



# General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General  
8 November 2007

Original: English

---

## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 17th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 October 2007, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Malinovska (Vice-Chairperson). . . . . (Latvia)

## Contents

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

- (a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)
- (b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*)

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

07-55289 (E)



*In the absence of Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica), Ms. Malinovska (Latvia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children** (*continued*) (A/62/297 and 319; A/C.3/62/2)

**(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children** (*continued*) (A/62/182, 209 and 228)

**(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children** (*continued*) (A/62/259)

1. **Mr. del Rosario Ceballos** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, said that poverty eradication strategies and social and economic development plans focused on children should be supplemented with programmes for protection against violence and discrimination and education programmes that stressed the most vulnerable groups and integrated a gender and human rights perspective. Although infant mortality had fallen in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region continued to be affected by HIV/AIDS. Campaigns had been launched to create awareness about the prevention and elimination of mother-to-child transmission and to support children affected by the disease. Education was also a priority and States must take steps to ensure universal access to free, quality primary education and progress in access to secondary education.

2. The Rio Group countries were firmly committed to the eradication of all forms of violence against children and welcomed the report of the independent expert in document A/62/209. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the right of indigenous families and communities to retain shared responsibility for the upbringing, education and well-being of their children. As sponsors of the Draft resolution on the rights of children, the Rio Group countries noted that international recognition of the rights of children involved a substantive change in the traditional adult-child hierarchy. Latin America was the region that had seen the greatest social mobilization around the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a process that remained dynamic both legally and practically.

3. **Ms. Gendi** (Egypt) said that her Government had contributed to dissemination of the study on violence against children and fully supported its

recommendations. It also supported the establishment of a post of special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children. That post should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations, rather than voluntary contributions, so as to ensure its continuity and effectiveness and firmly establish the concept of international participation in the institutional framework for tackling the problem.

4. Her Government attached great importance to international, regional and national cooperation in combating violence against children. It had established a national committee for the elimination of all forms of violence against children and had assisted the independent expert during the preparation of the study in order to ensure that its findings accorded with regional concepts in both the Arab world and the Middle East and in Africa. In its capacity as leader of the regional steering committee to promote the study recommendations, her Government, through the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, had played an active role nationally, regionally and internationally in promoting strategies to prevent violence against children before it occurred. It had also translated the study publications into Arabic at its own expense and distributed them throughout the Middle East, and had established mechanisms for the prevention of violence against children, such as a telephone hotline for children to report instances of violence that were investigated immediately. Efforts had also been made to earmark increasing resources in the State budget for implementing the study recommendations at the national level.

5. The Secretary-General's report on the girl child (A/62/297) lacked clarity and an integrated, objective vision and failed to take into account the developmental aspect of violence against the girl child and ways of combating it. Instead, it recapitulated cases dealt with in the Commission on the Status of Women and described the results achieved through the relevant treaty bodies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council. It contained no recommendations for achieving the desired progress on the situation of the girl child or commitments whereby the international community might assist developing and least developed countries in improving that situation. Mention should be made in that connection of the important work done by the United Nations Population Fund, in particular the study carried out as part of its global campaign for the prevention of

obstetric fistula. The report made no connection between that pathological condition and the situation of the girl child, and she hoped that future reports would address the issue.

6. The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228) on her visits to conflict areas, particularly her remarks concerning areas of the Sudan, was commendable. The Sudanese Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan had made progress in implementing initiatives for the protection of children, including the development of national legislation, and in dealing with sexual and gender-related violence. The establishment of a unit within the Khartoum State police to deal with issues related to women and children was also to be commended.

7. Her delegation was alarmed by the situation of children in Lebanon and in the occupied Palestinian territory, as described in the report. The Special Representative's visits had revealed the shameful conditions suffered by children as a result of Israeli military action that targeted them specifically. The international community must provide humanitarian assistance to those children in the areas of education and mental health, in order to give them psychological support and help them recover from the horrors that they had witnessed. Every effort must be made to ensure that such tragedies were not repeated. The Special Representative should also visit Iraq to investigate the situation of Iraqi children and promote effective international action in that regard. It was extremely important to expand the Special Representative's mandate to include children under foreign occupation and those subject to continued military action. The mandate of the new special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children should also extend to children under foreign occupation, since that involved one of the most intense forms of violence to which children were subject.

8. **Ms. Bowen** (Jamaica) said that the coming of age of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was cause for celebration. Its near-universal ratification was testimony to the importance that the international community attached to children. The United Nations had played a vital role in advancing the welfare of children, not only by facilitating implementation of the Convention but also by addressing new and emerging

issues, including through the two Optional Protocols to the Convention. Her delegation supported the establishment of a post of special representative on violence against children. It had listened keenly to the presentation by former child soldier Ishmael Beah (A/C.3/62/SR.14), who had challenged the international community to move beyond rhetoric. Creating a world fit for children demanded a comprehensive approach on the part of the international community. Special attention must also continue to be accorded to the girl child. Her Government would continue to play its part in promoting and protecting the rights of the world's children, including its own.

9. **Mr. Sea** (Cambodia) said that since the restoration of peace and political stability in Cambodia in the late 1990s, concerted efforts had been made to promote the rights of Cambodia's children. Notable progress had been made in reducing child mortality and improving child health, which was a top priority for his Government. There had also been an increase in vaccination coverage. Children's access to basic education had been strengthened significantly and a net primary enrolment rate of 91.3 per cent had been achieved in 2006. However, there was still a long way to go before the national targets set under the Millennium Development Goals would be attained. Poverty continued to be the main obstacle to improving children's education, especially in rural areas. Since the end of the conflict, the main focus had been on getting children into school. Currently, however, the priority was to improve the capacity of teachers.

10. Other domestic measures in support of children included the enactment in 2005 of a law on the prevention of domestic violence and the protection of victims and the setting up of a national council to coordinate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. His Government had also ratified the Optional Protocols to the Convention and had concluded relevant agreements with neighbouring countries.

11. **Mr. Gatan** (Philippines) expressed condolences to the Government and people of Pakistan concerning the previous day's terrorist attacks.

12. The interests of Philippine children were protected through several pieces of legislation, while the Constitution directed the State to defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and

protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty and exploitation. The Philippine military authorities had never recruited child soldiers. All necessary measures were being taken to avoid harming children wantonly deployed by non-State actors in combat zones and to reintegrate them into society. The Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups appeared to contain elements that were inconsistent with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on children and armed conflict, but his Government continued to study them with an open mind.

13. October was celebrated as National Children's Month in the Philippines, providing an opportunity to highlight the many facets of children's welfare. The Government was also intensifying implementation of its child development policy, which included a "Bright Child Strategy" with a component on effective parenting. It believed that the family must be supported in order truly to nurture children and protect them from physical and psychological harm. Lastly, the international community should continue to support developing countries in their efforts to improve the lives of children.

14. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga) agreed with the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict that more must be done to combat impunity and address all violations against children. Intra-State conflicts had had a devastating impact on young people. In 2006, the number of conflicts worldwide had numbered 56, compared with 30 at the time of the Machel study. Children's suffering continued long after conflicts had ended. Many were rejected by their own communities because of the atrocities that they had committed as child soldiers, causing the cycle of poverty to be perpetuated. His Government was concerned for the well-being of such children and appealed to the international community to work together to restore peace and love in their lives.

15. His Government recognized that youth offenders could sometimes be misled into committing crimes without considering the consequences of their actions. There had therefore been a move away from retribution towards reintegration of young offenders in their communities in Tonga.

16. Thanks to a grant from the Government of New Zealand, the World Bank and other development partners, an initiative was under way to increase

Tongan children's access to quality education. Moreover, the Government, mindful of the high level of inactivity among young people in Tonga which had resulted in 36 per cent of boys and 52 per cent of girls being either overweight or obese, was currently integrating sport into the school curriculum as a form of early intervention to avert the health problems associated with obesity. Studies had revealed that children aged 6 to 12 years who took part in five hours of physical activity a week also performed better academically. Lastly, his Government would continue to work with the international community to provide a safe, peaceful environment for the world's children.

17. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Palestine) expressed her delegation's distress at the egregious violations of children's rights that continued to be committed around the world, particularly in situations of armed conflict, including foreign occupation. A significant gap remained between international legal standards for the protection of children and their implementation for the actual safeguarding and promotion of children's rights. It was that lack of implementation that was perpetuating the impunity of those who violated children's rights. The damage caused to children had detrimental short-and long-term consequences not only for children but for women, families and entire societies, affecting future prospects for peace and development.

18. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was the primary instrument for the protection and promotion of children's rights. Other relevant legal instruments included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Those instruments were applicable to the entire occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and constituted the fundamental frame of reference for any accurate examination of the human rights situation of Palestinian children living under occupation. Any such examination would demonstrate that the rights of Palestinian children were being systematically breached on a daily basis by Israel as the occupying Power.

19. Three generations of Palestinian children had lived and grown up stateless and dispossessed in refugee camps and two generations in the occupied Palestinian territory had known only oppression, discrimination and humiliation in Israel's 40-year

military occupation. Palestinian children continued to be the targets of excessive, indiscriminate force at the hands of the Israeli occupying forces and were victims of a number of crimes identified by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, including killing, wounding and maiming; attacks on schools and hospitals; denial of access to medical care; illegal detention; displacement; and denial of humanitarian access. In conclusion, she thanked members of the international community for supporting the needs, rights and aspirations of Palestinian children and urged continued attention to alleviating their plight in order to help them realize their inalienable human rights.

20. **Mr. Khalfallah** (Tunisia) said that his Government had always shown its commitment to ensuring optimum conditions for children to exercise their rights and develop their full potential. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and had enacted a child protection code in 1995. Those legislative reforms were supported by practical measures that had an impact on children's daily lives, such as the establishment of a superior council for children, a children's rights observatory and a children's parliament and the preparation of a second national plan for children (2002-2010), which addressed the main challenges that remained.

21. His Government's 2006 report on the situation of children dealt, inter alia, with the right of children to express their point of view and to make decisions about matters concerning them. It was in that context that the children's parliament, as well as municipal children's councils, had been established to provide opportunities for dialogue and exchanges of views that would enhance the authorities' understanding of the needs of future generations, enabling them to tailor policies to their needs. Other initiatives included providing access to the latest information and communication technology in schools and allowing mothers of children under the age of 16 to work part-time in the public sector while retaining their full rights to career advancement and retirement.

22. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that his Government had enacted a number of constitutional and legislative provisions that protected the rights of children. The Constitution encompassed a bill of rights that protected the child's fundamental rights and freedoms, while policies such as the national child policy, the national youth policy and the national

programme of action were aimed at improving the quality of life of Zambian children and constituted core guidelines for implementing initiatives related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

23. In the area of child health, his Government had improved access to basic rural health-care services and established home-based care programmes. It had put in place a system for the integrated management of childhood illnesses designed to improve the care of children aged under five and had given priority to adolescent reproductive health services. However, it faced considerable challenges because of the continuing dependence of most rural areas on the health-care services provided in clinics in urban areas and because of the brain drain resulting from the migration of Zambian medical personnel to developed countries. More resources were needed to build adequate rural clinics. At the same time, efforts were being made to improve the conditions of service of health personnel in order to encourage them to stay in Zambia.

24. The goal of the Zambian education system, which was governed by the national education policy document, was to ensure that every child had access to free basic education. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services supported orphans, vulnerable children and children living with HIV/AIDS and provided grants to centres for street children. In 2000, his Government had launched the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), which had contributed to the progressive elimination of exploitative child labour in Zambia by providing educational and economic alternatives for working children. ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour had also been incorporated into the national plan of action on child labour.

25. His Government had adopted specific measures to address the sexual exploitation and abuse of children and had presented to Parliament a child rights domestic bill that sought to provide a comprehensive framework for the protection of the rights of the child and to protect the girl child from sexual abuse, trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced labour. One-stop centres providing integrated care services to victims of sexual exploitation had also been established across the country.

26. Lastly, his Government had declared HIV/AIDS a national crisis and given top priority to combating the spread of HIV in young people. It had given increased attention to the situation of children infected with HIV as a result of mother-to-child transmission, who numbered some 90,000 in Zambia

27. **Ms. Munteanu** (Romania) said that childcare in Romania had come a long way since the communist era, and that the Government's strategy was to get as many children as possible out of large institutions into foster care, adoption and small State-run homes. The number of children in care institutions had decreased dramatically in recent years because the Government believed that the best way to solve the problem was to protect the child within the family through a range of services.

28. Little information was available on the situation of institutionalized children around the world, as their problems did not attract as much attention as those of other children in difficulty. However, it was a sad fact that children who were separated from their families became more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and neglect. Preventing the separation of children from their families and providing professional services to maintain family unity should therefore be a priority. The Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledged that the family was the natural environment for the development and well-being of children. At the same time, it envisaged the appropriate use of substitute care for children at risk in or deprived of their family environment, viewing recourse to institutional placement as a last resort. When children were placed in institutions, their rights to be protected from discrimination, neglect and exploitation, to be able to develop their fullest potential and to have a say in decisions affecting their lives must be safeguarded and their placement must be subject to periodic assessment and review. At the same time, efforts must be made to address the underlying reasons for children's institutionalization, namely, poverty, family breakdown, disability, inflexible child welfare systems and a lack of alternatives to residential care.

29. **Ms. Radu** (Moldova) said that economic migration often led to the disintegration of families, as illustrated by the experience of one of her childhood friends, whose adult health was compromised because of the lack of family and the loneliness that had marked her life after she had been left behind when her parents emigrated in search of work. Moldova, like

other countries in the region, was also facing relatively new challenges, such as trafficking in children and rising rates of drug and alcohol consumption and HIV infection among young people, because growing numbers of children were being abandoned or lacked proper care when their parents emigrated.

30. According to official statistics, in 2005 some 26.6 per cent of Moldova's workforce had been working abroad, leaving 29 per cent of Moldovan children living without one or both parents. The reality was that millions of people had no choice but to migrate in search of work, human dignity and hope. Rather than attempting to stop them, the international community should work together to help them integrate in their new environments for the benefit of all: migrants, their families and countries of origin and destination. Her Government was hoping that integration in the European Union would make it easier for Moldovan migrants to maintain contact with their families.

31. With regard to children's rights, Moldova was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and had taken significant steps to improve the national legislative framework for the protection of children. It had also adopted a national "Education for All" strategy for the period 2004-2015, with support from several United Nations agencies, in order to study, identify and prioritize its educational needs.

32. It was regrettable that, despite efforts to improve their health and well-being, children were often used as pawns in campaigns conducted by terrorists and separatists. She hoped that the reports on violence against children and children and armed conflict would give renewed impetus to the promotion and protection of children's rights. All children had the right to live in security and to enjoy the benefits of civilization, but only a consensus among adults — decision makers, governments, international organizations and civil society — could protect them from discrimination and vulnerability.

33. **Ms. Makhumula** (Malawi) said that her Government was committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the commitments made at the special session on children in its quest to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It had submitted its first periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the

Child, whose concluding observations proved invaluable for enhancing States' efforts to create a world fit for children. Her Government had made considerable efforts to promote healthy lives for children. It had increased child immunization coverage to over 80 per cent and it continued to distribute insecticide-treated bed nets for the prevention of malaria. Its policy for the integrated management of childhood illnesses had improved the supply of essential drugs, basic transportation services and the training of health personnel in the management of childhood illnesses. Such initiatives had helped reduce infant and under-five mortality rates from 104 and 189 per 1,000 live births, respectively, in 2000 to 69 and 118 in 2006.

34. Her Government had launched an early childhood development policy in 2004, aimed at developing the child's cognitive, social, physical and psychosocial well-being and providing guidance and support in interventions to promote the welfare of children. One important development in the delivery of early childhood development services had been the establishment of community-based child centres, which improved access to those services, especially for rural children. Her Government also recognized the importance of a child-friendly legal framework and had taken steps to address gaps in the existing constitutional and legal framework in order to bring it into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments.

35. In recognition of the impact of HIV/AIDS on children, her Government had stepped up its efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, through voluntary testing and counselling, and the provision of antiretroviral drugs to help prolong the lives of parents. It was also implementing a National Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children, aimed at promoting the survival, growth and well-being of children affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, extreme poverty and other socio-economic factors. It encouraged children's participation in national development issues, particularly through the Children's Parliament, in which children articulated their aspirations, needs and day-to-day problems, enabling the National Assembly and district assemblies to provide an informed response to the needs of children.

36. **Ms. Graham** (South Africa) welcomed the 10-year strategic review of the Machel study on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/62/228).

Considerable progress had been made over the past decade in protecting the rights of children in conflict situations, but much remained to be done. The continuing recruitment and use of children in armed conflict was not only an affront to human values but also a fundamental impediment to development. Greater determination and commitment on the part of the international community were needed to support national efforts to accelerate accountability and implement legislation, policy and action. The study on violence against children showed that such violence was complex and took place in various settings: the home and family, schools, the justice system and even the workplace. Policies must therefore be developed and implemented to ensure its prevention. One major achievement in South Africa had been the recent abolition of corporal punishment, through the Safe Schools Act and the Children's Amendment Bill. The latter legislation also supported prohibition of the employment of children aged under 15 and provided for the establishment of child and youth centres offering programmes of protection against abuse and neglect, care and protection for trafficked or sexually exploited children, counselling and other treatment.

37. It was time for the international community to take stock of its commitment to create a better world for children, a world in which human development took into account the best interests of the child and was founded on principles of equality, non-discrimination, peace and the universality of all human rights, including the right to development.

38. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico) said that as part of its policy of openness to international scrutiny, in May 2007, his Government had noted a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. It was fully committed to the eradication of commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking in persons, which affected women and girls in particular. The Mexican Senate had just adopted a law against trafficking in persons and legislative amendments that increased the penalties for commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Government had also strengthened its institutions for the design and implementation of public policies in that area. One priority of the National Development Plan 2007-2012 was to take a preventive approach to the promotion and protection of the human rights of girls and boys. As the Secretary-General had observed in his report on the girl child, girls often experienced

multiple discrimination as a result of the persistence of stereotypical attitudes. His Government had therefore been working to develop statistical indicators on violence that paid special attention to violence against young and adolescent girls. It also attached particular importance to guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities and had recently ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

39. He agreed with the independent expert that all violence against children was preventable. What was needed was a substantive change in every day practices within the family, the community and society as a whole and recognition of children as subjects of human rights. Noting the recommendations in the independent expert's report, he said that any follow-up mechanism should take into account the work of existing mechanisms, particularly those of the Human Rights Council, in order to avoid duplication and have a real impact on the eradication of violence against children.

40. **Mr. Al-Anzi** (Saudi Arabia) said that because children represented the future of society but could neither know nor demand their rights, Islam had safeguarded those rights long before any legislation or conventions had been adopted on human rights or children's rights. Islamic law (sharia) protected the rights of the child from before birth by prohibiting childbearing out of lawful wedlock, outlawing abortion and seeking to avert any prenatal harm or disfigurement. It also safeguarded children's rights in such areas as breastfeeding, guardianship, care, maintenance, proper choice of name, education and inheritance.

41. From its inception, Saudi Arabia had adopted the sharia as the fundamental source of precepts on living. Moreover, article 10 of the Constitution stipulated that the State should strive to strengthen family ties, maintain Arab and Islamic values and provide care for all individuals and suitable conditions for the development of their natural endowments. That meant ensuring, through governmental and grass-roots institutions, that children enjoyed their full rights. The National Commission for Childhood, established in 1979, coordinated all efforts relating to the care of children, including the development of children's talents, for which purpose the King Abdul Aziz and his Companions Foundation for the Gifted had been established. The Government provided free education and curricula were designed to ensure social and cultural development in a way that encouraged the

desire for knowledge. Particular attention had been devoted to children with disabilities by founding rehabilitation centres for them and providing assistance to their families. Homes and charitable associations for orphans or children with chronic diseases had also been established. A set of measures to prevent work by underage children and the employment of young persons in dangerous or harmful jobs had been adopted, in accordance with principles set out in a ministerial decision. The Government had also acceded to many international and Islamic instruments on children.

42. Attention must be drawn to the killing, torture and deprivation of the most fundamental rights suffered by Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territory. He urged the international community to intervene to preserve and protect the rights of those children in accordance with the relevant international conventions.

43. **Ms. Salayeva** (Azerbaijan) said that her Government attached great importance to the study on violence against children and the outcome document of the special session on children. In recent years, it had been working to create an effective national child protection mechanism. The prevention and elimination of all forms of discrimination against children had been one of the overarching objectives of national policies and was reflected in all major strategies and programmes related to social development, poverty reduction and protection of human rights. The recently adopted national action plan on the rights of children was the first to encompass all areas of State policy, including child development and access to and improvement of the quality of health care and education.

44. Special attention was being paid to the girl child. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children was conducting research on the causes, consequences and impact of early marriage on girls' development. Regular awareness-raising campaigns on such topics as reproductive health, protection from violence and HIV/AIDS were being conducted in all regions of the country, targeting rural women and girls in particular.

45. Another priority was addressing the needs of vulnerable groups of children, such as orphaned and abandoned children, street children and refugee and internally displaced children. The situation of children affected by armed conflict remained the most important



issue. Forced displacement uprooted children and young people at a time in their lives when they most needed stability. Unfortunately, almost 200,000 Azerbaijani children had experienced displacement as a result of the conflict with Armenia. Measures were being taken to address their plight and treat their psychological trauma, but there were wounds that no one could cure, those caused by the horrors of war, displacement, separation from family, violence and abuse. Her Government therefore strongly advocated concerted international action to address the issue of children affected by armed conflict and to end impunity for those responsible for grave violations committed against children in wartime.

46. **Ms. Tincopa** (Peru) said that the promotion and protection of human rights was an essential framework for ensuring the welfare and development of children and adolescents. Her Government had developed a strategic agenda for action that gave priority to poverty eradication, reduction of social inequality, protection of children, inclusion of young people in decision-making and efforts to combat violence, abuse and exploitation of children.

47. The study on violence against children had noted that violence was a daily reality for many children around the world and had clearly established the need for immediate action to prevent and respond to such violence. The independent expert had said that ending such violence required high-level leadership and her delegation supported his recommendation that a special representative on violence against children should be appointed to act as an advocate for children worldwide by promoting the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against them and encouraging international cooperation to that end.

48. Ten years after the Machel study on children and armed conflict, children's most basic rights continued to be violated in such conflicts. The efforts of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict were nevertheless commendable and Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) had provided a formal, detailed structure for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. Lastly, she welcomed the incorporation of the rights of children and young people into such major international instruments as the recently adopted Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although much remained to be done, her Government was sparing no effort to ensure

the full enjoyment of the rights of children and young people.

49. **Ms. Ong** (Singapore) said that her country's only natural resource was its people. The Government therefore believed in developing Singapore children's full potential and ensuring their protection and welfare. No child was denied an education because he or she lacked the means and the education system had been ranked first by the Global Competitiveness Report for its ability to meet the needs of a competitive economy. At the same time, the child mortality rate was the lowest in the world. Nevertheless, Singapore was not totally immune to problems of child abuse and neglect and the Government's multi-pronged approach to child protection included legislative protection, intervention and preventive education and training. The key legislative instrument was the Children and Young Persons Act. Intervention mechanisms included child protection standards and the Child Protection Service. Lastly, teachers were trained in the detection of abuse.

50. Her Government's commitment to the protection of children extended beyond its borders. It participated actively in regional and international initiatives dealing with child-related abuse and had hosted the Sixth Asian Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect in 2005. Recognizing that issues such as trafficking in children and child sex tourism were global problems that could not be tackled effectively by national Governments alone, it had embarked, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), on a regional campaign to combat child sex tourism. In 2006, it had announced its decision to extend extraterritorial jurisdiction over nationals who sexually exploited minors abroad.

51. **Mr. Abdussalam** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that although a majority of States had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, large numbers of children continued to be killed, maimed, forcibly conscripted and sexually abused. His delegation called on the international community to work for the return of child refugees to their countries and families and praised the efforts of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in that regard. Similarly, although a majority of States had ratified ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, children continued to work in conditions that impaired their health, education and development. His delegation called on the international

community and civil society institutions to work to eliminate child labour and also supported the independent expert's recommendation that the Secretary-General should appoint a special representative on violence against children.

52. His delegation was deeply disturbed by the suffering of child victims of armed conflict and foreign occupation in such places as the Golan, Iraq and Palestine. It called on the international community to restore its credibility by condemning Israel, as the occupying Power, for its perpetration of practices that deprived Palestinian children of education, health care and, in many cases, their lives.

53. His Government had set up facilities nationwide to provide health care and timely vaccinations to mothers and children and to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents. The Al-Qadhafi programme for African women, children and young people illustrated his Government's ongoing commitment to ensuring freedom and prosperity without discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, language or colour. His country was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was committed to implementing its provisions at the national level. Ensuring children's rights to education, health care and development was the best investment a society could make.

54. **Mr. Al-Shami** (Yemen) said that in keeping with the teachings of true Islam, his Government had been one of the first to become a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and had also ratified ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Its Constitution and laws provided protection for the rights of children and young people, and a Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood, a Ministry of Human Rights and other agencies had been established to translate those legal provisions into action. Whereas in the past, motherhood, childhood and youth had merely been components of larger national plans, by 2001 there had been special national strategies devoted exclusively to each of them. In June 2007, the Government had launched a National Strategy for Childhood and Youth and it was taking steps to establish a Higher Council for Childhood and Youth, headed by the Vice-President of the Republic. Partnerships with civil society institutions, such as the Children's Parliament, were also important and his delegation was grateful to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other

international partners for their assistance. Lastly, he called on the international community to work to free children living under Israeli occupation from the violence, poverty and deprivation that they were suffering.

55. **Ms. Simovich** (Israel) commended the independent expert's study on violence against children, which should not remain an intellectual exercise but should prompt Member States to enact domestic legislation that demanded greater accountability for children's well-being in all spheres of life. Israel's Parliament had a special committee on the rights of the child which was responsible for protecting children and advancing their rights in accordance with international agreements. Her delegation strongly supported the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children.

56. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the girl child (A/62/297), her Government believed that girls should be given not only protection but also the same opportunities as boys and that boys should be educated to respect girls' right to equality. It was spearheading the issue of educational equality with a programme to encourage girls to study science and technology. Human capital was Israel's greatest asset and it had one of the highest educational attainment rates in the world.

57. The independent expert's study had noted the disturbingly high homicide rate among boys in many regions. Her own region was experiencing the result of that trend in a particularly troubling way. Impressionable Palestinian children were subjected to a barrage of hateful programming in the mass media and were sometimes dispatched as suicide bombers. To foster a culture of peace, countries must begin with their young people.

58. Her Government had welcomed the visit by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to assess the situation of children living under difficult conditions. While it took issue with some of the Special Representative's findings, of both law and fact, and regretted that some of its clarifications had not been included in the final report, it appreciated the Special Representative's efforts. Many children living in southern Israel and near the Lebanese border continued to experience the terror of daily rocket attacks and were suffering from post-traumatic stress.

However, there was renewed optimism in the region and a sense of hope that should be carried over into renewed dialogue with all Israel's neighbours.

59. Israel was a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the first Optional Protocol and was in the process of ratifying the second Optional Protocol. Her Government believed that civil society could be a strong force in the area of child protection. Civil society in Israel was very active in pursuing those issues. Lastly, it was vital to pursue sustainable policies with regard to the environment and climate change so that the children of the future might inherit a viable world.

60. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that the time had come for a sincere evaluation of the implementation of the child-related Millennium Development Goals and the outcome document of the special session on children, in order to take corrective action. In that connection, he paid tribute to the work of UNICEF country and regional offices, including the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).

61. His Government was committed to the principal goals of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but believed that least developed countries newly emerged from conflict, such as Nepal, needed to be given additional international, financial and technical assistance in order to translate those goals into action. In keeping with the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, his Government was implementing programmes for the release and rehabilitation of former child soldiers. It had also adopted a series of legislative and administrative measures and development policies that provided safeguards for children's rights and had enacted legislation to stop the trafficking of women and children.

62. Children in remote rural areas and from marginalized communities such as Dalits were particularly disadvantaged. His Government was therefore giving the utmost priority to social inclusion and social sector development. To assist the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including girls and children belonging to ethnic minorities, it was implementing a National Action Plan on Education for All aimed at guaranteeing all children access to free, compulsory primary education by 2015.

63. **Ms. Kulzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that the forthcoming midterm review of the special session on

children, would provide an opportunity to evaluate progress in implementing the outcome document of that session. Much remained to be done to improve the situation of children throughout the world. The conclusions and recommendations of the independent expert's study on violence against children also provided a sound basis for future work to protect children effectively from violence.

64. Her Government paid serious attention to maternal and child protection and to improving the status of women and children. It took a multisectoral approach to the promotion of children's rights, involving government agencies, the Human Rights Ombudsman, national non-governmental organizations and youth movements. It was enhancing its legislation in the areas of education, health protection and social assistance for children. Some 99 per cent of Kazakh children were covered by compulsory primary education and there was no gender disparity. Following recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Government had established a Committee on Child Protection. School and university curricula included human rights education. A national child protection programme established policy guidelines and legislative measures and a variety of other initiatives had been introduced. Lastly, a plan of action to combat crimes involving human trafficking was being implemented.

65. Despite all those measures, child disability, juvenile delinquency, child mortality and the spread of HIV/AIDS posed major challenges. In tackling those problems, her Government was cooperating closely with international organizations and specialized agencies such as UNICEF, to which it paid special tribute.

66. **Mr. Moreira** (Brazil) noted from the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/62/209) that the study had been translated into 12 languages, demonstrating its wide acceptance by governments, civil society and people working directly with children. He shared the independent expert's conviction that there was an urgent need to appoint a special representative on violence against children in order to translate the study's recommendations into action and urged the Third Committee to take a decision on the matter at the current session.

67. His Government was committed to promoting and protecting the rights of the child. It had adopted a cross-cutting National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents and had established a network for combating sexual violence against children and adolescents. It would be hosting the Third World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children in 2008. It had also developed a special programme to assist children and adolescents who were in conflict with the law, emphasizing their reintegration in society, and had made great strides towards the complete eradication of child labour. With technical support from UNICEF, it was coordinating a group of 15 countries from all regions of the world with a view to promoting the draft United Nations guidelines for the protection and alternative care of children without parental care. It urged all Member States to support that initiative.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*