparation classes in all - two morning classes for girls and four evening classes for boys.

Vocational training is provided in cooperation with the Don Bosco Technical Institute, Yubail, and the Agricultural Centre of the René Moawad Foundation (training in catering and hospitality).

A commission has been created to monitor the centre's work, with members representing the Ministry of Labour, the Higher Council for Children, the National Committee to Combat Illiteracy, the Municipality of Tripoli, the University of Saint Joseph, and various concerned governmental organizations.

The centre works at the local level with all concerned institutions and municipalities, notably the Union of Municipalities of Al-Faiha. A municipal commission has been established to combat non-attendance at school.

B. Centre for Strategic Middle East Studies

This centre deals with children's problems, particularly in State schools, in cooperation with the schools themselves, civil society institutions and municipalities.

Activities carried out by the centre include the following:

- Awareness-raising programmes in preparation for working life and on all-round health, for children from the Dar Al-Salam school in Tripoli (who were also taught how to pass on what they had learned to their friends in other schools), carried out in cooperation with the school administration, the Municipality of Tripoli, and volunteers from the University of Lebanon and the Department of Health Inspection of the Technical Institute of Tripoli;
- Training for eighth- and ninth-grade pupils from the Al-Tel Al-Yadida girls' school, in setting up a student body within the school to take up issues relating to the environment and public awareness-raising;
- Implementation of an academic support project in the Abu Samra State school, Tripoli, which involved training a selected group of outstanding students who volunteered to implement the support project with fourth-grade students with the aim of cultivating positive attitudes among children and young people.

3. Newly implemented programmes and their scope

New programmes focusing on protection for street children include the following:

- Cooperation programme between the Higher Council for Children and the Arab Council for Childhood and Development, which aims to raise social awareness of the problem of street children, ensure protection for street children by amending Lebanese legislation on children to bring it into line with international agreements, and provide training to people working with such children. A study has been carried out on the legal aspects of the situation of street children in Lebanon, and another is currently in preparation on the needs of street children in Lebanon, in connection with which a training workshop has been organized for people who work with such children;
- The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding Lebanon's third periodic report on the situation of children, and the concern the Committee expressed at the growing number of children in care institutions, prompted UNICEF to request the Higher Council for Children to conduct an exhaustive national survey on the situation of children in care, and this is expected to be published in May 2006. The Council has undertaken to work with UNICEF to organize a national workshop on the results of the study in order to implement its recommendations and adopt the legal and administrative measures necessary to address the problem of the increasing number of children in care and attempt to promote alternative solutions.

4. Newly implemented policies

Newly implemented strategies and policies in Lebanon include the following:

A. National Plan on School for All (2005-2015)

The Ministry of Education drew up this plan under the supervision of the national body responsible for School for All, and set up a monitoring committee. The national plan or strategy is based on the goals set by the Club of Dakar and includes a commitment to guarantee equal chances for all children in Lebanon to receive a proper education and to protect the right of all children to complete a basic education having regard only to their personal abilities and without external impediments. The main objectives of the plan are as follows:

- To make education compulsory, and enhance the role of the local community;
- To prevent children from dropping out of school, providing more help and support to teachers;
- To provide educational services in the early childhood stage;
- To encourage enrolment in the third cycle of basic education;
- To guarantee the provision of educational material by computer and the technologies of basic education;
- To combat illiteracy;
- To facilitate the integration of children with special needs into schools.

B. National strategy to combat child labour in Lebanon

The Ministry of Labour has drawn up a national strategy entitled “Child labour in Lebanon: Present situation and general directives and recommendations for a national policy”, in cooperation with ILO and the Institute of Research and Investment and in coordination with all parties striving to combat child labour in the public and private sectors.

The strategy comprises a series of general directives and recommendations by sector and geographical area. The general directives are as follows:

- To complete compilation of a database on the problem of child labour and improve and update it in cooperation with the interested parties;
- To establish a higher national commission to eliminate child labour, bringing together all the parties concerned by the problem, both State and non-governmental organizations;
- To take legal and executive measures to rectify the current shortcomings in this area;

- To organize information, educational and awareness-raising campaigns in order to reach the widest audience possible and alert them to the risks incurred by children and society as a result of child labour, and in order to educate and guide the public at large on practical ways to address the problem so as to be able to put pressure on the main actors to adopt general policies to eliminate child labour;
- To adopt social and macroeconomic measures such as specific national programmes to combat poverty in the least developed areas and extend and reinforce the social security network.

Recommendations by sector and geographical area

Education sector

- Draft regulatory decrees on basic and compulsory education;
- Make efforts to extend compulsory schooling to the age of 15;
- Look into the school dropout problem and its causes and take steps to help children who have dropped out to rejoin the general education system or take up vocational or technical training;
- Improve the quality of teaching in State schools and schools that charge very little. The data shows that there is a close correlation between the decline in teaching standards in schools, student dropout and subsequent entry into the world of work;
- Attempt to provide new ways to provide academic support to children from poor families;
- Prepare programmes for informal teaching and alternative teaching and training for children outside school.

Direct action in certain geographical areas and in relation to specific activities

Priority is given to those geographical areas with the highest rate of child labour: Tripoli, Akkar, the outskirts of cities, Palestinian refugee camps and surrounding areas, certain sectors of the southern region, notably Nabatiye, Bin Yubail, Sidon and outskirts, Al-Harmal, Baalbek and the Bekaa in general.

Priority is given to combating child labour in certain hazardous areas (the worst forms of child labour), such as:

- Mechanical work, car bodywork and the painting, repair and assembly of machinery;
- Tobacco farming;
- Household service, particularly for girls;

- Certain seasonal agricultural work;
- Work in the streets.

The national strategy to combat child labour in Lebanon includes the creation, by decree of the Council of Ministers, of a national commission to combat child labour. By Council of Ministers Decree No. 38/2005, a national commission was established within the Ministry of Labour, made up of representatives of the ministries of labour, social affairs, health, justice, education, the interior and municipal affairs, and industry, the Higher Council for Children, the National Employment Institute, the National Social Protection Fund, ILO, the General Union of Workers, the Association of Industrial Workers, four members from non-governmental organizations concerned with children's issues and six members from the Ministry of Labour, one of whom is to act as rapporteur.

The task of this commission is to prepare and implement programmes, plans and projects designed to eliminate child labour, in cooperation with ILO, international programmes to eradicate child labour, various international and Arab organizations, and national non-governmental organizations and committees.

The commission publishes an annual report on its activities and proposals, which it submits by the end of May, via the Ministry of Labour, to the Council of Ministers for adoption of the relevant resolutions.

C. Formulation of a social development strategy for Lebanon

The Economic and Social Development Fund of the Council for Public Works and Town Planning has prepared a draft strategy for social development in Lebanon with funding from the European Union. It contains the following points:

- A proposal for a global strategy for social development in Lebanon;
- Identification of geographical and sectoral pockets of poverty;
- Creation of a mechanism to enable the various interested parties working for social development to:
 - Deal with social problems;
 - Fully coordinate their efforts;
 - Enhance the effectiveness of the various social development projects and their impact and influence;
- Definition of the scope of action of the Economic and Social Development Fund in efforts to combat poverty (target areas, sectors and population groups).

D. National strategy to revitalize primary health care

Under Ministerial Decree No. 777/1 of 11 November 2003, a joint committee was established to implement the national strategy to promote primary health care. Its task is:

- To establish frameworks and the means of implementing the national strategy to promote primary health care, through the network of State and private health centres;
- To assess the technical and administrative functioning of health centres and accredited clinics;
- To propose administrative and technical measures as required to enhance progress with this work.

The Committee submits an annual report to the Ministry of Health describing the progress made during the past year and the work planned for the year ahead.

The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Joint Committee, has revised and reinforced the legal framework regulating the extensive cooperation between the Ministry and other partners concerned with primary health care. More than 40 new cooperation agreements with private bodies were signed in 2003, in order to increase basic provision of health services across all the regions of the country simultaneously, paying particular attention to impoverished areas, marginalized groups and the neediest people.

The database has been updated to include the new centres, reflecting the Ministry's concern to place them on the health map in order to determine the shortfall in coverage in preparation for the next extension of service provision.

Annex 1

SUBCOMMISSIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, REPORTING TO THE HIGHER COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN

The subcommissions held a number of meetings at which they established the following objectives:

Legal commission

- To collate legal texts relating to children's rights and, more specifically, protection from violence and abuse, with a view to proposing amendments or additions to the texts, or their repeal;
- To discuss the issue of punishment in schools and the most appropriate legal formulas for the abolition of punishment in schools;
- To arrange round-table meetings to publicize the "Children's Ombudsman" project and mechanisms and measures of implementation;
- To raise awareness of specific legislation on the protection of children and the role of the media in that regard.

Commission on research, analysis and monitoring

Bearing in mind the role of the commission on consultation and coordination, the following objectives were set:

- To determine the extent, causes and forms of the problem by:
 - Compiling data (studies, institutional experiences, services, programmes, etc.);
 - Giving due weight to consultation when setting research priorities (in response to clear needs);
 - Providing opinions/advice on the conduct of sectoral studies (quality, quantity);
 - Encouraging children's involvement in the adoption of measures they will be required to act upon (where necessary);
- To establish a monitoring body with a database: a structure of a global nature has been proposed, which would determine the measures upon which a standing monitoring body could be based, in cooperation with the interested parties.

Commission on programmes and training

- To establish training needs for people working in institutions with child victims of violence;

- To provide training for people working with children;
- To set parameters for intervention programmes in care institutions;
- To set parameters for programmes to prevent violence, abuse and neglect.

Commission on sexual exploitation

- To analyse the factual context based on the definition and standardization of concepts and on awareness of the associations and their possibilities and needs;
- To enhance awareness of the adverse effects of violence against children and change social attitudes with respect to prevailing beliefs;
- To develop the skills of people working with children and reinforce intervention, training and follow-up programmes.

Commission on abuse and neglect

- To define the concepts of abuse and neglect;
- To review experiences and action taken, and support and extend such action;
- To raise public awareness and obtain help and support to completely eliminate all forms of violence;
- To establish clear mechanisms for the submission of complaints, notification and follow-up.

Information Commission

(a) A workshop is currently in preparation on ways in which the news media can raise the issue of protecting children from all forms of violence, exploitation and neglect. Its aims are:

- To provide members of the media with comprehensive, specific information on the problem of violence against children in all its forms;
- To make the public more aware of the connection between prevention and the media's role in raising awareness of children's rights in order to protect children from all forms of violence;
- To set parameters for best practices that could be adopted by the media to embody the principle of protection of children from the various forms of violence.

(b) Organize an information campaign to promote the right of children to lodge complaints and publicize the legislation on child protection more widely.

Annex 2

PROPOSED MECHANISM FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHILDREN IN LEBANON

Activity 1: Seek and obtain political support

Efforts are being made to obtain the help and support of decision makers in order to facilitate the adoption of the measures required for the preparation and implementation of the plan.

Write to request the Council of Ministers to include the national plan for the advancement of children in its programme of work and take a decision on the plan's entry into force and its dissemination to the relevant ministries.

Activity 2: Appoint an international expert and several national experts (for preparing the plan and cost estimates, as well as for monitoring and evaluation)

The national experts and the international expert would take on the following tasks, in coordination and cooperation with the task force of the Higher Council for Children:

- Establish the broad scope of the plan, its main themes and the strategies to be followed;
- Provide supervision and advice to the committees;
- Prepare a draft of the national plan with the task force of the Higher Council for Children.

Activity 3: Organize a high-level meeting of the heads of the various ministries and other official bodies

Once the national plan has been established, the Council of Ministers has approved its implementation and the expert group has established its broad scope, a high-level meeting of the heads of the government departments concerned will be held to adopt a joint resolution to coordinate the work and establish the ministries' roles in preparing the plan and their involvement at all stages, in particular at the stages of proper implementation, follow-up, funding, evaluation and supervision.

Establishment of task forces within the ministries, coordinated by the head of each ministry.

Establishment of a special mechanism for coordinating the government departments at regular coordinating meetings.

A working meeting is also envisaged with the relevant international organizations operating in Lebanon, to prepare a formula for coordination and participation in respect of certain aspects of the plan.

Activity 4: Establishment of consultative committees of the Higher Council for Children and the national plan

Phase I: Creation of 13 commissions made up of representatives of government departments, non-governmental organizations and universities:

- Description of the functions of the commissions (tasks and responsibilities);
- Preparation of comments on the draft plan.

Phase II: Creation of commissions in which children participate, with the proviso that the facilitator should be a young person aged between 18 and 25:

- Arrange for children to participate in the consultative commission on the participation of children, once a strategy for their participation has been drawn up;
- Engage the attention of young people, using the national commission for the expression of other opinions so that they will join the consultative commissions and act as links between these and the commissions on the participation of children.

Phase III: Appointment of a coordinator for each commission from the secretariat of the Higher Council for Children.

The coordinators have the following tasks:

- To prepare a summary of the measures to be adopted, on the basis of a review of *A World Fit for Children* and the Arab Plan, and including a comparison with the data available in Lebanon, with a view to adopting the measures and provisions required in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the two documents mentioned, to establish national priorities;
- To assist in running the commissions' meetings so as to attain the objectives set;
- To monitor the working group's activities in the government departments responsible for supervision and ensure coordination between them;
- To assist the expert group in preparing the plan.

Activity 5: Establishment of a mechanism for the preparation of the national plan

- Organization of a national workshop to explain the method of work and the measures that will need to be adopted to implement the plan;
- Exposé of the broad scope, the main themes and the strategies of the plan.

Activity 6: First draft of the national plan

- Preparation of the first draft by the experts;
- Presentation of the draft to all the consultative commissions in respect of their own areas of specialization;
- Comments from all the commissions;
- Comments incorporated in the draft.

Activity 7: Discussion of the draft plan with the ministerial working groups, chaired by the heads of ministerial departments and with the participation of the international organizations

Formation of teams for the final review of the basic themes of the plan; teams to include, in addition to the task forces led by the heads of the departments responsible for implementation, representatives of the commissions involved in formulating the initial comments.

Activity 8: Drafting of the final version of the national plan; setting a budget; and establishing a plan for follow-up and evaluation

Activity 9: Submission of the plan to the Council of Ministers for ratification, consideration of the budget and determination of the responsibilities of the ministries concerned

Activity 10: Launch of the national plan for the advancement of children in Lebanon

Annex 3

ACCESS PROJECT ON ALTERNATIVE MEASURES TO COMBAT CHILD LABOUR THROUGH TEACHING AND THE PROVISION OF PERMANENT SERVICES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The United States Government, as part of its global strategy to combat child labour, and through its Department of Labor, is attempting to reduce the incidence of the worst forms of child labour in the Middle East and North Africa. These efforts take the form of cooperation agreements with international organizations with the aim of enhancing children's chances of access to good teaching programmes, on the basis that such programmes are an effective means of combating child labour.

In that context, the ACCESS project is being implemented under the direction of CHF International as part of a partnership agreement with the René Moawad Foundation, the Charitable Society for Social Welfare of Yemen and America-Mideast Educational and Training Services; the René Moawad Foundation is in charge of the regional segment of the project.

The ACCESS project in Lebanon

The René Moawad Foundation is responsible for that part of the ACCESS project relating to Lebanon and is carrying out a series of activities on the ground, including:

- Direct teaching of child workers and children at risk of dropping out of school;
- Giving priority to girls in educational provision;
- Preparing educational and teaching models with the aim of supporting the institutions concerned in eliminating child labour.

Target groups

The ACCESS project in Lebanon is aimed at child workers below the legal age for admission to employment (i.e. under 15) and children who risk dropping out of school for financial reasons or because of learning difficulties.

Type of activities proposed under the project

The following are some of the activities proposed:

- Literacy classes;
- Intensive vocational training courses;
- Assistance in the form of writing materials, books, etc.;
- Academic support;

- Improvement of basic infrastructure in certain schools in the areas where the project is running;
- Information and awareness-raising on children's rights, in particular the right to education and protection from child labour;
- In-service training in child-centred teaching methods, for teachers in certain schools;
- Promotion of national policies and strategies to improve children's learning opportunities and encourage them to remain in school.

Proposed partners

The activities are being carried out in cooperation with the following representatives and partners:

- Government institutions concerned with the issue of child labour (ministries of education, labour, social affairs, the interior and municipal affairs, etc.);
- International bodies (ILO/IPEC);
- Local non-governmental organizations;
- Civil society at large (the media, the private sector and municipalities).

Areas of Lebanon where the ACCESS project is running

The regions where the project is being implemented are those with the highest incidence of child labour, namely:

- The southern region (Nabatiye, Tyre, etc.);
- Greater Beirut (Bury Hamud and Sinn al-Fil area);
- The northern region (Akkar, Tripoli and in particular Bab at-Tabbana).

Duration of the project

The project is to run for four years, from 6 September 2004 to September 2008.
