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**Third Committee****Summary record of the 15th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 October 2014, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Mesquita Borges . . . . . (Timor-Leste)  
*later:* Mr. Faye (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Senegal)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 26: Social development** (*continued*)

**(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) (A/C.3/69/L.11)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.11: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly*

1. **Mr. Mamani** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the United Nations, by adopting a resolution on that subject by consensus every year, had expressed its unequivocal commitment to implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and further social development initiatives adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session. He drew particular attention to preambular paragraphs 14 and 19 and operative paragraphs 47, 59 and 64. New elements included the decisions and recommendations relating to the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development set out in operative paragraphs 60, 61 and 63.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Panama had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

**(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*) (A/C.3/69/L.10 and A/C.3/69/L.13)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.13: World Youth Skills Day*

3. **Mr. Mamani** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that equipping youth with employable skills was central to achieving goals such as decent work, the promotion of full and productive employment and sustainable and equitable development and contributed to the eradication of poverty. Education systems should provide youth with the skills, knowledge and attitudes sought on the labour market, including soft skills. It was important to emphasize technical and vocational education and

training, while remaining in tune with the aspirations of youth. He drew attention to preambular paragraphs 15 and 18. The declaration of a World Youth Skills Day would give due recognition to the importance of skills development in policies for improving socioeconomic conditions, give youth as well as decision makers and stakeholders an awareness of the importance of acquiring technical skills and provoke discussion on mechanisms and tools to identify current and future needs. Enhancing the quality of technical and vocational programmes would be an investment in human capital that would produce a high return for individuals, businesses and States.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.10: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond*

4. **Ms. Maduhu** (United Republic of Tanzania), introducing the draft resolution and speaking also on behalf of the Philippines, said that the text built on the momentum gained at the first high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development in 2013. She drew attention to paragraphs 1, 4, 7, 12, 14 and 15.

5. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Panama had joined the sponsors.

**(d) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas** (*continued*) (A/69/183; A/C.3/69/L.9)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.9: Literacy for life: shaping future agendas*

6. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia, Liechtenstein and Turkey had become sponsors. Despite the commendable efforts of national governments and strong leadership from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during the United Nations Literacy Decade, literacy remained a distant dream for millions of adults and children worldwide. Increased domestic and global efforts were needed to achieve the Education For All goal of halving the number of illiterate adults by 2015. Preambular paragraphs 7 and 8 were new, while operative paragraphs 5 and 6 had been modified in order to reflect the five strategic axes of the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization on literacy for life: shaping future agendas (A/69/183).

7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Austria, Brazil, Panama and Timor-Leste had joined the sponsors.

**Agenda item 105: Crime prevention and criminal justice** (*continued*) (A/C.3/69/L.2, A/C.3/69/L.3, A/C.3/69/L.4, A/C.3/69/L.5, A/C.3/69/L.7 and A/C.3/69/L.17)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.17: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders*

8. **Mr. Pacunega Manano** (Uganda), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the African Group, said that it was based on General Assembly resolution 68/194. Technical changes had been made to operative paragraph 12 to reflect information contained in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/69/92), while preambular paragraph 14 and operative paragraph 14 were new.

9. The governing body of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had mandated a review on improving the functioning of the Institute, but had not yet received the results, which it would forward to the Secretary-General.

10. **The Chair** drew attention to draft resolutions A/C.3/69/L.2, A/C.3/69/L.3, A/C.3/69/L.4, A/C.3/69/L.5, A/C.3/69/L.6 and A/C.3/69/L.7, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.2: Follow-up to the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*

11. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, with regard to the report requested in paragraph 2, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had indicated that it could be provided on the assumption that the timelines for the submission and processing of documentation were determined in consultation between the Commission on Crime

Prevention and Criminal Justice secretariat and the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

12. With regard to the requests contained in paragraphs 10, 13, 14 and 19, resource requirements had been included under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 to provide for: (a) the preparation of technical research papers for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; (b) participation of the least developed countries in the regional preparatory meetings and in the Congress itself; (c) the travel of staff to the regional preparatory meetings; and (d) the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Thirteenth Congress. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.2 was adopted.*

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.3: Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*

14. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, with regard to the request made in paragraphs 11 and 23, additional extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$632,000 would be required to convene the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Group for four days (eight meetings), with interpretation and documentation services in the six official languages of the United Nations, one professional post at the P-3 level for four months and one General Service post for two months, as well as travel of three staff members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The consolidated working paper referred to in paragraph 12 would serve as pre-session documentation and the report of the Intergovernmental Expert Group referred to in paragraph 11 would serve as a post-session document. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 18, additional extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$634,400 would be required to provide the technical assistance needed. The resources would provide for advisory services missions to eight countries, two professional posts and one General Service post for one year, and one consultant for four months.

15. Should the additional extrabudgetary resources not be provided, the activities would not take place. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications.

16. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.3 was adopted.*

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.4: International cooperation in criminal matters*

17. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the activities requested in paragraphs 8 and 10 would be implemented to the extent that extrabudgetary resources were made available. The activities envisaged in paragraph 14 would be undertaken in 2014 within existing extrabudgetary resources. Thereafter, they would be implemented to the extent that additional extrabudgetary resources were made available. Implementation of the request contained in paragraph 15 would imply tasking the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with the organization of intergovernmental expert group meetings or other implementation modalities for the review of the relevant model treaties on international cooperation in criminal matters. Those activities would be implemented if extrabudgetary resources were made available.

18. Should the additional extrabudgetary resources referred to not be provided, the activities would not take place. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications.

19. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.4 was adopted.*

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.5: United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice*

20. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the request contained in paragraph 11 would require additional voluntary contributions in the amount of \$538,000 to provide for printing costs, four regional events, staff resources (one professional post at the P-4 level for seven months, one professional post at the P-3 level for five months and one General Service post for four months) and one consultant for two months. The request contained in operative paragraph 12 would require additional voluntary contributions in the amount of \$579,300 for missions to 10 countries, staff resources (one professional post at the P-3 level for eight months and a General Service post for four months) and one consultant for five months. The request contained in paragraph 13 would require additional voluntary contributions in the amount of \$822,600 to provide for six regional training events, staff resources (one professional post at the P-4 level for seven months, one professional post at the

P-3 level for five months, a General Service post for four months) and two consultants for 2 and 12 months, respectively.

21. Should the additional extrabudgetary resources not be provided, the activities would not take place. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications.

22. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.5 was adopted.*

23. **Mr. Yip** (Singapore) recalled that Singapore was not a member of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice or of the Economic and Social Council, where the resolution was first adopted. His country would therefore implement the draft resolution to the extent permitted by its national legislation and in accordance with its obligations under the relevant international human rights instruments.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.7: International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences*

24. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the request contained in paragraph 7 would be implemented to the extent that additional extrabudgetary resources were made available. Implementation of the requests contained in paragraphs 8 and 9 would require extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$39,300 for a consultant for three months to assist with the development of the practical assistance tool, which was expected to be a publication of about 90 pages, in English only. If the publication were to be provided in the six official languages, additional extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$197,900 would be required. Handbooks and training manuals would be developed to the extent that additional extrabudgetary resources were made available. The report requested in paragraph 12 would be part of another document to be prepared pursuant to existing reporting obligations and would therefore not require additional resources.

25. The activities mentioned would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications.

26. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.7 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 106: International drug control***(continued)* (A/C.3/69/L.8)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.8: Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016*

27. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, with regard to the substantive and conference servicing of the special session, resources amounting to approximately \$938,800 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, in accordance with established budgetary procedures. Paragraph 6 of the draft resolution referred to the preparatory process as approved by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 57/5, which would be undertaken within the number of meetings already programmed for the biennium 2014-2015. Accordingly, no additional conference servicing resources would be required. The services requested in paragraph 7 could be provided on the assumption that the timelines for the submission and processing of documentation, as well as the dates for the holding of the intersessional meetings, would be determined in consultation between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs secretariat and the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

28. The draft resolution therefore had no programme budget implications for the biennium 2014-2015. The resource requirements amounting to approximately \$938,800 for 2016-2017 would be included in the programme budget for that biennium.

29. *Draft resolution A/C.3/69/L.8 was adopted.*

**Agenda item 64: Promotion and protection of the rights of children** *(continued)*

(a) **Promotion and protection of the rights of children** *(continued)* (A/69/165, A/69/166, A/69/212, A/69/260, A/69/262, A/69/264, and A/69/394-S/2014/684)

(b) **Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children** *(continued)* (A/69/258)

30. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that armed terrorist groups, supported by Arab and other States, were committing horrendous crimes daily against Syrian children and the children of foreign mercenaries, some of whom had arrived from Australia. The groups had filled the children's minds with radicalism and barbarism and forced them to bear

and use arms and participate in atrocities such as beheadings and the stoning of women. The situation had been duly noted in various reports, including one recently issued by the Syrian Center for Policy Research in cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Boys were being turned into walking time bombs and paying with their lives for decisions in which they had played no part. At the same time young girls were being raped by so-called jihadists. For over two years, the Syrian Government had been drawing the attention of the United Nations to the fact that those groups, bolstered by international silence and complicity on the matter, were training children in the ways of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and jihad. Children were sent to special camps administered by ISIL and by the Nusra Front, where they were given new names and turned into suicidal fighters willing to take the lives of the citizens of their own homelands.

31. The murder of children could never be justified, yet the United Nations had not condemned the crimes committed against children by the armed terrorist groups in her country, such as the recent attack on school children in Homs, which had been described in document A/69/421-S/2014/715. The silence of the international community had encouraged the terrorist groups and the States that supported them to continue perpetrating such crimes, to the extent that they boasted of nurturing a junior league of jihadists and regularly published videos and photographs of training camps online to encourage children to join them.

32. She also drew attention to the situation of Syrian children in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, including Turkey. Recruitment of children in the Turkish camps was increasing in full view of the Turkish authorities and should be condemned immediately. It was widely documented in international reports that children were being conscripted and raped in the camps and that the Turkish and Israeli mafias and ISIL were involved in abducting Syrian children from the camps and trafficking in them and in their organs. Her delegation called for an immediate investigation of those grave human rights violations, as well as the prosecution of the terrorist groups that committed them and the States that facilitated them.

33. Her delegation wished to place on record its shock at the double standard employed by the Government of the United States of America, whose

representative had displayed horror at pictures of children killed mercilessly by ISIL in Iraq, while failing to react to the slaughter of children by the very same organization in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past three years. The Vice-President of the United States had acknowledged that his country had indeed overtly sponsored ISIL in the past, not realizing that one day the organization would pose a threat to the United States as well.

34. **Mr. Sylla** (Senegal) said that, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, his delegation welcomed the universal character of the instrument. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the signing of the Convention by the State of Palestine on 2 April 2014 and the increasing number of States who had become party to its first two optional protocols. Over the years, significant progress had been made in reducing child mortality and HIV infection rates and in increasing school attendance worldwide. Consistent efforts had also been made by the Security Council to prevent the recruitment of children by armed forces and the targeting of schools and hospitals in armed conflict, as well as sexual violence in armed conflict. Nevertheless, almost 600 million children still lived in extreme poverty, 58 million of school age did not attend school, and in 2012 about 600 children were dying of AIDS each day. Extreme poverty impacted children's rights considerably, and the root causes of poverty, including its intergenerational transmission, must be tackled in the post-2015 development agenda.

35. In that vein, in October 2013 the Government of Senegal had launched an ambitious free health-care programme for children under 5 years of age that covered medical visits, vaccinations and hospitalization for 2.5 million children. The Government had made children one of the priorities of its national strategy to combat HIV/AIDS and was committed to caring for the 5,400 children aged 14 or less who were living with HIV/AIDS in the country. Senegal already had one of the lowest proportions of infected persons in Africa (0.5 per cent) and was working to end the epidemic by 2030 in line with the commitments assumed at the 2013 Special Summit of the African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

36. In addition to its early childhood programme, which had been praised by UNESCO as a model for managing early childhood development, the Government was now pursuing a long-term (2013-

2025) strategy to improve the quality of education, as the primary-school enrolment rate had reached 94 per cent. The completion rate stood at 66 per cent.

37. *Mr. Faye (Senegal), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

38. **Mr. Marn** (Slovenia) said that the aim of the Convention was to empower children as rights holders rather than just objects of protection. Children must be listened to and included in decisions on matters affecting them. In that regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia and a Slovene non-governmental organization (NGO), the Association of the Friends of Youth, had held a round-table discussion with children and adolescents in April 2014 at which children had expressed concerns over a number of issues, ranging from violations of their rights to education and to privacy in the Internet era, the sexual abuse of children and discrimination. The ensuing recommendations were posted on the webpage of the Slovenian mission to the United Nations in New York.

39. A National Children's Parliament had been meeting since the early 1990s. The discussions at its twenty-fourth session in 2014 had focused on discrimination, equality, poverty, youth unemployment and the influence of media. To increase the participation of children in decision-making, peer mediation had been introduced in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Such mediation was proving to help reduce violence and increase respect for human rights and diversity. In addition, for almost 10 years, the "Our Rights" programme, which aimed to foster non-violent behaviour and empower children to respond to violations, had been imparted in the country's schools. The programme had also been translated into 21 languages and extended to 175,000 children in other countries, most recently in Jordan and Brazil.

40. Children were among the most vulnerable members of society. To protect them from the negative impact that news reporting might have, the coalition of Slovene NGOs working in the field of children's rights, the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Society of Journalists of Slovenia had jointly published guidelines on the media coverage of news events.

41. **Mr. Alshamsi** (United Arab Emirates) said that, since the adoption of the Convention, greater attention had been paid to children's rights, but progress had been uneven and many children still lived in abject poverty. His delegation therefore supported the



inclusion of the protection of the rights of the child in the post-2015 development agenda. International and national efforts needed to be redoubled to end practices such as early and forced marriage, the use of children in armed conflict and to create a world fit for children.

42. His country had implemented a number of measures in that regard. The United Arab Emirates had ratified regional and international conventions on children's rights and enacted national legislation to protect children from violence and exploitation. The Government continued to pay attention to the needs of mothers and children and, in cooperation with the women's union, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and civil society, would soon launch a national strategy for mothers and children. Legal reforms were under way to enhance the status of the child. Education was now compulsory for children aged from 6 to 18 years, and the Federal National Council had enacted a law covering all the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that would serve as the framework for development plans and programmes undertaken by all government agencies.

43. As part of its cooperation with developing countries, the United Arab Emirates had invested in programmes to safeguard the rights of the child, including the right to health. It was one of the main contributors to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, including the Foundation's vaccination programme in Afghanistan and Pakistan and in Jordanian refugee camps. The Ruler of Sharjah and his wife were currently hosting a conference on the protection of refugee children in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Arab Emirates would host the Global Child Forum on the Middle East and North Africa in November 2014. The recent signing by the United Nations and the League of Arab States of an agreement to strengthen the protection of children affected by armed conflict in the Arab world was a welcome development.

44. **Mr. Dempsey** (Canada) said that despite the international community's collective commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of the child and the gains made in school attendance, child mortality and child nutrition, millions still died prematurely from preventable diseases, lacked access to health facilities, were not registered at birth or were married off as

children. Sadly, millions of children continued to live in situations of armed conflict.

45. The abuse of children in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic was intolerable. The depravity of ISIL had forcibly displaced millions of civilians, including over 840,000 children who were suffering multiple hardships. Three million children had been displaced internally within the Syrian Arab Republic. Whole generations had been exposed to the worst forms of violence, and the deliberate targeting and forced recruitment of children by ISIL was an outrage. Canada urged the Security Council to impose sanctions and targeted measures to ensure that those responsible were brought to account.

46. Children must be protected from violence, exploitation and abuse in all forms and in all settings, including the worst forms of child labour, trafficking, sexual violence and forced marriage. Young girls were not war bounty to be passed around amongst violent aggressors. Children must be provided with health care and a quality education, even in precarious situations. Children had the right to be registered at birth and to be given every chance not only to survive, but to thrive. The drafting of the post-2015 development agenda was an opportunity to address children's issues in a systematic manner. Despite significant progress, not all the targets for maternal, neonatal and child health associated with the Millennium Development Goals had been met, and the subject must remain a priority in the new agenda, together with the eradication of child, early and forced marriage.

47. **Mr. De León Huerta** (Mexico) said that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was an ideal opportunity for States to take stock of what had been achieved and what remained to be done in the field of children's rights. Advances to date included the recognition of children as rights holders and actors in the decisions that affected their lives, and the post-2015 development agenda should pave the way for further progress in that respect; however, greater investment in children, the prioritization of their rights and the establishment of indicators of progress would also be required.

48. The protection of children against violence should be viewed as a human rights issue that affected the development of all States. One form of violence that Mexico was currently tackling from a rights-based perspective was bullying, which had increased in

recent years, aggravated by the inappropriate use of technologies and social networks. Mexico was taking a multidimensional approach to tackle bullying in all settings, and the problem was specifically addressed in the country's national human rights programme. A draft resolution on bullying should be submitted to the General Assembly to raise awareness and identify good practices that would enable States to develop mechanisms and increase national capacities for dealing with the problem.

49. Mexico was also working to eliminate child labour. A special interministerial commission to prevent and eliminate child labour and protect adolescents of working age from abuse had been set up in 2013 with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF and with input from civil society organizations such as Save the Children. Mexico was progressively bringing its laws into line with the Convention and other international standards for child protection, and the best interest of the child was enshrined in the Constitution. A protocol to guide the action of judges in cases involving children had been issued by the Supreme Court in 2012. Mexico would continue to work with international human rights mechanisms and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to tackle violence against children, which should be analysed as a social problem exacerbated by economic imbalances and poor-quality education, and to promote the full implementation of the rights of the child.

50. **Ms. Solórzano-Arriagada** (Nicaragua) said that the obligation to fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child was acknowledged in the Constitution of Nicaragua. The Government was required to provide a legal framework that would ensure the balanced development of children and to implement policies and programmes that upheld the best interest of the child at all times. Children comprised just over half the population of Nicaragua and were viewed as rights holders who were entitled to play a leading role in the changes taking place in their lives, their families and their communities. Restoring family values was a Government priority, and the national welfare system had introduced a programme that guaranteed free education, access to health care, sports, art, security and recreation for children at risk. The families of the children, their community and the pertinent institutions were involved, and the programme was improving the quality of life and

succeeding in promoting a solidarity- and values-based culture in the country.

51. The Government was working to lower child mortality to 19 per 1,000 live births in 2015, from 29 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007. A child vaccination campaign would be launched. To uphold the right of children to grow up in a loving family, the special care centres would continue their work to place children in families. By 2016, adoptions were expected to number over 100 each year, and an additional 400 foster homes would be made available for children at risk. Meanwhile, also by 2016, the number of spaces in government day-care centres for the children of working mothers was projected to reach almost 8,000.

52. In 2012-2016, 1.2 million families would be visited and trained in infant care and early childhood health and development, and 160,000 children would be registered in the civil registry through a massive campaign at the neighbourhood and community levels. Efforts to integrate children with disabilities in the education system would continue, and HIV/AIDS orphans would receive special protection, child-support payments and care. In short, Nicaragua was firmly committed to the protection and promotion of children's rights, as demonstrated by the fact that ILO had declared Nicaragua to be free from child labour.

53. **Ms. Salman** (Iraq) said that, since children comprised over half the population in many countries, the protection of their rights was crucial to the forging of stable, crime-free societies. The rights of the child were particularly important in countries facing terrorist attacks by ISIL, where vast swathes of the population, particularly children, were being displaced, abducted or murdered. Terrorist attacks also hampered access to health and education, and in many cases the situation was compounded by abject poverty and malnutrition. Iraq was striving to promote and protect children's rights in such regions. Since 2003, children had been a top priority in the country's development programmes and legislation. Despite the huge obstacles posed by terrorism, progress had been made in implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iraq had ratified together with its first two optional protocols. A special body had been set up to follow up on the observations and recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in relation to the country's periodic reports.



54. A number of initiatives had been launched, and results had been achieved in many areas. Campaigns had been conducted to raise awareness and educate people about the rights of the child. Literacy rates and the level of education had improved, as had the purchasing power of families, which had a positive impact on children. While Iraqi women could now pass on their nationality to their children. More hours of television programming were now suitable for children. Laws prohibiting the recruitment of children as soldiers or for enforced labour, slavery and trafficking had been enacted. Provisions addressing sexual violence included special penalties for cases where the victims were under 18 years of age. Iraq was now preparing a periodic report for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and urged the international community to assist it in ridding the country of the terrorist groups whose barbaric acts prevented the Iraqi people from living normal lives.

55. **Mr. Ruiz** (Colombia) said that Colombia supported the inclusion of early childhood development, health and education among the sustainable development goals and would continue to advocate for targets and indicators that reflected the rights and needs of the child in the post-2015 development agenda. Colombia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its first two optional protocols, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the unlawful recruitment of children was classified as a crime in the Criminal Code. In Colombia, the rights of the child took precedence over the rights of other persons.

56. The development policy of the current Government focused on three interrelated areas: peace, equity and education. Education had been allocated not only the largest portion of the budget, but also the largest budget in the country's history. A special early childhood programme had been implemented with a view to forming a peaceful, healthy and educated generation of citizens. The aim was to offer all children under the age of 5 years high-quality nutrition, early childhood education, day care, health and development opportunities. The programme was being implemented by a national commission with considerable input from local communities and civil society. One million children had been attended in the preceding four-year period, and the goal was to reach all 2.4 million of the poorest children by 2018.

57. Meanwhile, professional development programmes for teachers were planned, and top-scoring secondary-school graduates would be given incentives to pursue a career in teaching. Education was free for all from the age of 2 years until the last year of secondary school, and primary school attendance had reached 100 per cent and secondary school attendance 72 per cent. However, only 46 per cent of youths had access to tertiary education. The Government had therefore established 400,000 scholarships for high-performing students from the poorest sectors. Other measures with a positive impact on children included the expansion of public health, housing and utilities programmes and child benefits for low-income families.

58. The Government's efforts to keep children out of the armed conflict in the country continued. The recruitment of children had been prohibited for 17 years, but armed groups operating outside the law had forced or coerced children into participating. The Government had taken decisive action against such conduct, by prosecuting perpetrators and taking care of the victims. Between 1999 and 2014, 5,506 children had been helped through the special rehabilitation programme for boys and girls who had been separated from illegal armed groups. Efforts to prevent the recruitment of children included an early warning system to identify those at risk, which had been set up in over 130 municipalities with the support of UNICEF.

59. In short, Colombia had made significant progress in child protection. Outstanding challenges included improving opportunities for children with disabilities, reducing teenage pregnancy rates and eliminating child labour.

60. **Ms. Ibrahim** (Ethiopia) said that the Government of Ethiopia had formulated policies and legal reforms aimed at ensuring the compatibility of national laws with the provisions of international human rights instruments relevant to the protection of the rights of children. For example, the Comprehensive National Child Policy focused on development and growth, prevention and protection, and rehabilitation, care and support.

61. Through its health policy, Ethiopia had reduced the under-5 mortality rate three years ahead of the deadline. Primary education was free and all children were encouraged to attend school. The Government continued to allocate more resources to education and

the primary net enrolment rate had consequently increased from 57.4 per cent in 2003/04 to 85.9 per cent in 2012/13.

62. Female genital mutilation (FGM), marriage by abduction and early marriage were all punishable under the penal code of Ethiopia. The Government had established the Universal Forum to deal with harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse and violence. FGM prevalence had dropped from 74 per cent in 2005 to 23 per cent in 2011, the prevalence of marriage by abduction had dropped from 23.3 per cent in 1997 to 12.7 per cent in 2009/10 and early marriage prevalence had dropped from 33.1 per cent in 1997 to 8 per cent in 2013/14. The Government had included provisions criminalizing trafficking of children for the purposes of sexual or labour exploitation in the Criminal Code.

63. Ethiopia had set the minimum age of recruitment to the armed forces at 18 years, including for volunteers, and the recruitment process was conducted in a very responsible manner. In addition to ratifying the ILO Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, Ethiopia had revised its Labour Proclamation to stipulate the working conditions for young workers and prohibit the employment of young persons in occupations that might endanger their life or health. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had adopted a National Action Plan (2011-2018) to prevent child labour exploitation.

64. The Constitution explicitly prohibited laws, customs and practices that caused bodily or mental harm to children. As part of efforts to counter violence against children, and child-friendly benches, child protection units and special prosecution units were operating throughout Ethiopia.

65. **Mr. Milubi** (South Africa) said that international cooperation was an important mechanism in combating the activities of international crime syndicates operating in the area of child trafficking. His delegation condemned the acts harmful to children that were perpetrated by militias such as Boko Haram. The United Nations system, working in partnership with Member States, should develop, adopt and implement sustainable and context-specific strategies for the prevention of the sale of children and for their protection. His delegation remained deeply concerned by the plight of children in situations of armed conflict, which continued to affect children disproportionately. There should be no impunity for perpetrators of serious

crimes committed against children in conflict and post-conflict settings. International instruments, including the relevant optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, provided guidelines on how to address the protection of children in armed conflict.

66. Children's issues received significant attention in South Africa's national agenda, with increasing legislative action, policy intervention and information campaigns to safeguard children's right to freedom from violence. The Government of South Africa had directed substantial resources to early childhood development and to equal and high-quality education. With regard to the MDGs, it had achieved universal primary education before the target date of 2015, and significant progress had been made towards gender parity in schools. The Government had launched the Integrated School Health Package to provide schools with on-site health education and health services.

67. A comprehensive set of initiatives to reduce child mortality rates were in place. The Government had prioritized the health needs and rights of children who were socially vulnerable, living in poverty and residing in rural areas, as well as those affected by HIV/AIDS. The Government's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS were bearing fruit with recent statistics showing a decline in the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. As part of its anti-poverty interventions, the Government had implemented a social protection system for children, providing child support grants to families.

68. **Ms. Andelić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that it was important to accelerate the universal realization of child rights by fostering greater social inclusion of the most vulnerable and excluded children and families, including children from minorities, especially the Roma. Bosnia and Herzegovina had established the Council of Children in 2013 to serve as a new tool for the development, coordination and realization of agreements for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She reiterated her country's support for the Delivering as One approach with the aim of having a stronger, more coordinated and more efficient United Nations presence in the country.

69. Bosnia and Herzegovina had recently achieved and adopted numerous laws for the protection of children. It had followed very closely the matter of the issuance of identity numbers for newborn children.

70. As one of the first countries to have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the

Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina attached particular importance to the issue of children in armed conflicts and to the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign.

71. As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed its gratitude to the United Nations country team for its supportive role during the floods and landslide emergency in her country in May 2014 and to UNICEF for providing essential services to children and families affected by the disaster.

72. Education and culture had been identified as critical areas that could help dialogue and reconciliation to take deeper root in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the post-conflict period. Based on that initiative, the “Dialogue for the Future” United Nations joint project had been developed. Bosnia and Herzegovina also hoped that the “two schools under one roof” phenomenon, which was a reality in some parts of the country, would soon be completely abolished.

73. **Ms. Sánchez** (Honduras) said that the migration of unaccompanied children, a crisis affecting her region, was caused by violence, drug trafficking, poverty, inequality, social exclusion, lack of opportunities, domestic abuse, family reunification, trafficking in persons and the false perception that a child or family with a child reaching the United States would not be returned. The report published recently by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees entitled “Children on the Run” had found that 58 per cent of boys and girls from Mexico and Central America in a situation of irregular migration in the United States claimed to have been “forcibly displaced” by armed criminal groups. The Joint Task Force for Migrant Children, established by Honduras in July 2014, had collected data showing that the numbers of unaccompanied children entering the United States from Honduras had increased by 1.67 per cent in 2014 compared to 2013.

74. In July 2014, having declared a humanitarian crisis, the Government of Honduras had mobilized the national social protection system to assist children and families, repatriate them in a dignified and organized manner, reintegrate them into their families, communities and schools, and create opportunities for families with a view to preventing irregular migration to other countries. A large proportion of children who

had been returned together with their mothers had been reintegrated into their schools, while the mothers had been provided with training opportunities or decent work. Social reintegration programmes were being developed in Honduras to facilitate the return of migrants to the education system and ensure their access to health care, security, protection from violence and economic opportunities.

75. The response to the crisis should be based on the principle of shared responsibility, integration and coordination. The efforts of countries of origin, transit and destination should be coordinated, with a strong commitment from all actors, including Government, civil society, the private sector and regional and international bodies.

76. **Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) said that, in his country, efforts had been focused on overcoming poverty and creating conditions that enabled children and their families to exercise their rights effectively. The Government of Chile had made it a priority to ensure that children should not suffer discrimination on grounds of their religion, gender, social origin, migration status, culture or skills.

77. Work was underway to increase the coverage and quality of early childhood education programmes, which were essential to achieve the full intellectual, emotional and social potential of children. It was hoped to increase the number of children between 3 and 5 years of age in education by almost 88 per cent. Chile was also seeking to extend the pioneering initiative “Chile Grows with You”, which had been established in 2009, to children up to the age of 8 years. The Government was reforming the education system at all levels in order to provide inclusive education of a high quality, without regard to family income. It had sent a bill to Congress to establish a deputy secretariat for education focusing on preschool education.

78. In order to improve the daily lives of children, the Government had been working to modify, strengthen and adapt the institutional framework. The President of Chile had established the National Council on Childhood, which focused on promoting the rights of children and adolescents and ensuring the protection of those rights through appropriate legal instruments and social policies.

79. The Government was strengthening technical cooperation with international partners in order to

detect any gaps or shortcomings in the promotion and protection of the rights of children and in its compliance with international obligations.

80. **Mr. Alharari** (Libya) said that his delegation emphasized its commitment to the highest international standards for protecting children, in accordance with international and regional instruments. The Government of Libya had established a new vision for the future of the country to guarantee the welfare of the people.

81. Law No. 95 of 1975 on education provided that education was mandatory up to the intermediate level and was free for all Libyans, male and female. The Ministry of Education had launched an initiative to use modern communication methods to reach out to parents and include them in the education process, with a view to improving performance, contributing ideas and combating the problems that had accumulated in education over the years.

82. Libya supported the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign, which fostered cooperation with Governments to put an end to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts by 2016. He highlighted the call by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for donors to extend sufficient financing for the campaign.

83. Libya expressed its regret at the deteriorating situation of Palestinian children in the occupied Arab territories and condemned the recent crimes perpetrated in Gaza. The international community should fulfil its commitment to protecting the Palestinian children in the occupied territories.

84. **Ms. Abdulbaqi** (Saudi Arabia) said that Saudi Arabia’s commitment to strengthen the promotion and protection of the rights of the child was based not only on its obligations under the Convention, but also on Islamic sharia, which made provision for the interests of children without discrimination based on colour, race, sex, sect or religion.

85. Saudi Arabia had achieved the Millennium Development Goal related to universal primary education in 2011. It had increased the number of nursery schools and their level of service. In 2011, 2,323 such schools had served 141,422 children, compared to 1,521 schools serving 106,301 children in 2009.

86. The Ministry of Health had adopted a programme to monitor the health of mothers and children during pregnancy and until the child reached 5 years of age. Immunization coverage had reached 98 per cent.

87. The Child Protection Act was designed to protect children from all forms of violence, raise public awareness of children’s right to life and prohibit any actions that could be detrimental to the safety or physical and psychological health of children. A national committee had developed a number of programmes with objectives related to children including, inter alia, the “Substructure” programme, which aimed to improve child early education, an initiative to raise media awareness of childhood issues, and a programme to train teachers in the early detection of cases of violence, the best ways of addressing such cases and how to prevent any further occurrence.

88. With regard to the child’s right to be heard and respected in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, a conference had been co-organized by the Health Affairs department, the National Family Safety Programme and Child Helpline International.

89. The international community must address the challenges facing children in all regions of conflict and their impact on children’s psychological, physical, mental and developmental health. It was regrettable that the international community remained silent and failed to realize that it would pay the price when it found itself in confrontation with a generation that believed in nothing but violence and a clash of civilizations rather than dialogue.

90. **Ms. Daud** (Brunei Darussalam) said that her country had been able to meet the Millennium Development Goals for the reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases thanks to its efforts in improving the lives of its people through its National Vision 2035. Children enjoyed a number of benefits to support their development, including free health care and medical services. Brunei Darussalam’s commitment to children’s welfare and the protection and promotion of their rights was demonstrated by the enactment of several pieces of legislation, which were further strengthened by international instruments.

91. Brunei Darussalam had introduced a number of programmes to strengthen and empower families,

including the provision of premarital courses for young couples, awareness campaigns on reproductive health, chronic diseases and domestic violence, and the provision of welfare assistance to needy families. Such programmes had been instrumental in helping families provide a strong foundation for children. A special committee on the family and women had been set up to coordinate the implementation of an action plan on strengthening the family.

92. Young people made up the largest proportion of unemployed people in Brunei Darussalam. They often lacked education, experience and a serious attitude to work. Young people needed to upgrade their skills and acquire self-motivation and confidence. To that end, Brunei Darussalam had provided basic training and programmes in areas such as computing, accounting and language skills, in addition to organized career talks, roadshows and job fairs.

*The meeting rose at 6.00 p.m.*