



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
5 June 2012

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child Sixtieth session

Summary record of the 1700th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 30 May 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Zermatten

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties

Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Cyprus (CRC/C/CYP/3-4; CRC/C/CYP/Q/3-4 and Add.1; HRI/CORE/CYP/2011)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Cyprus took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Papageorgiou** (Cyprus) said that the Cypriot Government had always attached great importance to respecting and protecting children's rights. However, the Government was not in a position to guarantee the universal application of children's rights since a third of the country had been occupied by foreign military personnel since 1974. Consequently, the information contained in the periodic report only concerned the part of the country that was under the effective control of the Cypriot Government.
3. The appointment of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights in 2007 had been a major development in the promotion of children's rights. The Commissioner had a broad mandate, which was fully compatible with the Paris Principles and the Committee's general comment No. 2, and could act as the legal representative of a child to ensure that they were heard and that their best interests were taken into account. The Youth Advisory Committee met every two months in order to present children's views to the Commissioner.
4. The Government had also demonstrated its commitment to children's rights by ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and had submitted a proposal for signing the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure to the Council of Ministers for approval. Furthermore, legislation concerning the protection of young people in the workplace had been amended to guarantee proper working conditions for young people aged between 15 and 19. The Government had also submitted a bill aimed at streamlining adoption laws and laying down clear and effective procedures that took into account the best interests of the child.
5. In 2001, a children's rights NGO had established the Children's Parliament in order to guarantee the participation of children in decision-making processes. The Children's Parliament was composed of 80 members aged between 12 and 18 and met every two months. Once a year, the Children's Parliament presented its views to the House of Representatives at a special sitting, which was attended by members of Parliament and various Government representatives. Children's participation was also encouraged through seminars organized for parents and children by the Pedagogical Institute.
6. In general, children aged over 12 could speak before the Family Court. In criminal investigations, police officers could obtain a video recording of children's statements, which could subsequently be presented in criminal courts. In addition, specialized judges were appointed to preside over cases involving children and courtrooms were equipped with technology that allowed children to give evidence from a separate room in the presence of a competent adult.
7. Education was compulsory until the age of 15 and was provided free of charge to children aged between 4 years and 8 months and 18 years. Public educational institutions enrolled pupils irrespective of their gender, ability, language, skin colour, religion, ethnic background or the residential status of their parents. The Government considered early childhood to be a priority and had made pre-primary education compulsory as of September

2004. Children who attended public kindergartens received free pre-primary education. Moreover, the Government had launched a reform programme with the aim of modernizing the Cypriot education system. The Government designated areas that were home to disadvantaged students as “zones of educational priority”. It provided additional resources to schools located in those zones in an effort to reduce the number of school dropouts and functional illiteracy. Special needs children were integrated into mainstream schools by means of a programme designed to meet their individual needs and which was in keeping with the principles of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.

8. In recent years, the prevalence of antisocial behaviour in schools had been a cause for concern. In an effort to address that problem, a number of preventive programmes had been launched. Those programmes often focused on combating school failure, which was a major cause of bullying and violence in schools. Furthermore, a national action plan to prevent and combat domestic violence for the period 2008–2013 had been adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Government also recognized the importance of mobilizing NGOs in that endeavour and had provided financial and technical assistance to run crisis centres, shelters, seminars and children’s helplines.

9. One of the greatest challenges facing the Government was that of improving its data-collection system. The country’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union would provide an opportunity to develop indicators to measure child poverty and children’s well-being with a special focus on children’s rights.

10. The Government regretted the delay in establishing a modern legal framework for children. The bills concerning child welfare, child protection, day and residential care services would be submitted for verification by the end of 2012. In addition, a new legislative framework on juvenile justice was still being discussed by the relevant ministries and the House of Representatives.

11. **Mr. Gastaud** (Country Rapporteur), recalling that the Convention enjoyed supra-legislative and infra-constitutional status in Cypriot law, asked whether compliance with the Convention was subject to judicial review and whether the Convention was frequently invoked before the courts and the administrative authorities. Noting that the adoption of recent laws had helped modernize the Cypriot legal system, he enquired as to the current status of the bills concerning child welfare, young people at work, adoption, violence in the home and juvenile justice. He also wished to know whether the inclusion of provisions of the Convention in the amended Manual of Operations for social welfare services was indicative of their absence from other legislative norms.

12. Despite the fact that the law insisted on the independence of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children’s Rights, the fact remained that the Commissioner’s office was funded from the Government budget. Moreover, the fact that the office was staffed by public servants from various governmental departments could prove problematic. He would like to know the authority to which the Commissioner reported and whether the office produced a report on its activities. In that connection, he enquired as to how a child or a group of children could refer a case to the Commissioner.

13. Despite the fact that the definition of a child set out in article 1 of the Convention had been incorporated into the Cypriot legal system and had been enshrined in a number of domestic legislative provisions, there were still significant omissions with regard to the legal working age in Cyprus and compulsory education, as well as contradictions concerning the age of criminal responsibility.

14. He noted with concern that certain forms of discrimination appeared to persist in the educational sphere and affected children belonging to minorities and migrant children in particular. He enquired as to whether victims of discrimination could lodge a complaint

with the Commissioner. He wished to know whether the small number of cases of discrimination recorded was attributable to the general lack of data collection or to other factors.

15. Noting that numerous initiatives intended to disseminate the provisions of the Convention among police officers and judges had been launched, the Committee would be interested to know whether those persons had received adequate basic training and whether the Government was aware of any cases of criminal penalties being prescribed for offences. In view of the fact that training was mostly provided in the form of seminars, he was of the opinion that those seminars only served to complement basic training and did not constitute training in their own right. In that connection, he asked whether attendance at the seminars was compulsory.

16. He wished to know how the right of the child to be heard was guaranteed in schools and in the family sphere and whether there was a remedy available should parents, guardians or teachers infringe that right. With regard to the Children's Parliament, he enquired as to whether its competence was exclusive or shared, or whether it had a consultative role. He would also like to receive additional information on the role of the Youth Advisory Committee in relation to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights.

17. In reality, data collection was virtually non-existent in Cyprus. He recalled that data collection was essential, not just for assessing the current situation in the country, but also for predicting future situations. The Committee had received information to the effect that the Commissioner was now responsible for data collection but lacked the human, financial and technical resources to perform that task.

18. **Ms. Nores de García** asked whether the laws against violence extended to all spheres where violence could occur. She wished to know whether the national action plan to prevent and combat domestic violence for the period 2008–2013 was subject to evaluation. In addition, she would be interested to know whether anyone had been arrested for committing acts of violence against children and whether legal proceedings had been initiated against them. She noted with concern that the children of displaced mothers continued to receive unequal treatment and had difficulty in obtaining refugee status, which prevented them from exercising a number of their rights.

19. **Mr. Guráň** said that the appointment of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights in 2007 had been a positive development but that the Committee would welcome additional information on the accessibility of the mechanism, its mandate, the number of complaints it had received and how those complaints were handled. He also enquired as to the reasons behind the State party's reduced participation in children's rights activities at the European level and hoped that hosting the presidency of the Council of the European Union would provide the Government with an opportunity to pursue its children's rights agenda more actively.

20. **Mr. Kotrane** said that he would like to know whether judges and legal practitioners were generally aware of the Convention and its primacy over domestic law, of the steps the Government had taken to ensure its dissemination and effective application and of the cases in which its provisions had been invoked by judges.

21. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked whether, aside from the 2007–2008 national campaign against domestic violence and child abuse, any educational or other measures had been taken to combat such violence and abuse. Information would also be welcome on whether the Welfare, Care and Protection of Children Bill contained any provisions on positive discipline and corporal punishment.

22. **Mr. Madi** said that, while the adoption of laws and amendments to existing legislation was welcome, it seemed that further measures needed to be taken to promote tolerance and multiculturalism, particularly within the education system. The concept of strengthening religious and ethnic identity appeared to be one of the goals of the education system, and yet it was contrary to the principle of non-discrimination. Furthermore, during its examination of the State party's previous report, the Committee had expressed concern at the discriminatory attitude towards children born out of wedlock and Cypriot children of Turkish origin with regard to the acquisition of nationality. He asked whether any progress had been made in that area.

23. **Ms. Maurás Pérez**, while welcoming the examples provided of children's rights to freedom of speech, to receive information and to participate, said that many of the relevant mechanisms predated the comment in the report of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights that children's freedom of speech and right to participate was probably the weakest link in the State party's application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It seemed that there was a need to break down the cultural resistance to children's participation.

24. **Ms. Al-Shehail** asked for further information on the practical application of the principle of equality and non-discrimination on grounds of age, religion, ethnicity, nationality and disability.

25. **Mr. Pollar**, noting that the Convention was founded on three basic principles set out in article 6, the right to life, survival and development, asked for further information regarding the deaths of children due to illness, accidents, crime and suicide.

26. **Ms. Aidoo** said that she would appreciate clarification regarding the allocation of resources for children. She asked why the proportion of expenditure on child benefit had remained almost constant over a five-year period, when the number of children and State revenues must have changed over that period. Under article 4 of the Convention, States parties were obliged to allocate resources specifically to children as rights-holders. How could the level of resources allocated to children be evaluated when they were sometimes merged into the family and social services budgets? And how were resources monitored to ensure that they actually benefited children, particularly children in disadvantaged or vulnerable communities?

27. She wondered whether the State party had considered using child-sensitive budgeting to monitor and evaluate the use of resources allocated to children. More information on the resources allocated to the Ombudsman would also be welcome.

28. While she welcomed the broad range of expertise represented by the delegation, it would have been useful to have a representative of the Ministry of Finance present, as the implementation of the Convention depended not only on political will but also on the allocation of resources.

29. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked what progress had been made in setting up a database to store, collect and analyse data relating to implementation of the Convention, and whether any data had already been collected. She said it would be useful to know what system was in place to allow children to report corporal punishment, whether there were any data available on such reports and what action had been taken in response to them. Further information on the database on domestic violence would also be welcome: was there a helpline for reporting domestic violence?

30. **Ms. Varmah** said that, although freedom of religion was protected by law, it appeared that children of Greek Orthodox parents were marginalized in State schools because of their or their parents' religion. She asked if the delegation could explain whether the issue would be addressed by the ongoing reform to the State school system, how it

would be ensured that the religions of children from different ethnic or religious backgrounds were respected and whether religious education would be included in the new curriculum. She also asked if the delegation could provide information on any measures to educate the general public to ensure that children were able to enjoy their freedom of religion. It would be interesting to know whether Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots had free access to sites of religious and cultural significance.

31. **Ms. Al-Asmar** asked whether the Children's Law of 1956 remained in force, noting that it appeared to permit the use of corporal punishment.

32. **The Chairperson** said that no information had been provided on the coordination of action between ministries. Given that the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights could not act as the coordinating mechanism, he asked whether there were mechanisms to coordinate between the central and the local authorities in order to ensure that Government decisions were implemented in practice.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.25 a.m.

33. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that the Convention took precedence over domestic legislation and that judges had referred to it on several occasions. The Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights had provided judges with special training on issues related to the implementation of the Convention.

34. The new Children's Law and four sets of regulations on minimum standards for day-care programmes for school-age children and children in residential care were due to be legally vetted in 2012. The Adoption Law was under review by a parliamentary committee. The juvenile justice bill was being discussed by the relevant ministries and the House of Representatives, and the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights had been invited to produce a report on the bill. The Government's decision to introduce specialized judges and courtrooms for children and families should speed up the enactment of the bill.

35. **The Chairperson** asked whether information on the Convention was provided to lawyers, as well as judges. The adoption of the new Children's Law and the review of the Adoption Law seemed to be taking a long time, and he wondered what was behind the slow progress.

36. **Mr. Kotrane** said that, while it was good to know that the Convention had been invoked in court, he would also like to know if it had been a factor in any decisions by judges.

37. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that programmes existed to train lawyers on the Convention. The delay in adopting the Children's Law was due to the fact that replacing old legislation and regulations was an ambitious undertaking, with a number of stages to be completed before the final draft could be vetted.

38. **Mr. Veis** (Cyprus), responding to a question by Ms. Wijemmane, said that police data on cases and incidents of violence were registered in a database on an annual basis and that the data were available online. The data were disaggregated by sex and, for children, by age. The most recent data indicated that the majority of those who complained about incidents of violence were women, although children also filed complaints, and the majority of the accused were men. Complaints by children were split equally between the sexes.

39. The police tracked every case of domestic violence and monitored the final outcome. Almost half of the 4,000 cases of domestic violence reported in the period 2005–2008 had resulted in a criminal investigation. The data available were periodically analysed by the police and published. Domestic violence would be a key theme for the upcoming Cypriot

presidency of the Council of the European Union and a conference for experts in domestic violence would be held in July 2012.

40. The significantly lower attrition rate for cases of child abuse as compared to cases of domestic violence indicated the authorities' firm stance on the offence of child abuse. Instruction on how to handle investigations and trials involving children was provided to police officers as an integral part of their training and emphasized that, all else being equal, the child's best interests were the determining factor in any decision. There were numerous examples of that principle being applied in practice.

41. Section 54 of the Children's Law, which was outdated, would be removed during the revision process in 2012. Corporal punishment was not permitted in any sphere; the Ministry of Education had issued an order stating that the use of corporal punishment in schools was prohibited and the Manual of Operations for social welfare services explicitly stated that children could not be subjected to corporal punishment or degrading behaviour in their homes. Acts that came under the definition of corporal punishment were considered offences and led to prosecution. Every year there were a number of cases of child abuse, many leading to convictions, and those brought before the courts included cases of child abuse committed by teachers and carers. One recent case involved carers and teachers abusing children at a school for children with special needs.

42. He recalled that the age of criminal responsibility had been raised from 10 or 12 years, depending on the nature of the offence, to 14 years, irrespective of the offence committed, and noted that 14 years was the most common age of criminal responsibility, both in Europe and internationally. There were no plans to amend the age of criminal responsibility and statistics indicated that most children under 16 who were accused of a crime were not prosecuted but were subjected to alternative measures. Most children convicted of a crime received alternative sentences, such as community service, and the number of children in prison was very low.

43. **The Chairperson** commended the State party for its thorough collection of data on various types of violence and encouraged it to make similar efforts across all spheres relating to the rights of the child. He was concerned, however, by the absence of a national statistical institute that could provide a global view of the situation of the rights of the child.

44. **Mr. Tsiakkiros** (Cyprus) said that the main objective of the educational reform currently under way was to create a democratic, student-focused education system that was inclusive of all children without discrimination. Through in-service training for teachers, the Ministry of Education and Culture was encouraging the use of new teaching approaches to promote multicultural education. It had also developed a strategic plan to facilitate the smooth integration of students from different cultural backgrounds, particularly migrant, refugee and asylum seeking children, and to meet their linguistic and cultural needs. Areas with a significant population of students that were disadvantaged or were non-native speakers of Greek were treated as educational priority zones.

45. Student council members attended monthly meetings with the school administration and teacher representatives, where they participated in decision-making on matters affecting life in school. Secondary students were entitled to a hearing before any disciplinary action was taken against them. Any complaints against schools regarding breaches of that regulation were investigated by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

46. Students in public primary and secondary schools were required to attend religious education classes. However, students who were not of the Greek Orthodox faith could be exempted from such classes upon their parent's or guardian's request, and secondary students could also be exempted from attending religious services if a request was submitted by their parent or guardian, or by the students themselves if they were over 16 years of age. The curricula and textbooks used in religious education were being revised to

follow a multiple-perspective approach to religious studies, and representatives of religious groups had been consulted in that revision process.

47. **Ms. Konstantinou** (Cyprus) said that the Civil Registry Law had been amended in 2007 to allow children of internally displaced persons to obtain a certificate proving their status regardless of whether the parent in question was the mother or the father. A further amendment passed in January 2012 allowed children of internally displaced mothers to benefit from various housing schemes.

48. **Ms. Azina-Chronides** (Cyprus) said that all children in Cyprus had equal access to public health services. The Government recognized, however, that inequalities might exist at the prenatal stage, and it offered positive parenting programmes and prenatal examinations to address those inequalities. Several health services such as vaccinations and paediatric examinations were offered free of charge to all children. In 2009 a health monitoring unit had been established within the Ministry of Health. Cyprus was the first country in the European Union to have established a national plan to prevent injuries among children.

49. **The Chairperson** asked the delegation to provide further information about traffic accidents, homicides and suicides involving children.

50. **Ms. Azina-Chronides** (Cyprus) said that the Ministry of Health made great efforts, in cooperation with the World Health Organization, to prevent traffic accidents, homicides and suicides, and that the rates of occurrence were similar to those in other European countries.

51. **Mr. Veis** (Cyprus) said that a large percentage of traffic accident victims were children and young adults. In order to remedy that situation, for the past several years the police and relevant authorities had taken many measures to reduce road accident fatalities and injuries, especially among children. Those measures included awareness-raising campaigns and increased restrictions and penalties for young drivers. The number of child victims of homicide was very low, both in number and as a percentage of homicide victims.

52. **Ms. Nores de García** asked whether, following the aforementioned amendment of the Civil Registry Law, any differentiation remained with regard to the benefits granted to children of internally displaced mothers.

53. **Mr. Papageorgiou** (Cyprus) said that some differences still remained and that the delegation would provide further details at the next meeting.

54. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that it was true that information on budgetary expenditures for children was often integrated into the expenditures for families. While the percentage of the budget allocated to child benefits appeared to have remained stable from 2003 to 2007, spending per child had actually increased, since children now represented a smaller proportion of the total population. Despite the economic crisis, the resources allocated to children had for the most part remained the same or had even increased.

55. **The Chairperson** said that it was difficult to evaluate the budgetary information provided without knowing what percentage of the budget for each domain was allocated to children. Regardless of what proportion of the total population was represented by children, the fact remained that the percentage of the budget allocated to child benefits had not increased. It would be helpful if, at the next meeting, the delegation could provide more detailed information about the budget for children from a holistic rather than sectoral viewpoint.

56. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure had been submitted to the Council of Ministers and was expected to be approved in the coming weeks.

57. **The Chairperson** asked if she was referring to approval for the signature or ratification of the Optional Protocol.
58. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that a decision would first be taken to sign the Optional Protocol and then eventually to ratify it.
59. **Mr. Veis** (Cyprus) said that since 2005 the police had kept records of racially motivated offences, and as of 2011 children had been involved in 29 per cent of all such incidents. They represented 10 per cent of complainants and 23 per cent of offenders in racially motivated offences. The investigation and prosecution of such cases involving children posed a great challenge, because the principle of the best interests of the child must be applied to both complainants and offenders. While the Government must take a firm stance against racism, it also needed to be flexible when dealing with child offenders.
60. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that ministries dealing with children included the Convention in the core training of their staff, and the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights also delivered seminars on children's rights for Government officials.
61. **The Chairperson** requested further information on the basic training provided for professionals working in Government ministries. As for in-service training, while seminars on the rights of the child were a positive step, just two or three days of training were not enough. He wondered if other forms of training were provided to ensure that the best interests of the child were at the heart of all decisions taken within the judicial system and Government ministries.
62. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that her answer had referred to in-service training and that she would provide information on basic academic training for professionals at a later time.
63. **Mr. Veis** (Cyprus) said that the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights delivered a seminar on the rights of the child as part of the mandatory basic training for all police officers. The Convention was also included in the multidisciplinary in-service training offered to police officers at several levels, such as the training required for promotion and the specialized courses on issues relating to children.
64. **The Chairperson** noted that in 2007 Cyprus had signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and asked if the State party had ratified it.
65. **Ms. Tapanidou** (Cyprus) said that the process to ratify that Convention was still at the signature stage and that an interdepartmental committee had recently been established to examine the measures that were needed in order to ratify that Convention. It was hoped that the Convention would be ratified by 2013.
66. **Ms. Nores de García** asked if there were any plans to conduct an evaluation of the 2008–2013 national action plan to prevent and combat domestic violence.
67. **Mr. Veis** (Cyprus) said that an advisory committee on preventing and combating domestic violence, comprising representatives from State agencies and NGOs, had been assigned the task of monitoring the implementation of the action plan. That committee was currently conducting its first interim assessment of the implementation, and once the plan had expired it would conduct an overall assessment that would be used to establish a new plan for the future.
68. **Mr. Guráñ** asked for additional information on the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights, including the nature of its relationship with the Children's Parliament, the number of staff and the number of complaints processed.

69. **Mr. Gastaud** asked if the recent law protecting youth in the workplace provided for labour inspectors and set out penalties for non-compliance.

70. **Ms. Herczog** (Country Rapporteur) said that children were highly valued in Cypriot society but societal changes in recent decades had visibly affected cultural values, raising the question of how much of the responsibility for raising children should be incumbent on society versus families. In that connection, she asked about the nature of early childhood education and care of children up to the age of 4, and the amount of parental leave available. She requested additional information on residential and day care, in particular the cost to parents, the availability of allowances and the nature of staff training. She wished to know if non-Greek speaking children were provided services in their mother tongue and were taught Greek with a view to proficiency by the time they entered school. Regarding alternative care, she enquired about the age range of children placed in foster families or residential institutions, the reasons for placement, the body responsible for ordering placements, the case review process, families' visitation rights, the average length of stay in the alternative care system and how foster parents were prepared for their role. Citing the recent case of two teenage Turkish girls who had run away from a residential institution and had then been sequestered and raped by three young men, she wished to know what measures were being taken to improve conditions in such institutions. She also asked for further information about domestic and intercountry adoption, adding that Cypriot law and practice were not fully in line with the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption and that babies born to refugee or migrant women were allegedly being sold. She wondered whether child-friendly measures were being considered for children involved in legal proceedings and what techniques, such as peer mediation, were being used to combat bullying in schools. She welcomed the fact that children with disabilities were being integrated into the mainstream school system, but expressed doubt as to the qualifications of teaching staff to cope with children with special needs. She said that requiring parents to officially request that their children be excused from Greek Orthodox religious education contradicted the Government's commitment to non-discrimination, and asked what religious education was available to children of other faiths.

71. **Ms. Lee** asked for comments on claims that Turkish-speaking children did not have full enjoyment of their right to instruction in their mother tongue. It was regrettable that asylum seeking children were considered illegal migrants until their case reached the Supreme Court and therefore did not benefit from certain services and risked being detained or deported. She requested additional information on trafficking in children and women. She wished to know if all children of displaced persons were granted a temporary residence permit and whether that permit entitled them to services.

72. **Ms. Maurás Pérez** asked about the situation of migrant children, especially those in an irregular situation, and what measures were taken to ensure that their best interests were considered. She wished to know what regulations and oversight were in place to adequately monitor child labour.

73. **Ms. Sandberg** asked for comments on the apparent cutbacks to social welfare services which had led to the loss of family counsellors who handled cases of domestic violence. She also requested confirmation that the psychological assessment of a child victim could not be conducted without the consent of the perpetrator parent. She wished to know if the Government was planning to fund additional children's shelters. Given the risk of re-victimization caused by children having to testify years after an incident, she asked if steps were being taken to resolve the serious delays in the administration of justice.

74. **Ms. Varmah** welcomed the fact that the European hotline for missing children could be reached from Cyprus, but said that the country should have a national helpline for

children to call about any problem they were facing, which should include an outreach component for marginalized children and services for children living in remote areas.

75. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** commended the State party for ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He asked what funds were specifically allocated to instituting the necessary measures for children with disabilities to enjoy the right to play. It appeared that children with disabilities were only placed in specialized institutions at the primary level and were then all placed in mainstream secondary schools. If that was indeed the case, he asked how integration took place, whether it was done through special classrooms or support staff and how many specialized teachers were involved. He also commended the State party on its efforts to pursue other measures, such as rehabilitation, for child offenders under the age of 17. He asked for confirmation that the age of criminal liability for minor offences was still 7 and asked what that age was for serious offences. He wished to know if there were specific rules governing criminal liability in cases of serious offences committed by children between the minimum age and 16, and whether they were tried before specialized courts. He asked if there were specific rules governing the criminal liability of children between 16 and 18 and if they were tried as juveniles or adults.

76. **Ms. Wijemanne** said the data suggested that 100 per cent of mothers received prenatal and postnatal care and asked if that included female migrants and asylum seekers. She requested additional information on child nutrition, infant feeding and maternity leave and wondered if Cyprus had domestic rules governing the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. She enquired about services available to young people, such as life skills training, sexual and reproductive health education and psychosocial support.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.