



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child Fifty-second session

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention

Concluding observations: Qatar

1. The Committee considered the second periodic report of Qatar (CRC/C/QAT/2) at its 1446th and 1447th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1446 and CRC/C/SR.1447) held on 29 September 2009, and adopted at the 1453rd meeting, held on 2 October 2009, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's second periodic report (CRC/C/QAT/2) as well as the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/QAT/Q/2/Add.1). It also notes with appreciation the constructive dialogue held with the cross-sectoral delegation on the progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the provisions enshrined in the Convention.

3. The Committee reminds the State party that these concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its concluding observations adopted on the State party's initial reports to the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/OPSC/QAT/CO/1) and on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/OPAC/QAT/CO/1), respectively, in June 2006 and in October 2007.

B. Follow-up measures undertaken and progress achieved by the State party

4. The Committee welcomes positive developments in the reporting period, including the adoption of a number of legislative instruments, undertaken with a view to implementing the Convention, such as:

- (a) The Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar in 2004;
- (b) The Labour Code No. 14 of 2004, which contains articles on child labour;
- (c) The Civil Code No. 22 of 2004 which affords protection to children;

(d) The Code of Criminal Procedures No. 23 of 2004, which ensures that children are protected throughout all stages of investigation and trial proceedings and while serving sentences;

(e) Act No. 22 of 2005, prohibiting the recruitment, employment, training and participation of children in camel racing and prescribing penalties for infringing the Act;

(f) Act No. 3 of 2009 regulating penal and correctional institutions; and

(g) Act No. 4 of 2009 regulating the entry, exit, residence and sponsorship of migrants.

5. The Committee also notes with appreciation the ratification or accession to:

(a) The ILO Convention No. 138 (1973) concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment in 2006;

(b) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008;

(c) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2009; and

(d) The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2009.

6. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab region aimed at, among others, the sharing of information, best practices and strengthening the capacity of the States parties in the region in the field of human rights.

C. Main subjects of concern and recommendations

1. General measures of implementation (articles 4, 42 and 44, paragraph 6 of the Convention)

The Committee's previous recommendations

7. The Committee notes that a number of concerns and recommendations made upon the consideration of the State party's initial report have been addressed. However, it regrets that some of its concerns and recommendations have been insufficiently or only partly addressed.

8. The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to address those recommendations from the concluding observations on the initial report (CRC/C/15/Add.163) adopted in October 2001 that have not yet been implemented or sufficiently implemented, including those related to a national plan of action, best interests of the child, definition of the child and juvenile justice. The Committee invites the State party to undertake adequate follow-up to the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations on the second periodic report.

Reservations

9. While welcoming the information that the State party has withdrawn the general reservation entered under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Committee regrets that the State party has made a partial withdrawal to its general reservation to the Convention by narrowing it to articles 2 (non-discrimination) and 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the Convention which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. The

Committee also expresses concern at a number of reservations entered to the CEDAW and in particular articles 9, paragraph 2 and 16, paragraph 1 (f) which have direct impact on the rights of the child.

10. **The Committee strongly encourages, in light of article 51, paragraph 2 of the Convention, the State party to review its reservations with a view to withdrawing them in accordance with the Principles of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights of 1993 (A/CONF.157/23).**

Legislation

11. The Committee notes the legislative measures that have been undertaken by the State party in order to ensure the implementation of the provisions enshrined in the Convention. However, the Committee remains concerned at the frequent delays which obstruct the adoption of the Children's Bill. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at the fact that the provisions of the Convention have not been invoked or referred to directly in courts.

12. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 13) that the State party continue to scrutinize carefully existing legislative measures with a view to ensuring their compatibility with the provisions enshrined in the Convention. Furthermore, the Committee urges the State party to take, as a matter of priority, all appropriate measures to expedite the adoption of the Children's Bill and ensure its effective implementation. The Committee also urges the State party to take appropriate steps to give full effect to the Convention in its legal system, so that it is directly invoked before the courts.**

National plan of action

13. The Committee notes that a national plan of action is currently being developed and that the draft National Strategy for Children 2008–2013 has not yet been finalized.

14. **The Committee recommends that the State party finalize the development of the National Plan of Action and expedite the adoption of the National Strategy for Children 2008–2013 as a matter of priority. It also recommends that the State party ensure that the National Strategy for Children covers all areas of the Convention and takes into account the outcome document, "A World Fit for Children", of the 2002 United Nations General Assembly special session on children and its mid-term review in 2007, and that the body charged with monitoring the implementation of the National Plan of Action for children is allocated sufficient human and financial resources to fulfil its mandate. The Committee also recommends that the State party establish evaluation mechanisms to regularly assess progress achieved and identify possible deficiencies in implementing the National Plan of Action for corrective action.**

Independent monitoring

15. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment of the National Human Rights Committee in 2002 in accordance with the Paris Principles and has recently included non-citizens in its mandate. The Committee also notes the information that the National Human Rights Committee is currently looking into establishing a children's rights unit.

16. **The Committee encourages that the State party, taking into account its general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent national human rights institutions, undertake all effective measures to ensure that the National Human Rights Committee is easily accessible to, and user-friendly for, all children. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that the National Human Rights Committee has a clear mandate to monitor children's rights at national and local levels and to receive**

and investigate complaints on the violations of children's rights including from individual children. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party establish a children's rights unit within the National Human Rights Committee.

Data collection

17. The Committee notes with appreciation the provision of statistical data in the State party's report and the efforts made to collect and analyse statistical data regarding children. However, the Committee regrets the limited data concerning some areas covered by the Convention, for example, violence against children, child abuse and children of migrant workers.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen its mechanisms for data collection by developing indicators consistent with the Convention in order to ensure that data are collected on all areas covered by the Convention and that they are disaggregated by age and sex, urban and other areas, and by those groups of children who are in need of special protection. It further encourages the State party to use these indicators and data to formulate policies and programmes for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Dissemination of the Convention and training

19. The Committee is encouraged by the efforts of the State party to disseminate information about the Convention especially to children in schools through the use, among others, of teaching manuals containing child-friendly information on the rights and principles set out in the Convention. However, the Committee is concerned that insufficient measures have been taken to disseminate and raise awareness of all the rights of children, in a systematic and targeted manner with focus on families, communities and professionals working with children.

20. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to systematically disseminate information about the Convention among children, their parents and other caregivers and all relevant professional groups working with and for children. It recommends that the State party provide relevant professional groups with targeted and regular training on the provisions and principles of the Convention and the international human rights standards in general. The Committee further recommends that the State party take specific measures to make the Convention available to and known by all children in and out of school in Qatar.

Cooperation with foundations and civil society

21. The Committee notes the active role played by various organizations, including entities such as the Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women and the Qatari Orphans Foundation, as well as by civil society in the provision of services, particularly health and social services for children, including children with disabilities and children without parental care. However, the Committee notes that the role and cooperation with civil society organizations need strengthening.

22. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Continue and strengthen its cooperation with foundations and civil society organizations and involve them systematically at all stages in the implementation of the Convention as well as in policy formulation;

(b) Provide civil society organizations support as necessary, including financial and other resources, to enable them to contribute effectively to the implementation of the Convention in all parts of the country;

(c) **Ensure that foundations and civil society organizations comply with the principles and provisions of the Convention, for example, by providing them with guidelines and standards for service provision.**

2. Definition of the child (article 1 of the Convention)

23. Despite the steps introduced by the Family Act, the Committee is still concerned at the disparity in the minimum age of marriage for boys and girls and particularly that the age for girls is set at 16 years.

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party rectify the disparity in the minimum age of marriage for boys and girls by raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years.**

3. General principles (articles 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)

Non-discrimination

25. While noting that the Constitution and other domestic laws are built on the principle of non-discrimination and ongoing efforts by the State party to promote the principle of equality between women and men, the Committee is concerned about the remaining laws such as the Family Act and the Nationality Act which perpetuate discrimination against women and girls in the Qatari society. Furthermore, discrimination against children born out of wedlock and children of migrant workers is an issue of particular concern to the Committee.

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party make greater efforts to ensure that all children within its jurisdiction enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Convention without discrimination, in accordance with article 2, by effectively reviewing its existing laws which are not in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy to eliminate de jure and de facto discrimination on any grounds and against all children, paying particular attention to girls, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock and children of migrant workers.**

Best interests of the child

27. The Committee is concerned that the general principle of the best interests of the child contained in article 3 of the Convention is not fully integrated in national legislation, regulations and practices concerning children.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is fully incorporated in legislation as well as in judicial and administrative decisions and in the various policies, programmes and services which have an impact on children.**

Respect for the views of the child

29. While noting the various programmes to promote the right of the child to express views, such as the school press and radio groups, student rights groups and student councils, the Committee expresses its concern that the views of the child are sometimes not duly solicited or taken into account in other settings affecting the child, including in judicial proceedings (trial in absentia), in public debates as well as within the family.

30. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CRC/C/15/Add.163) that, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention, the State party incorporate, facilitate and implement, in practice, within the family, schools, and the community as well as in institutions taking care of children and in administrative and judicial proceedings, the principle of respect for the views of the child. Furthermore, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the Committee's general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard.**

Right to life

31. The Committee notes with concern that injuries, many of them preventable, and particularly road traffic and domestic accidents, are an important cause of childhood morbidity and mortality.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its measures to protect children from injuries, including road traffic and domestic accidents. It recommends that the State party continue to include the prevention of accidents in national policy priorities and objectives, and strengthen its public campaigns to increase traffic awareness among children, parents, teachers and the public in general.**

4. Civil rights and freedoms (articles 7, 8, 13–17, 19 and 37 (a) of the Convention)

Nationality

33. The Committee regrets that no sufficient follow-up has been given to its recommendation on the right to acquire a nationality in the previous concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.163, para. 41) and reiterates its concern that the Nationality Act does not confer de jure citizenship to children of Qatari women married to non-nationals, as it does where the father is Qatari.

34. **In accordance with articles 2 and 7 of the Convention, the Committee urges the State party to critically review its Nationality Act in order to ensure that nationality can be transmitted to children through both the maternal and paternal line without distinction.**

Preservation of identity

35. The Committee is concerned that the child born out of wedlock does not have the full right to know and be cared for by his or her parents in accordance with article 7 of the Convention and especially that no procedures are provided by law to fully guarantee this right.

36. **In line with article 7 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures, including legislative ones, to ensure that the child born out of wedlock has the full right to know and be cared for by his or her parents and that procedures are established by law to guarantee this right.**

Access to appropriate information

37. The Committee recognizes the use of modern technology, including the Internet as a teaching tool for children, but it remains concerned at the lack of information on monitoring mechanisms to protect children from being exposed to harmful information, such as violence and pornography, transmitted through the media and the Internet.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party consider adopting specific legislation and develop mechanisms, guidelines and programmes for parents and children to protect them from information and material injurious to their well-being such as violence and pornography.

Corporal punishment

39. While noting that measures are being taken to address corporal punishment in the context of disciplinary measures in schools and in the penal system, the Committee expresses concern that corporal punishment of children is still lawful in the family and alternative care settings.

40. The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To critically review its current legislation with a view to prevent and end the use of corporal punishment of children as a method of discipline and to introduce explicit legislation prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, including in the family, schools, penal system and alternative care settings;

(b) To introduce public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization campaigns on alternative non-violent forms of discipline with the involvement of children in order to change public attitudes to corporal punishment;

(c) To take into account while drafting legislation and designing policies the Committee's general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment.

Follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children

41. The Committee encourages the State party to prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children. With reference to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take all necessary measures to implement recommendations of the Regional Consultation for the Middle East and North Africa held in Cairo from 27 to 29 June 2005 as well as in the Regional Follow-up Consultation held in Cairo from 25 to 28 March 2006. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party pay particular attention to the following recommendations:

(i) Prohibit all forms of violence against children;

(ii) Enhance the capacity of all who work with and for children;

(iii) Address the gender dimension of violence against children;

(b) Use the recommendations of the Study as a tool for action in partnership with civil society and, in particular, with the involvement of children to ensure that all children are protected from all forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence and to gain momentum for concrete and time-bound actions to prevent and respond to such violence and abuse;

(c) Cooperate with and support the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on violence against children.

5. Family environment and alternative care (articles 5, 18 (paragraphs 1–2), 9–11, 19–21, 25, 27 (paragraph 4) and 39 of the Convention)

Family environment

42. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party regarding the Maternal and Childhood Cultural Centre and the Family Consultancy Centre to raise awareness of effective child-rearing techniques in all developmental stages and to avoid harmful practices. However, the Committee is concerned that responsibilities of the parents may not be equally shared in the upbringing of their children.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure appropriate support programmes for parents in the exercise of their equal responsibilities towards their children in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.**

Recovery of maintenance for the child

44. While noting the information provided in the State party's report regarding the system of recovery and maintenance, the Committee is concerned at the lack of a mechanism which ensures the payment in case of lack of funds or assets of the legally designated responsible person for the payment.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party complete its system of recovery of maintenance for the child by creating a national fund. The Committee also recommends that the State party consider ratifying the 1973 Hague Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions relating to Maintenance Obligations.**

Children deprived of a family environment

46. The Committee notes the establishment of the Qatari Orphans Foundation which provides alternative care for orphaned children. However, it regrets the limited information regarding the evaluation of the alternative care and the review of placement, including informal forms of alternative care based on the provisions of the Convention.

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party establish an effective evaluation mechanism for alternative care, including care provided by the Qatari Orphans Foundation and other forms of alternative care, such as *kafalah*. It recommends that the State party develop, standardize and control the alternative care and related programmes and services in accordance with articles 20 and 21 and the principles of the Convention. The Committee also recommends that evaluation should involve direct consultation with children in a cultural and gender-sensitive manner. Finally, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations adopted on its Day of General Discussion on children without parental care in 2005 (CRC/C/153, paras. 636–689).**

Abuse and neglect

48. The Committee appreciates the work carried out by the Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women with regard to children in need of assistance, including through the establishment of a Qatari "safe house" offering protection, care, rehabilitation and treatment for child victims of abuse. The Committee also notes that the Foundation has formulated a comprehensive training strategy targeting personnel who deal with children and women subjected to abuse. However, the Committee is concerned at the limited information on the magnitude of domestic violence, including child abuse and neglect.

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Strengthen public education programmes, including awareness campaigns and provide information, parental guidance and counselling with a view, inter alia, to prevent child abuse and neglect;

(b) Ensure that professionals working with children (including teachers, social workers, medical professionals, members of the police and the judiciary) receive training on their obligation to report and take appropriate action in suspected cases of domestic violence affecting children;

(c) Strengthen support for victims of abuse and neglect in order to ensure their access to adequate services for physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.

6. Basic health and welfare (articles 6, 18 (paragraph 3), 23, 24, 26 and 27 (paragraphs 1–3) of the Convention)

Children with disabilities

50. The Committee commends the State party for the efforts made to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities are observed, particularly in the area of health and education including through the establishment of various institutions offering treatment, training, social and advisory services. The Committee also appreciates the study conducted by the Supreme Council for Family Affairs in order to assess the quality of services offered to children with disabilities. However, the Committee is of the view that access to quality education, health and leisure for children with disabilities needs further strengthening.

51. **In light of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96) and the Committee's general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue to collect adequate statistical data on children with disabilities and use disaggregated data and results of studies to develop policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for them in society, paying particular attention to girls with disabilities and children with disabilities living outside the city;**

(b) **Continue to develop measures for early detection of children with disabilities or at risk of disability, such as testing, and other tools and methods of assessment;**

(c) **Provide all children with disabilities with access to adequate social and health services, quality education, physical environment, information and communication, and strengthen its efforts to standardize service provision.**

Adolescent health

52. The Committee welcomes efforts made by the State party to protect the health of adolescents and promote healthy lifestyles. However, it is concerned at the emerging trends in obesity, psychological and mental health problems. The Committee takes note of the very low HIV/AIDS prevalence in the State party and welcomes the State party's efforts to raise general awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescents. However, it notes with concern that adolescents know little about other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

53. **The Committee recommends that the State party, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child and general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:**

- (a) **Improve the nutritional status of adolescents, including by ensuring healthy choices in school canteens;**
- (b) **Strengthen its mental health services tailored for adolescents;**
- (c) **Strengthen age-appropriate school education on sexuality and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs);**
- (d) **Provide adolescents with gender-sensitive counselling and health-care services that respect privacy and confidentiality;**
- (e) **Aiming at prevention, continue to provide adolescents with information on the harmful consequences of drug and tobacco use.**

Harmful traditional practices

54. The Committee notes the information provided by the State party's delegation during the dialogue that the rate of early marriage is 1.5 per cent and declining and that the 2.5 per cent adolescent fertility rate is also declining due mainly to education and employment of women.

55. **The Committee encourages the State party to strengthen its awareness-raising efforts aimed at girl children, their parents and communities on the many negative consequences of early marriage and other traditional practices harmful to the health, well-being and development of children.**

7. Education, leisure and cultural activities (articles 28, 29 and 31 of the Convention)

Education, including vocational training and guidance

56. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party provides free primary school education for all children, including non-citizen children. The Committee also notes that the Supreme Education Council has recently drafted an early childhood strategy. Furthermore, it notes the increasing number of children enrolled in kindergartens, primary, intermediate as well as secondary education. The Committee expresses appreciation at the inclusion of human rights in school curricula at the preparatory and secondary levels. However, the Committee is concerned that only boys can access the Qatar Leadership Academy.

57. **In the light of articles 28 and 29 of the Convention and taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Continue to take measures to increase enrolment rates in secondary education and technical and vocational training;**
- (b) **Further strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education both in public and private schools through providing appropriate and continuous training to teachers;**
- (c) **Continue to include human rights in general, and the rights of the child in particular, in the school curricula;**
- (d) **Consider opening the opportunity to girls to participate in the Qatar Leadership Academy.**

8. Special protection measures (articles 22, 30, 38, 39, 40, 37 (b)–(d), and 32–36 of the Convention)

Refugee children

58. While noting the information provided in the State party's report and by the delegation during the dialogue that there are no refugee children in the State party, the Committee still remains concerned at the lack of legislative measures in this field.

59. **The Committee recommends that the State party, taking into account that it is in the process of drafting the Children's Bill, take this opportunity to address the issue. The Committee further recommends that the State party consider acceding to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and adopt national asylum legislation and procedures on asylum in accordance with international standards for asylum and international protection. It further recommends that the State party consider acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

Children of migrant workers

60. While noting that the State party allows the establishment of private schools run by expatriate communities, the Committee remains concerned that the children of migrant workers employed in the private sector may not always have access to public schools. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that children of migrant workers are more vulnerable to violations of their human rights.

61. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure access to public schools to all children, including to children of migrant workers employed in the private sector. It further recommends that the State party develop and implement policies and practices that will better protect and serve children of migrant workers. The Committee also recommends that the State party consider ratifying the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

Economic exploitation including child labour

62. The Committee appreciates the efforts undertaken by the State party to prohibit the use of child labour in the formal sector but it regrets the limited information on child labour in the informal sector, for example, small family businesses.

63. **In accordance with article 32 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party continue to take effective measures to prohibit the economic exploitation of children, in particular in the informal sector by designing special programmes aimed at combating child labour. It recommends that the State party strengthen the labour inspectorate to monitor the extent of child labour, including unregulated work. In this regard, the Committee encourages the State party to seek technical assistance from ILO and UNICEF.**

Sexual exploitation and abuse

64. The Committee is concerned at the limited data and information provided in the State party's report regarding sexual exploitation and harassment of children.

65. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Strengthen appropriate legislative measures to address the issues of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation;
- (b) Take appropriate measures to ensure the prompt prosecution of perpetrators of sexual offences against children;
- (c) Ensure that child victims of sexual exploitation or abuse have access to free, child-sensitive complaints mechanisms and are not criminalized or penalized;
- (d) Continue to implement appropriate policies and programmes for the prevention, recovery and social reintegration of child victims, in accordance with the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the 1996, 2001 and 2008 World Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children as well as the outcome of other international conferences on this issue.

Sale, trafficking and abduction

66. The Committee notes the steps undertaken by the State party in combating human trafficking, including through the establishment of the National Office to Combat Human Trafficking in 2005, and the Qatari Shelter and Humanitarian Welfare Home. The Committee reiterates its concerns raised in its concluding observations (CRC/OPSC/QAT/CO/1), especially paragraphs 14 and 21, following the consideration of the initial report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in June 2006.

67. **In light of article 35 and other related articles of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Continue to monitor data on trafficking of children and ensure that all data and indicators are used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;
- (b) Strengthen its procedures for the early identification of child victims of trafficking;
- (c) Seek to establish bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperation programmes with countries of origin and transit to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

Helpline

68. While noting that the Qatari Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women operates a helpline, the Committee remains concerned that it is not toll-free and is not accessible to all children.

69. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Ensure that the helpline is allocated a 3-digit toll-free number accessible daily for 24 hours to all areas of the State party;
- (b) Allocate sufficient funds for awareness-raising activities, training and capacity-building.

Administration of juvenile justice

70. While noting the progress achieved in the domain of juvenile justice, the Committee reiterates its previous concern that the minimum age of criminal responsibility, still set at 7 years, remains far too low. The Committee is also concerned that the right of the child to be heard in criminal proceedings may not always be observed. It is further concerned that children between the ages of 16 and 18 may be treated as adults.

71. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that juvenile justice standards are fully implemented, in particular articles 37 (b), 39 and 40 of the Convention, as well as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules). In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party, while taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 10 (2007) on the administration of juvenile justice:

(a) Raise the age of criminal responsibility to a minimum of 12 years, as a matter of urgency, with the view to raising the age further in accordance with the Committee's general comment No. 10;

(b) Provide children, both victims and accused, with adequate legal assistance throughout the legal proceedings and ensure that children are held separately from adults both in pretrial detention and after being sentenced;

(c) Take all necessary measures, including strengthening the policy of alternative sanctions for juvenile offenders, to ensure that children are held in detention only as a last resort and for as short a time as possible;

(d) Ensure that children between the ages of 16 and 18 are afforded the same protection as other children;

(e) Strengthen training programmes on relevant international standards for all professionals working with the juvenile justice system such as judges, police officers, defence lawyers and prosecutors; and

(f) Seek technical assistance and other cooperation from the United Nations Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice which includes UNODC, UNICEF, OHCHR and NGOs.

Victims and witnesses of crimes

72. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure, through adequate legal provisions and regulations, that all children victims and/or witnesses of crimes, e.g. children victims of abuse, domestic violence, sexual and economic exploitation, abduction, and trafficking and witnesses of such crimes, are provided with the protection required by the Convention and that it take fully into account the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/20 of 22 July 2005, annex).

9. Ratification of international human rights instruments

73. The Committee, while recognizing as very positive the recent ratification or accession to a number of human rights treaties, takes note that Qatar is not State party to all core international human rights instruments which, in the view of the Committee, would strengthen the efforts of the State party to meet its obligations in guaranteeing the full realization of rights of all children under its jurisdiction.

74. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify or accede to all core international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families as well as the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

10. Follow-up and dissemination

Follow-up

75. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the present recommendations are fully implemented, *inter alia*, by transmitting them to the members of the Supreme Court, Cabinet and the Advisory Council and to local authorities, when applicable, for appropriate consideration and further action.

Dissemination

76. The Committee further recommends that the second periodic report and written replies submitted by the State party and the related recommendations (concluding observations) it adopted be made widely available in the languages of the country, including (but not exclusively) through the Internet to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention, its implementation and monitoring.

11. Next report

77. The Committee invites the State party to submit its combined third and fourth periodic report by 2 May 2013. This report should not exceed 120 pages (see CRC/C/118) and should include information on the implementation of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

78. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document in accordance with the requirements of the Common Core Document in the Harmonized Guidelines on Reporting, approved by the Fifth Inter-Committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3).
