



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Thirty-seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)* OF THE 972nd MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 13 September 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRPERSON declared open the thirty-seventh session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Ms. IZE-CHARRIN (Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the High Commissioner for Human Rights wished to convey her deepest sympathy for the families of the victims of the recent hostage-taking in Beslan in the Russian Federation. Since nearly half of the 330 people killed in that tragedy were children, it was essential that the Committee should continue its ongoing efforts on behalf of children worldwide.

3. On 25 August 2004, the Secretary-General had appointed Ms. Mehr Khan Williams Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms. Khan Williams had worked for the United Nations since 1976, including in a number of senior management posts in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). With the experience and knowledge she had acquired during her years at UNICEF, she would no doubt be very supportive of the work of the Committee.

4. Among the new mandates established during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos of Costa Rica had been appointed Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to education. The Secretariat was in the process of organizing a meeting between Mr. Villalobos and the Committee during the Committee's thirty-seventh session.

5. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had continued its efforts to implement the Secretary-General's agenda for reform as outlined in his 2002 report, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). Draft guidelines for an expanded core document and proposals for harmonized reporting guidelines and methods of work had been thoroughly discussed by participants to the sixteenth Meeting of Chairpersons of Human Rights Treaty Bodies and the third Inter-Committee Meeting, both held in Geneva in June 2004. A mechanism for further consultations among committees on that draft document had been established and a rapporteur had been appointed to collect the views of the seven core international human rights treaty bodies, which included the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The rapporteur would consult with the Committee in order to obtain its views during the current session.

6. The Secretariat fully supported the issues that the Committee planned to discuss at the thirty-seventh session in connection with its methods of work. She was encouraged by the fact that the Committee's forward-looking initiative - the "two chambers proposal" - would be discussed in New York at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

7. The Committee's annual discussion day on "implementing child rights in early childhood", which over 100 participants were expected to attend, highlighted an important theme that often tended to be forgotten. The Committee's continuing efforts to draft general comments on the Convention were essential to fostering an understanding of, and respect for, the provisions and principles of the Convention.

8. Regional consultations would soon be held in various parts of the world in conjunction with the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. She hoped that the independent expert who conducted the Study, Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, would have an opportunity to brief the Committee on recent developments in that area.

9. As part of an agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of the African Union, three members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child would visit the Committee during its current session. Ms. Joyce Aluoch, who was both a member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Chairperson of the African Committee, was in a unique position to act as a liaison between the two expert bodies that shared the same aims.

10. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee joined with the High Commissioner in condemning the hostage-taking in Beslan, and expressed its sympathy for the victims. The Committee would participate actively in the reform of the human rights reporting and review system.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CRC/C/141)

11. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES

12. Mr. DAVID (Secretary of the Committee) said that, since its previous session, the Committee had received one initial report, from St. Lucia, two second periodic reports, from Thailand and Latvia, and one third periodic report, from Colombia, bringing the total to 182 initial reports, 88 second periodic reports and 12 third periodic reports. Of those reports, the Committee had considered 236. To date, 12 initial reports and 85 second periodic reports were overdue.

13. The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict had been ratified by 78 States parties. Subsequent to those ratifications, the Committee had received 5 initial reports, from Finland, Austria, Italy, Andorra and Switzerland; 32 initial reports were overdue.

14. The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified by 79 States parties. Subsequent to those ratifications, the Committee had received 5 initial reports, from Morocco, Italy, Kazakhstan, Andorra and Iceland; 34 initial reports were overdue.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES

15. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Islamic Republic of Iran had requested and been granted a postponement of the consideration of its report until the next session of the Committee.

DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION

16. The CHAIRPERSON said that, at is current session, the Committee would hold a day of general discussion devoted to the question of implementing child rights in early childhood.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.30 a.m.