



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the first part (public)* of the 1518th (Chamber B) meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 31 May 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Zermatten (Vice-Chairperson)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Second periodic report of Grenada on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (continued) (CRC/C/GRD/2; list of issues (CRC/C/GRD/Q/2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Grenada took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) said that maternity wards encouraged fathers to be present at the birth, except in cases where another woman was also giving birth at the same time. The health authorities encouraged women to breastfeed their babies until the age of 4 months.
3. The Ministry of Education ran a sex education programme which focused on abstinence and included the distribution of contraceptives to young people aged 16 and above. Children under the age of 16 who wished to obtain contraceptives needed their parents' permission. The Government had no official policy on adolescent reproductive health.
4. **Ms. Herczog** (Country Rapporteur) enquired whether newborns could remain with their mother in the maternity ward or whether they were placed in a separate room, and whether the number of delivery wards could not be increased to cover the possibility of more than one woman giving birth at the same time. Recalling the World Health Organization recommendation that babies should be exclusively breastfed up to the age of 6 months, she wished to know why the authorities in Grenada only encouraged mothers to breastfeed their babies until the age of 4 months.
5. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) said that, traditionally, many mothers did not wish to breastfeed their babies for more than two months. Thus, the authorities, while in favour of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, encouraged mothers to breastfeed their babies for at least four months. As the birth rate was very low, separate delivery rooms were considered unnecessary. Newborn babies were only separated from their mothers when they needed to be placed under observation.
6. There were a numerous problems relating to maternity leave, as a result of the difficult economic situation facing the country. Around 37 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. In order to mitigate the consequences of that poverty, the Government had created a social safety net, consisting of a number of programmes including the distribution of school books, public assistance, support for the needy, school buses and school feeding.
7. With regard to assistance for single parents, and single mothers in particular, certain parental support programmes focused on single mothers while other programmes, such as the youth uplift programme or the road management and scrub clearance programmes, which provided employment for the poorest, gave priority to single mothers. The level of child maintenance was set by the courts. If the father failed to pay child maintenance, the mother could report the matter to the police.
8. With regard to the possible provision of aid to Grenada, funding to set up a family consultation centre and launch a new programme to support victims of violence would be welcome.
9. There were no special legislative provisions on homosexuality, but it was rejected by society. Finally, Grenada had no official policy on sickle-cell anaemia but intended to look into the matter.

10. **Mr. Filali** asked whether there was a national fund to ensure that child maintenance was paid if the father failed to respect his obligations and whether he could be taken to court.
11. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) stated that there was no central fund to ensure the payment of child maintenance. In general, initial mediation services were provided by a non-governmental organization (NGO), which offered counselling and legal aid relating to child maintenance, child custody and visiting rights. That approach produced positive results. If mediation failed, the case would go to court. If the father in question failed to pay the amount stipulated by the courts, he would once again be brought before the court and could face severe penalties.
12. **The Chairperson** asked whether mothers were able to obtain legal aid to secure easier access to the courts.
13. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that such aid was provided by an NGO, as mentioned earlier. However, mothers were generally very reluctant to bring a case against the father and preferred mediation. The Government was planning new legislation on child custody, visiting rights and child maintenance, under which family mediation and a system for settling disputes out of court would play a central role. All disputes would initially be referred for mediation, with the courts intervening only if that approach failed.
14. **Mr. Filali** expressed the opinion that mediation could be very useful when the father could afford to pay child maintenance. However, the real problem arose in cases where the father was unable to pay. Without a national fund, the mother had no one to turn to.
15. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that the creation of a national fund posed many problems for a small country like Grenada. The Government was trying to help mothers in need by means of the social safety net which it had introduced.
16. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada), referring to juvenile justice, said that the authorities were implementing alternative sentencing measures. The Government had just launched a "Youth at Risk" programme which focused on life skills training, education and support. Moreover, it would have to find the necessary resources to finance the foster placement programme which had hitherto been funded by external sources.
17. **Ms. Herczog** (Country Rapporteur) said that experience in many countries showed that foster placement for children was preferable to placing them in care institutions. In view of the State party's economic situation, it would perhaps be more judicious to develop a child foster placement system instead of continuing to manage expensive institutions. Fostering also had the significant advantage of allowing children to remain in a family environment.
18. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada), agreeing with Ms. Herczog, said that the Government was planning to launch a recruitment campaign for foster families within the following two months. It wished to implement a system whereby a minor would be placed in a care institution for a period of time, to allow their situation to stabilize, before being placed with a foster family.
19. **Ms. Herczog** (Country Rapporteur) said experience had shown that the temporary placement of children in institutions often served the interests of the institutions in question more than those of the child, and that the temporary placement period was too long. Transitions were always distressing for children traumatized by the loss of their family environment and it was important to avoid a second such transition. Certain countries had recourse to emergency foster families, and she encouraged the State party to consider that option.

20. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that under no circumstances could children under the age of 15 obtain a work licence. Work licences were sometimes issued to 15-year-olds who had completed secondary education.

21. The introduction of school attendance officers had resulted in a significant drop in truancy. Truancy was a problem that affected secondary schools in particular, and was linked more to behavioural issues than to access to education. The Ministry of Education was intending to review school curricula in order to better prepare young people for working life and to ensure that the school system was better adapted to the needs of the labour market. However, the proposed reform was opposed by teachers as it involved a longer school day. In order to resolve the problem of poor school performance, and within the framework of further training for teachers, the authorities were focusing on improving basic education. Many teachers also received specialized training on how to deal with children with particular difficulties.

22. **The Chairperson** asked whether, in addition to general education programmes, Grenada also had vocational training programmes, and whether young people had the opportunity to take up apprenticeships.

23. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that primary and secondary school education remained very general and did not provide children with real professional skills. However, the T.A. Marryshow Community College did offer vocational training courses.

24. In Grenada, there were about a hundred children currently living in care institutions. Some of them had a form of disability, while others had been abandoned by their families. Approximately 80 children lived with foster families.

25. With regard to child protection measures, the Grenadian authorities suffered from a lack of financial and human resources. Grenada was preparing to assume full responsibility for the management of the foster placement system, which had originally been established and administered by an external organization, with support from the Grenadian Government, and to strengthen the programme. The Government would welcome technical assistance in that area.

26. Children living in State-run care institutions had access to individual counselling services. The Government wanted to extend those services to all other homes which took in children.

27. In order to make the child protection system more effective, the Government had, for the previous two years, been restructuring the Child Welfare Authority.

28. **Ms. Herczog** asked who was responsible for the decision to place a child in care and what procedures were followed.

29. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that, in cases where children had been mistreated or sexually abused, if the family supported the child and had the perpetrator removed from the family home, the child would remain with the family. Otherwise, especially in cases of incest, the child would be placed in a care institution. Generally speaking, that decision was taken by social workers. Child victims of sexual abuse were wary of calling the helpline for victims of abuse because, given the small size of the country, they could not be guaranteed anonymity, which meant that their family's reputation could be compromised or they risked being stigmatized and taunted by their peers.

30. **Ms. Herczog** noted that, with regard to sexual relations, Grenadian legislation did not provide for an age of consent for boys, and asked how the State party tackled cases of sexual exploitation and abuse where the victims were boys. She also wished to know what the State party was doing to tackle the phenomenon of so-called "sugar daddies", strengthen parents' capacity to protect their children and alert children to the risks involved.

31. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that the Grenadian authorities were concerned about both the “sugar daddy” phenomenon and the problem of teenage sex, involving encounters arranged using mobile phones or telephone cards. According to recent studies, sexual relations began at a very early age in Grenada, and both the authorities and NGOs organized awareness-raising campaigns to promote sexual abstinence.

32. The number of cases of sexual abuse involving boys was growing. Unfortunately, very few victims filed reports through fear of being stigmatized, as Grenadian society was generally homophobic. The Government was continuing its efforts to educate the population on the issue.

33. **The Chairperson** asked whether the State party had a specific policy on disabled children.

34. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that care institutions for the disabled were unable to take in young children. Where possible, children remained with their families, with support from the social services. Other children, including newborns, were placed either with a foster family or in an ordinary children’s home. Grown children whose families still did not wish to take them in were transferred to a care home for the disabled.

35. Grenadian law prohibited prostitution. Grenada was not a country where sex tourism was rife and she knew of only a very few cases of human trafficking, which had all been investigated by the police.

36. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked whether, by law, both the clients of prostitutes and prostitutes themselves, either adults or minors, were liable to prosecution.

37. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) replied that persons who engaged in prostitution could be prosecuted if a complaint had been filed, which was very rare. In fact, prostitution was not organized and remained a clandestine activity in Grenada, concealed behind a wall of silence. The prostitutes were adults. A child victim of sexual abuse was not considered to be a prostitute. A minor forced to work as a prostitute would not be treated as an adult.

38. Grenada did not have trained staff to care for foreign victims of human trafficking who had been brought to Grenadian territory, or to offer them special protection. Owing to its geographical location and language, Grenada was not a country of destination for human trafficking. Nor was it a country of origin for human trafficking.

39. **Mr. Filali** asked whether a child prostitute was considered a victim and what relevant legislative provisions existed.

40. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that, under the Child Protection Act, a child engaging in prostitution was taken into the care of the State, if the family was unable to provide the necessary protection.

41. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked what assistance the Government could offer to families of children engaging in prostitution.

42. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that children did not necessarily become involved in prostitution or live under the “protection” of a “sugar daddy” as a result of poverty. The phenomenon was also linked to changing lifestyles and values. The Government combined child protection measures with measures to educate parents.

43. **The Chairperson** asked what measures the State party had taken to prevent child prostitution and abuse, and to support single-parent families.

44. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that the Government, assisted by NGOs, ran educational and awareness-raising campaigns on abuse and sexual violence. Those topics had also been included in school and preschool curricula.

45. **Ms. Herczog** asked whether the State party could not conduct awareness-raising activities for children, in order to prevent underage sex and teenage pregnancies. In that respect, it would also be a good idea to alert parents to the need to establish a dialogue with their children regarding contraception and protection against sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. In particular, the use of condoms should be encouraged.

46. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that the awareness-raising process had begun but required time to take effect.

47. Approximately 20 children were adopted in Grenada each year, more than 80 per cent of them by members of their family. Girls were adopted more frequently, as they were viewed as more docile and able to help with household chores. Grenada had not signed the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.

48. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) said, with regard to the juvenile justice system, that the Government favoured alternatives to prison sentences, and was seeking to implement a foster placement system where foster families were given special training and received remuneration for fostering children in conflict with the law. It had launched a programme which aimed to provide young offenders with practical skills and offered them counselling services.

49. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that, when a complaint was lodged against a young offender, the police encouraged the complainant to agree to the matter being settled out of court. The Government did not view the detention of minors in prisons for adults as an acceptable solution, and that measure was ordered only as a last resort, most often in cases where the minor had reoffended, or where non-judicial measures had proved ineffective.

50. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked whether there was a diversion programme for children in conflict with the law.

51. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that a diversion programme had just been launched. In collaboration with NGOs, the Government had recently introduced a programme for school-age children in conflict with the law, which aimed to encourage school attendance and to offer them education, follow-up and psychological support services. Magistrates generally gave a deferred sentence to young offenders, pending their completion of the programme. A report would then be submitted to the court, which would decide whether to suspend or enforce the sentence. However, the problem of young offenders who did not attend school, were generally older and had committed more serious offences, remained unresolved and was a major concern for the Government and for magistrates, who were seeking a way to deal with young offenders using foster families, training, education and psychological support.

52. **The Chairperson** urged Grenada to improve the unsatisfactory conditions that young offenders faced in prison, where they were not always separated from adult offenders. He wished to know whether children in conflict with the law had access to legal aid and, stressing the fact that, under the Grenadian system, the State itself sanctioned corporal punishment for children, asked for further information on training for prosecutors in that regard.

53. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that children in conflict with the law were generally represented by the Ministry of Social Development or benefited from the legal aid system. However, more in-depth training was required, not only for prosecutors, but for anyone working with children, including staff in the social services sector.

54. **The Chairperson** asked whether there were children living in the streets in Grenada.

55. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) said that the State did not have data on that subject, but that the possibility could not be ruled out, given the country's economic situation.
56. **The Chairperson** asked for further information on the commercial exploitation of children.
57. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that it was difficult to speak of child exploitation, given that children earned the same wage as adults for the same work, which meant that children faced no discrimination when they entered the labour market.
58. **Mr. Koompraphant** commented that remuneration was not the only means of exploiting children, and that factors such as working conditions and working hours also had to be taken into account. He encouraged the State party to introduce a special agency responsible for protecting children at work.
59. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that Grenada did not have a special agency of that kind because there was no particular problem in that respect, as children generally worked under the same conditions as adults.
60. **Mr. Koompraphant** emphasized the fact that children were different from adults, in both physical and psychological terms, and thus could not be hired to work under the same conditions as adults.
61. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) specified that, in Grenada, children who worked were at least 16 years old and that children under that age did not work.
62. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) stated that children under 16 only worked within a family context, by helping their parents in the fields, for example, and often as a result of the economic situation. Moreover, progress had been made with regard to truancy. Between 90 and 95 per cent of children currently attended school. In cases of truancy, a designated officer visited the family to ensure that the child returned to school. Furthermore, the State was taking measures to promote schooling by responding to children's needs in regard to school equipment, meals and transport.
63. **Ms. Varmah** asked the delegation to confirm the information contained in the State party's report to the effect that children under 15 were allowed to work if they obtained a licence from the Ministry of Labour.
64. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) said that it was rare to find children under 16 on the labour market, given that national policy focused on the importance of schooling. In order to obtain a work licence, children had to prove that they had completed secondary education. Very few children started secondary school at the age of 10 (rather than 11) and finished school before the age of 16. As a result, work licences were very rarely issued to children under 16.
65. **The Chairperson** asked for details concerning action taken following the 2005 investigation into drug consumption, particularly by secondary school pupils, which had highlighted the inadequacy of prevention measures.
66. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) explained that the Ministry of Education had a National Drug Avoidance Secretariat which was responsible for following up cases of drug-taking, especially marijuana, among children in primary and secondary education as well as cases of alcohol consumption. There were awareness-raising campaigns in schools.
67. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) noted that, in 2006, drug prevention education programmes for primary and secondary schools had been launched. He acknowledged the need to strengthen those programmes and to make them more coherent.

68. **The Chairperson** asked whether any harmful traditional practices existed in Grenada, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation or any other practice which could impair the health or other rights of the child.

69. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) said that such practices did not exist in Grenada. More than 70 per cent of Grenadian women were single mothers and, according to the latest statistics, only 200 marriages took place per year. Grenadians generally did not marry before the age of 25. Genital mutilation was not practised on Grenadian territory.

70. **The Chairperson** asked whether Grenada's geographical location protected the country from an influx of immigrants or asylum-seekers and from human trafficking.

71. **Ms. Daniel** (Grenada) acknowledged that Grenada's geographical location, as well as the predominance of the English language, did not attract refugees, who were generally French or Spanish speakers.

72. **The Chairperson** thanked the delegation for answering the Committee's questions and being open to dialogue.

73. **Ms. Herczog** confirmed that, in spite of its economic situation and geographical characteristics and the impact of the hurricanes on its territory, Grenada was actively involved in improving the welfare and situation of Grenadian children, as well as implementing the Convention. She stressed that numerous bills were pending but, with the exception of the bill on the establishment of the Ombudsman's office, had yet to be adopted. She encouraged the State party to ratify international instruments and highlighted the problem, mentioned by the delegation, of the dual or triple role of certain actors (government officials, various institutions, etc.), as a result of the dearth of professionals in certain fields.

74. **Mr. Quarless** (Grenada) stressed the Government's political will to meet certain challenges, such as those involving cultural norms and practices, human resources, strengthening the institutional framework and developing the infrastructure required to implement child protection programmes throughout the country. He thanked the Committee for supporting Grenada's efforts to implement policies and programmes on children.

75. *The delegation of Grenada withdrew.*

The first part (public) of the meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.