



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 1987th (Chamber A) meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 May 2015, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Aldoseri (Vice-Chairperson)

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* No summary records were prepared for the 1985th and 1986th meetings.

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In the absence of Mr. Mezmur (Ethiopia), Ms. Aldoseri (Bahrain) took the Chair.

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

Consideration of reports of States parties

Fourth periodic report of Eritrea (CRC/C/ERI/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Eritrea took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), introducing the fourth periodic report of Eritrea, said that the State party had made considerable progress in various areas linked with the rights of the child and had established mechanisms to implement, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of those initiatives. In the period since the Committee's consideration of the previous report of Eritrea, Child Wellbeing Committees had been established in 43 of the country's 56 subregions, which represented a significant achievement.

3. Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child required strong commitment and the combined efforts of all stakeholders, including government organizations, civil society bodies, community and family structures and children themselves. However, for a developing nation such as Eritrea, lacking in resources and faced by multiple constraints, support from international partners was essential.

4. Despite resource shortages and the unjust sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council, Eritrea had made remarkable strides towards achieving some of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, including a 90 per cent decline in cases of malaria, the eradication of polio and neonatal tetanus, and the reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence to below 1 per cent. Health-professional-assisted deliveries had increased, more schools and health-care facilities had been established, and there had been greater student enrolment and enhanced access to health facilities by various communities, including those in remote areas.

5. Integrating orphaned children within extended families had proved an effective approach to their psychosocial recovery. Community-based rehabilitation programmes in Eritrea served the interests of the child better than institutionalization, which was only being used as a last resort for tackling the numerous problems confronting children in difficult circumstances.

6. He trusted that the current session would serve to inform the Committee on the Eritrean context and on his Government's endeavours to guarantee the welfare and development of the child. In that connection, he was pleased to announce that the eagerly anticipated national body of laws was now ready for enactment.

7. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Rapporteur) said that Eritrea had made remarkable progress in certain areas, particularly in terms of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. However, the country still faced numerous challenges.

8. She said that the State party report had highlighted the close links between the Constitution and the task of harmonizing national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, it was clear from various sources that the Constitution itself had not been formally implemented. The partial implementation of the Constitution coupled with a lack of legislative reform had reportedly hindered efforts to integrate the Convention into law. She would be grateful if the delegation would explain the current situation regarding the Constitution.

9. The Government had recently announced the introduction of new Civil, Penal, Civil Procedure and Penal Procedure Codes. The legislation was said to have been drafted in accordance with traditional customary law whose evolution and modernization had been

impeded by colonial rule. She would like the delegation to confirm that the codes in question had been adopted and to say how they differed from the previous codes and whether they were in line with the Convention. She also wished to know what impact those customary laws had on the rights of the child.

10. She noted that there had been no legal reform to incorporate the Convention into Eritrean legislation and create a comprehensive Children's Act. There seemed to be a piecemeal approach to implementation, which the Committee was concerned could lead to fragmentation. Legislative reform to create a sound legal framework was a basic requirement for full implementation of the Convention.

11. The Committee welcomed the State party's new national policy for children as well as its comprehensive plan for persons with disabilities, and it would like to hear how those policies were to be put into practice through national strategy or plan of action. While the State party had clarified the mandates of the coordinating bodies for children's rights, the Committee wished to know about the resources allocated to coordination and whether they were adequate.

12. A child-rights-based approach was not currently being used when planning the State budget. While a breakdown of resources by sector had been provided, it was important to be able to track the allocations specific to children. The Committee would like budgetary decisions to be based on the needs of children and wondered whether the Government had any plans in that regard. It was also very important to ensure transparency in the budgetary process so that the public could see how resources were being allocated, which was apparently not the case at present.

13. While improvements to the data collection system were commendable, they did not yet cover all areas of the Convention. Furthermore, the results were not made public, which was why the National Statistics Office of Norway had ended its involvement in the project. Information on planned future improvements to the system would be welcome.

14. Concerning the Committee's enquiry about measures to combat corruption in Eritrea, the State party's report did not address that issue and she wondered whether the delegation was in a position to do so.

15. On the inclusion of human rights education in the school curriculum, she would welcome clarification by the delegation whether any action had been taken in that regard. Civil society organizations, including those concerned by children's rights, reported that their operations and activities were limited and that they were frequently subject to intimidation and harassment. The issue was one of great concern to the Committee and the delegation's comments would be appreciated.

16. Despite the State party's continued efforts, girls still suffered from discrimination and she wondered whether the Government would consider introducing a more robust strategy to eliminate gender-based stereotypes and change attitudes in that regard. Details of what had already been done in that area would also be welcome. Furthermore, the Committee had received reports that ethnic minorities were discriminated against when accessing social services and that members of certain unrecognized religions, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, were likewise subject to discrimination.

17. With regard to measures to combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) children, the State party's report had claimed that LGBT was not an issue in the country as the practice was unknown among Eritrean children. However, it was common knowledge that the practice was to be found in all countries and the Government should not close its eyes to realities. The Committee wished to know what the Government would do to combat discrimination in that regard, particularly since consensual same sex conduct was criminalized in Eritrea.

18. On a question of terminology, she wondered whether there was any significance in the State party's use of "interest of the child" in its replies to the list of issues, rather than "best interests of the child". Furthermore, it was unclear how the principle was applied in practice. It would be helpful to know how the consequences for children were assessed when preparing legislative changes or developing planning activities, for example.

19. She could not avoid referring to the large number of children, up to the age of 18 under the Convention, reportedly leaving Eritrea. Despite the State party's denial of the application of a so-called "shoot to kill" policy at its borders, the Committee had received reports to the contrary from other sources. How did the Government know that instances of such violations were actually reported? Did the children, or anyone else, have any mechanism for doing so? A related question, given the large number of children fleeing the country at risk to their lives, as evidenced by those currently attempting to cross the Mediterranean, how was the Government attempting to improve conditions in Eritrea so as to stop the exodus of children, make them wish to stay in their country and ensure their right to life and development?

20. Concerning consideration for the views of the child, Eritrea's civil code stated that children had the right to be consulted on important matters if they were "capable of discernment" and were at least 15 years old. The age limit seemed rather high and she wondered what was done to hear children below that age, in court cases for example. A similar question arose in the case of adoptions, where the corresponding age limit for consultation of the child was 10 years.

21. Regarding freedom of expression, Eritrea had been ranked lowest in the world in terms of press freedom. In a country where there were no private media and where State-owned media were said to be heavily censored, the implications for children's right to information and free expression were clear.

22. **Ms. Aho Assouma** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to know why there were no women representatives in the country's delegation and whether civil society organizations and other stakeholders had been involved in drafting the State party's report.

23. She asked why child registrations were carried out in Christian and Muslim religious institutions, rather than in civil registry offices; why there was an associated administrative charge and a two-month delay in registration; and whether there was a law regulating the civil status of Eritreans. Updated statistics on the numbers of children registered since the 2009 data should also be provided, as should information on the awareness-raising programmes carried out to date in 2015 on the importance of child registration.

24. In terms of mobile registration units, she asked how many the country had, whether they covered rural areas and how they were managed. Had the State party considered establishing registration kiosks in urban and rural health-care centres as a way of reducing the large number of unregistered children, particularly among minorities, nomadic peoples and refugees? Such a measure, by providing children with proof of age, could also help to prevent them from being recruited as child soldiers .

25. **Mr. Gurán** said that articles 3 and 12 of the Convention required the establishment of independent bodies to monitor implementation of their provisions, and he wished to know why the State party had no plans in that regard. He also wished to know whether the Committee's general comments, particularly Nos. 12 and 14, had been incorporated into law, whether they had been translated, how easily children could access them, and whether any awareness-raising activities had been carried out.

26. **Mr. Nelson** said that he wondered whether Eritrea might consider establishing a timeline for the implementation of the Constitution, an approach which had been of help to other States parties. He wished to know whether the Government was aware of

discrimination against minority religions and what strategies were in place to prevent and combat it. Also, was it the practice in Eritrea for a person's family religion to be registered? Lastly, he asked whether there were any statistical data on sexual offences committed within the family context and whether there had been any resulting prosecutions.

27. **Ms. Khazova** said that, according to the Eritrean transitional civil code, a person was regarded as a minor until the age of 18 and that any marriage contracted between persons under that age was invalid. She wondered whether there were any changes in the new code if it was already in force. In that connection, she noted that the State party's report affirmed that it was possible in exceptional circumstances for children to be married at an earlier age, specifically at age 14 for girls and age 16 for boys. She understood that the age differed significantly from place to place and was regulated by customary law, so that marriage at an even younger age was, in fact, a widespread practice. She would welcome an explanation of the gap between the law and the reality on the ground and whether the new laws and codes recently introduced clarified the issue. Referring to United Nations documents according to which Eritrea had one of the highest child marriage prevalence rates in the world, she wished to know what were the outcomes of the State party's awareness-raising programmes on the harmful effects of early marriages, and whether a child who married before the age of 18 was still considered to be a minor.

28. **Ms. Aho Assouma** (Country Rapporteur), noting that there was no outright ban on corporal punishment in Eritrea, wondered whether the State party would consider explicitly outlawing that harmful practice and seeking non-violent alternatives to corporal punishment. On another serious issue, it was reported in 2009 that, despite Government efforts, 60 per cent of girls were subjected to female genital mutilation. It was also said that 61 per cent of those girls were Christian and 18 per cent Muslim. Could someone explain the reason for that discrepancy, which could not be attributed to religion since excision was prescribed in neither the Bible nor the Koran. Medicalizing the practice by moving it into medical institutions simply sidestepped the issue. She wished to know the current statistics regarding female genital mutilation, what the Government was doing to enforce existing legislation and how it planned to change social attitudes towards the practice.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.20 p.m.

29. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), responding to the question on the Constitution of Eritrea, said that the Constitution had not been formally implemented after it had been adopted by the Constituent Assembly on account of the emergency situation and war in the country at that time. The Constitution did address issues pertaining to the rights of the child but, given that it was outdated, the Government was entitled to revise the Constitution and would do so in such a manner as to guarantee the growth and development of children within Eritrean society.

30. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would like to know what stage the State Party had reached in reviewing its Constitution. She asked whether a committee had been established for the process and whether a deadline had been set for completion of the task.

31. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that he was unsure of the precise details but was aware that a committee had been set up in order to update the Constitution. He also stated that certain codified laws were in the process of being enacted which were in line with the provisions of the Convention, in addition to legislation on juvenile justice.

32. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Rapporteur) said that it would be useful to have more details on the specific laws referred to by Mr. Fassil, and she asked for further information on the news brief regarding the publication of new Civil and Penal Codes and how such codes would be reconciled with traditional customary laws.

33. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that the newly published codes had improved upon previous legislation and he assured Ms. Sandberg that copies of the new codes would be sent to the Committee for their consideration. Furthermore, the Government took a zero-tolerance stance on corruption, highlighted by the fact that legislative provisions had been established to eliminate corruption in both the private and public sector.

34. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), responding to the question on coordination, said that a National Coordinating Committee on the CRC had been set up and had produced its Terms of Reference which clarified the responsibility of all national and regional stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention by creating five-year strategic plans. The implementation of such plans was monitored every six months through meetings and visits. In response to Ms. Aldoseri's question on the availability of the new Comprehensive National Policy for Children, he said that the Policy was in place and served as a document to expedite implementation of the Convention and to make all stakeholders aware of it, including children themselves.

35. With reference to regional transparency, he asserted that all United Nations agencies working in the country would agree that Eritrea was committed to transparency. The information that Ms. Sandberg had provided on the difficulties a Norwegian team had faced when working with the Eritrean National Statistics and Evaluation Office was incorrect. Eritrea did indeed require capacity-building for data collection, which is why the Government sought partners and stakeholders to offer financial assistance.

36. **Mr. Hailemariam** (Eritrea), also speaking about data collection, said that it was untrue to claim that data was not being published. For instance, the Ministry of Education published every year data that was available to the public, and the Eritrea Population and Health Survey (EPHS) was also published every few years. Nonetheless, resources for data collection were limited and the Government was seeking to improve it. In response to Ms. Sandberg, he said that data was published only on certain areas and not on others on account of the lack of capacity in certain sectors. However, information on the budget was publicly available to Eritrean nationals.

37. With regard to instruction on human rights in schools, the Government had spent approximately two years preparing textbooks which were now available for use and civil education was now officially a part of the school curriculum.

38. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea) said that key human rights laws had been translated into local Eritrean languages through funding from the Ministry of Justice. The translated versions had been handed to local communities in order to increase awareness of human rights laws. In response to Ms. Sandberg, he said that the Convention had been translated into six Eritrean languages through funding from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Moreover, other awareness-raising work was being carried out, such as seminars and workshops pertaining to the Convention, and the celebration of Universal Children's Day across all zonal administrations.

39. **Mr. Tesfaselassie** (Eritrea), replying to the question on female genital mutilation (FGM), said that the Government was aware that it was a dangerous practice. The data that the Committee had cited regarding FGM was collected not too long after Proclamation No. 158/2007 was made. Therefore, insufficient time had elapsed for real improvement to have taken place. However, the situation had now changed for the better as awareness had been raised on a national and subregional level, resulting in the understanding among large numbers of the population that FGM was a dangerous practice. It was impossible to say that the practice had been eradicated from society but Eritrea was certainly moving in the right direction.

40. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), in response to the Vice-Chair, said that FGM had been criminalized.

41. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that she would like to know whether arrests had been made following the criminalization of FGM, whether the practice was still continuing in hospitals, and why it was more prevalent among Christians than Muslims.
42. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea) said that FGM had been prohibited across the entire country, including in hospitals. However, given the patriarchal nature of Eritrean society, it remained difficult to enforce the law. The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) was working hard to implement the law with the cooperation of the police and the Ministry of Justice. FGM practitioners had also been made aware of the dangers and such persons were being employed in different sectors in an effort to preserve their income. The information regarding the higher rate of FGM among Christians than Muslims was incorrect.
43. **Mr. Tesfaselassie** (Eritrea), speaking on the same point, said that the reduction in the number of FGM cases was a national achievement and it should not be a matter of concern if the numbers were higher among one religious group than another.
44. **Mr. Hailemariam** (Eritrea), referring to the issue of discrimination against girls, said that it was an issue deeply entrenched in Eritrean culture. Nonetheless, progress had been made in ensuring equality between the sexes, particularly in education. Numerous awareness-raising campaigns had been conducted and literacy programmes for adults had also been launched, all of which had resulted in increased public understanding regarding such issues. With regard to discrimination against ethnic minorities, Eritrea firmly believed in diversity. Nine ethnic groups existed in Eritrea and the Government did not discriminate against any of them. In fact, in many areas, including education, health and social services, the Government gave priority to ethnic groups that were previously disadvantaged, such as those living in remote areas.
45. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), in response to the question on LGBT discrimination, said that it was not an issue as LGBT relations were not practised in Eritrea and, therefore, an awareness-raising programme had not been arranged. He added that same-sex relations were a criminal offence.
46. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea), in response to Ms. Sandberg's question as to whether Eritrea would consider decriminalizing same-sex relations, said that Eritrean society had not reached such a degree of consciousness. Given the culture and influence of ancient civilizations within the country, it would take a long time to change the public's mentality regarding LGBT issues.
47. **Mr. Hailemariam** (Eritrea), responding to Mr. Nelson's request for clarification on how priority was given to minority groups, said that there were disparities in the level of education among the population, based on geographical location, which were the result of the concentration of the efforts of colonial powers on the central area of the country. Consequently, persons residing in the highlands and lowlands, traditionally farmers, had not been exposed to education for as long as those living in central areas. Therefore, the Government had built schools in such areas and had made extra efforts to provide teachers and teaching materials in order to encourage those communities to send their children to school. The same priority had been afforded to remote communities in the field of health care.
48. **Mr. Nelson** said that he was unsure how such action taken by the Government meant that remote communities were being given priority over others and sought clarification on the matter.
49. **Mr. Hailemariam** (Eritrea) said, as an example of the priority given to certain communities, that four regions had been identified as the main beneficiaries of an educational programme worth US\$ 25 million. The Government was trying to bring the development of different regions in line with one another as much as possible. In response

to Ms. Sandberg, he agreed that access to social services was more difficult in remote areas but that investment was being made from the limited resources available in disadvantaged regions.

50. **Mr. Tesfaselassie** (Eritrea) said that the Government had created a new document focusing on the links between health and human rights, as well as the equitable distribution of resources in order to ensure that remote areas, disadvantaged for so long, were able to develop.

51. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea), in response to the question on the best interests of the child, said that paragraphs 6 to 22 of the Replies of the State of Eritrea to the list of issues addressed the question of the best interests of the child.

52. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Rapporteur) disagreed and said that the phrase “best interests” was not used by the State party in the above-mentioned document. Moreover, it had only referred to the consequences that legislation on certain areas, such as custody and adoption, had on children. She would like to know how the consequences for children were assessed by the Government when legislating on a broader spectrum of political issues, including local planning, housing and sanitation.

53. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that the extended family and society took care of the interests of children in Eritrea, obviating any need for the services of psychiatrists.

54. **Mr. Hailemariam** (Eritrea) said that the word “best” might usefully have been included in the report when referring to the interests of the child, but that children’s best interests were certainly taken into account by State institutions.

55. **Mr. Nelson** asked for examples of legislation in which the best interests of the child were mentioned.

56. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that the best interests of the child were referred to in the Civil Code, which had been drafted in collaboration with international experts. Issues related to children were also mentioned in the commercial, maritime and labour codes.

57. **Mr. Tesfaselassie** (Eritrea) said that State institutions always worked in the interests of children, as was borne out by the country’s achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to maternal and child mortality.

58. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea) said that the omission of any women from the delegation was unfortunate, particularly as the National Union of Eritrean Women had taken an active part in preparing the periodic report. On the matter of birth registration, less good results had been achieved in the more remote areas of the country. The Ministry of Local Government ran campaigns to encourage registration and the resultant statistics were compiled by the national statistics office. The birth registration needs of the Somali refugee populations were met by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, but a lack of resources hindered the provision of similar services to the country’s nomadic peoples. Mobile birth registration units had also not yet been used, for the same reason.

59. **Mr. Tesfaselassie** (Eritrea) said that school enrolment drives helped to improve the situation, since a birth certificate was required for enrolment. No charge was made to register a child’s birth.

60. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea) said that no child soldiers had ever been used in Eritrea, even during the struggle for independence. National service was obligatory from the age of 18.

61. **Ms. Khazova** said she would welcome additional information on the situation related to child marriages.

62. **Mr. Gurán** said he would like more details on independent monitoring of the implementation of articles 3 and 12 of the Convention.
63. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that it was now Ministry of Education policy to prohibit the beating of children and the exception in the case of disciplinary purposes that had previously existed had now been removed from legislation.
64. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that the possibility remained that children who did not have birth certificates could be enlisted in the army before they were 18.
65. **Mr. Fassil** (Eritrea) said that such practices did not exist in Eritrea.
66. **Mr. Fessehaie** (Eritrea) said that birth registration rates were improving and that citizens over the age of 18 could also apply for identity cards.
67. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said she would welcome more information on children with disabilities in the State party, and specifically what percentage of children they represented. The publication of the first sign language dictionary was to be commended and it would be interesting to know how many deaf children had access to it. Mention had been made of community rehabilitation for people with disabilities in general; what provision was there for children in particular? Information would be appreciated on any State assistance available to the families of children with serious disabilities and on the current state of the project to encourage school enrolment of children with disabilities, particularly its sources of funding and the enrolment rate achieved. She would like to know whether orthopaedic equipment was available and on what basis.
68. She asked what proportion of the national budget was devoted to health needs. Noting that the under-five mortality rate was still very high, she said she would like more specific information on how the Ministry of Health was addressing both that problem and the infant mortality rate. Was there adequate infrastructure to provide children with access to clean water and sanitation? Further details would also be welcome on the reproductive health services available to adolescents in rural areas and the results achieved in the State party under the African Union Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, New Born and Child Mortality. The periodic report spoke of immunization campaigns for diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus but did not mention poliomyelitis; it would also be interesting to know what was being done to improve vaccination coverage rates in general. It might be useful to link birth registration to the immunization campaigns. What was the distribution of qualified health staff in the country, particularly given the need for midwives and social workers in the outlying regions?
69. In respect of malnutrition, it would be interesting to know whether noma existed in the State party and what was being done to combat micronutrient deficiencies. She would also appreciate information on the HIV/AIDS situation, with particular reference to children, and whether the prevention of mother-to-child transmission was practised, antiretrovirals were available and free and the State party was a partner in the World Bank's HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis Control Project.
70. It would be interesting to know whether any programmes existed to help children, particularly girls, who lived permanently on the street, in contrast to child street traders who were trying to make money for their families. What solutions were proposed by the Ministry with responsibility for children other than imprisonment?
71. **Ms. Sandberg**, noting the disparities in school attendance rates between rural and urban areas, as well as between social groups, said she would like more information on the outcomes of the school attendance programmes introduced in four regions. She said she recognized the challenge posed by getting nomadic children into school, but would like to know whether the Government provided support to cover the hidden costs of primary

schooling and whether the teachers remaining in the country had proper training as well as access to books and other resources.

72. She would welcome clarification on the status of Sawa camp, to which thousands of children were sent for their education after completing grade 11, and specifically an explanation of how it had transitioned from being a military training camp. Reports indicated that many young people chose to flee the country partly because of their fear of what appeared to be indefinite conscription. That had a serious effect on family life and educational opportunities. According to other reports, unsuccessful asylum seekers who returned to the country faced torture, detention and disappearance, and children were often detained with their mothers. Further information on those issues would be appreciated.

73. **Ms. Muhamad Shariff** said she would like information on the results of the policy adopted in 2013 on infant and young child feeding and whether a draft code on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes had been adopted and implemented. It would be interesting to know whether the Ministry of Health had finalized the strategy for adolescent health and information services, whether adolescents were able to access confidential treatment and what the findings were of the study conducted to assess their health problems. More detailed information would also be welcome on the educational and recreational centre for children being built by the Government in Asmara, and other cultural and leisure possibilities available to them.

74. **Mr. Nelson** said he would like to know why the Criminal Code in force until recently had differentiated between children aged 9 to 15 years and those aged 15 to 18 years. He also would like clarification on whether 9-to-15-year-olds could be sentenced to simple imprisonment of between 10 days and 3 years at the discretion of the sentencing judge. He wished to know how many children, of what ages, had been sent to remand facilities, for what offences, and how many children had been imprisoned with their mothers who had attempted to cross the border.

75. **Mr. Gurán** said he would like information on alternative family-based care arrangements for children, including those who were not orphans. The very low adoption figures needed clarification. Did the State party intend to ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption? The State party report mentioned community-based group homes; it would be useful to know who decided where children should be placed and how the homes were monitored.

76. **Ms. Khazova** said she would welcome more information on access to education for adolescent girls. She invited the delegation to comment on reports that girls avoided conscription by marrying and having children early, dropping out of school, and that boys tried to avoid conscription by fleeing the country, meaning that neither were able to complete their education or have any chance of development in the future.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.