



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Colombia due in 2021 under article 44 of the Convention*

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A. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Legislation and institutional framework

1. The Colombian Constitution recognizes the primacy of the rights of children and adolescents and the shared responsibility of the State, the family and society for guaranteeing the harmonious, integral development of children and adolescents and the full exercise of their rights. The Children and Adolescents Code (Act No. 1098) of 2006 establishes the substantive and procedural standards for ensuring their comprehensive protection on an equal and equitable basis. Public policies are the instruments used for the application of those standards.

2. The Government of Colombia has enacted the following laws, as approved by the National Congress, to provide comprehensive guarantees and protection for children: (1) Act No. 1804 of 2016 establishes the National Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development from Zero to Forever; (2) Act No. 1822 of 2017 facilitates proper early childhood care and attention by extending the duration of maternity leave; (3) Act No. 1918 of 2018 establishes a series of disqualifications in respect of persons convicted of perpetrating sex crimes upon minors; (4) Act No. 2000 of 2019 prohibits the consumption, possession and distribution of psychoactive substances in places where minors are present; (5) Legislative Act No. 01 of 2020 provides for the possibility of a sentence of life imprisonment for child rapists; (6) The Jacobo Act (No. 2026) of 2020 provides for the delivery of oncopaediatic health services and comprehensive medical care for minors with cancer; (7) Act No. 2089 of 2021 prohibits the use of physical punishment, humiliating or degrading treatment and violence in any form as a means of disciplining children and adolescents.¹ (8) Act No. 2081 of 2021 establishes the imprescriptibility of sex crimes committed against persons under 18 years of age; and (9) Act No. 2097 of 2021 provides for the creation of a registry of persons in arrears on child support or alimony payments.

3. Act No. 1997 of 2019, on the prevention of statelessness, establishes a special regime, on an exceptional basis, for the acquisition of Colombian nationality by children born in Colombia to Venezuelans having a regular or irregular migration status and by applicants for refugee status born in Colombian territory and extends the applicability of this exceptional measure to persons born in Colombia between 1 January 2015 and 15 September 2021. The State is taking steps both to reduce cases of statelessness among children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents by extending Resolution No. 8470 of 2019 and to prevent the statelessness of persons born in third countries by developing the implementing regulations for the migration bill.

4. Under Act No. 1878 of 2018, article 56 of the Children and Adolescents Code has been amended to place a six-month limit on the time period allotted for administrative action to search for relatives of children and adolescents for whom a declaration of violation has been issued and to arrange for their placement in a family environment. Act No. 1955 of 2019 amends article 103 of the Children and Adolescents Code to establish a maximum term of 18 months for the administrative rights restoration process. It also provides for the temporary protection of adults with disabilities until the corresponding agency within the National Family Welfare System can ensure the provision of such services in accordance with its legal scope of authority.²

5. The State increased the number of family advocates from 1,188 in 2015 to 1,345 in 2021;³ updated the guidelines for administrative authorities responsible for the care of children whose rights have been violated with a view to improving the quality of care;⁴ and evaluated the operational and institutional performance of the family advocates' offices and the district centres of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF). The main recommendations are to have the advocates' offices specialize by process, function, type of

¹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 28 (e)).

² Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 8 (a)).

³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 8 (c)).

⁴ The term "children" covers both children and adolescents.

violation and modality in the central zones where conditions are highly or moderately challenging and to structure their operations as general family advocacy offices in central zones where the conditions are less so.⁵

Comprehensive policies and strategies

6. The Children and Adolescents Code defines public policies concerning children and adolescents, their objectives, guiding principles and the responsible parties in each case. The Code includes the National Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development from Zero to Forever (Act No. 1804 of 2016) and its regulatory decrees (Nos. 1416, 1336 and 1356 of 2018), which define the corresponding national and local operational structure, establish an intersectoral mechanism for the delivery of comprehensive care and reaffirm the 10 principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. The State remains committed to promoting the integral development of children through the National Policy for Children and Adolescents 2018–2030, which is the outcome of a wide-ranging, participatory dialogue with children, adolescents and society at large.⁶ The aim is to create the social, human and material conditions required to enable the members of the population between the ages of 6 and 18 years to fully exercise their rights while recognizing them as primary rights holders. The Comprehensive Road Map for Services for Children and Adolescents, which was established in 2019 as a sectoral and intersectoral tool for the implementation of the National Policy, sets out 28 support services for furthering children's and adolescents' integral development.

8. The National Public Policy to Support and Strengthen the Family 2014–2024 takes a pluralistic, broad-ranging and inclusive approach to the recognition of families as collective rights holders with agency and of the home as a setting for care and development. It is based on social recognition and protection, harmonious coexistence within a democratic framework and governance.

9. In accordance with the guidelines for the National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents 2018–2028, this type of rights violation is recognized as a form of gender-based violence. The focus is on the prevention and eradication of this form of violence, effective prosecution mechanisms, protection measures and the punishment of such acts. Instruments for use in the investigation and prosecution of transnational crimes and the provision of victim support have been designed with the help of international partners.

Coordination

10. The Executive Committee of the National Family Welfare System has optimized intersectoral coordination arrangements for the implementation of comprehensive policies and strategies that are tailored to the local and demographic specificities of the population in order to ensure that people are able to exercise their rights. In addition, the National Family Welfare System has expanded the range of State entities that are involved in helping to safeguard children's rights. It now works with the ministries in charge of sports, culture, and science and technology and with the navy, the army and the Fondo Acción. In addition, it has established working relationships with 17 different national bodies based on action plans that are updated every four years.⁷

11. ICBF provides child protection services throughout the country. It has offices in all 32 departments and in the Capital District and a total of 215 centres.⁸ It also provides technical assistance to the Family Commissioners' Offices, thus providing nationwide support for the provision of safeguards and rights restoration efforts. A total of 114 mobile units provide emergency humanitarian assistance in outlying and other rural areas. This

⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 8 (b) and 12 (d)).

⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 10).

⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 12 (a) and (b)).

⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 12 (c)).

assistance includes differential psychosocial support for children and their families in the context of the armed conflict; there are also 4 mobile units that provide assistance to the migrant population.

12. The National Family Welfare System employs an advocacy strategy within the framework of government programmes and local development plans that draws on the experiences of the agencies making up the System and the lessons they have learned during the last three Administrations at the national and local levels. This has made it possible to incorporate children's issues and family strengthening components into planning instruments and public policy priorities. Technical assistance has been provided to 6,895 participants in the incoming administrations of 1,133 subnational entities in accordance with the established guidelines for the inclusion of relevant issues relating to early childhood, childhood, adolescence and families in local development plans for 2020–2023.⁹

13. The National Family Welfare System makes the necessary arrangements for local authorities and the President of Colombia to give an accounting to the public concerning the progress made in connection with children's issues. The second public accountability initiative focusing on the steps taken to safeguard children's rights and strengthen the country's families in 2012–2017 was carried out at the national level in 2018. In keeping with the technical guidelines for the 2012–2015 public accountability initiative and with the help of a toolkit consisting of 21 different instruments, mayors and governors report to the public every two years. Training has been provided to a total of 228 mayors and 4,656 officials in the country's 32 departments, the Capital District and 1,101 municipalities in Colombia.

14. The Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation Unit of the National System for Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation works to promote coordination with the National Family Welfare System and the national human rights system in order to support the action being taken at the national and local levels, ensure the implementation of public policies related to the restoration and reparation of the rights of victims of the conflict, including children and adolescents, and apply joint strategies for providing them with full protection.¹⁰

Resource allocation

15. A methodology for measuring national agencies' public expenditure on children's well-being has been developed that takes into account the legal basis for the corresponding budgetary allocations. Data on budget execution from all agencies covered by the General National Budget are used for this purpose. The central government budget allocations and the resource transfers made under the sector-based revenue-sharing system (Sistema General de Participaciones) (SGP) are both analysed.¹¹ Progress was made in the second half of 2021 on the implementation of the tool developed to track the use of budgetary resources for the promotion of children's well-being, which is linked to the platform for the Unified Investment and Public Finance System. This tool can be employed at both the national and local levels to keep track of investments made for the benefit of young children (pregnant women and children from 0 to 5 years of age), children (6 to 11 years of age) and adolescents (12 to 17 years of age).

16. The measurements of public spending on children in 2016–2019 indicate that the estimated budget (established appropriations),¹² at constant 2020 prices, for young children, children and adolescents rose from 36.4 trillion in 2016 to 39.72 trillion in 2017, 39.42 trillion in 2018 and 40.42 trillion in 2019, for an 11 per cent increase in real terms during that period. It is estimated that 70 per cent of the budget resources for children comes from SGP transfers to local governments for the health, education, and drinking water and basic sanitation sectors. The next-largest category is ICBF investments made using financing from other sources. In addition to SGP funds, local governments make investments under projects financed by the

⁹ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5 (para. 12 (e)).

¹⁰ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5 (para. 12 (f)).

¹¹ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5 (para. 14 (a) and (b)).

¹² These are the maximum spending authorizations approved for the fiscal year up to 31 December of each year.

National Royalties System, among other sources, such as local taxes and grants from cooperation agencies earmarked for priority child-related areas of policy.

17. SGP resources were allocated for comprehensive early childhood care in accordance with the Constitution and Act No. 1176 of 2007, which stipulates that, if the real growth rate of the economy as certified by the National Department of Statistics (DANE) is above 4 per cent, then SGP funds will be increased by a sum equivalent to the percentage difference between the real growth rate of the economy and 4 per cent. This provision was implemented on the basis of National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES) documents 181 of 2015, 3861 of 2016 and 3887 of 2017.¹³ This investment was used to expand early education services through the construction, outfitting and adaptation of preschool classrooms, reading rooms and playrooms; skills-building activities; expansion of the cold chain of the Expanded Immunization Programme; equipment for delivery rooms and services for pregnant women; special rooms for the treatment of acute diarrhoeal diseases, paediatric hospital rooms and neonatal units; and family and community caregiving and parenting skills-building.

18. In order to move forward with the implementation of the Framework Plan for Implementation of the Agreements, resources (drawn from the general government budget) of the Colombia in Peace Fund have been made available since 2017 for use in strengthening comprehensive early childhood services in the rural areas of the 170 municipalities with local development plans.

19. In order to ensure transparency, objectivity and excellence in the procurement of early childhood services, in 2020 ICBF developed the Betto (which stands for well-being (*bienestar*), efficiency, transparency, technology and opportunity) technological tool. Betto facilitates the objective candidate selection, evaluation and recruitment of service providers using advanced analytics and artificial intelligence and machine-learning algorithms. It is also used to target children under 5 years of age who are potential beneficiaries of ICBF programmes based on the criteria of multidimensional poverty, vulnerability and residence in outlying and other rural areas. This technology was used in 2021 to prioritize the allocation of slots for 161,500 children in ICBF programmes.¹⁴

Cooperation with civil society

20. Since 2016 the Attorney General's Office has been pursuing eight specific courses of action for the investigation of crimes committed against human rights defenders, including the promotion of an institutional culture that recognizes the valuable work done by human rights defenders; the presumption of the veracity of their findings as a first investigative hypothesis; the use of a case association methodology; and the establishment of mobile units capable of getting to crime scenes quickly.

21. Directive 002, which sets out general guidelines for the investigation of crimes perpetrated against human rights defenders in Colombia, was issued on 30 November 2017. These guidelines were developed with technical assistance from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in the incorporation of international standards applicable to the criminal investigation of crimes against human rights defenders. Threatening human rights defenders has been made a specific criminal offence (see article 188E of the Criminal Code), and mechanisms for receiving reports of such threats operate around the clock.¹⁵

Children's rights and the business sector

22. In 2015 the Government issued the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights within the framework of Subsystem 4 (Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Rights) of the National Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law System. This public policy instrument was developed with the participation of businesses and civil society organizations to support respect for the human rights of ethnic groups, women, lesbian, gay,

¹³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 14 (a)).

¹⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 14 (d)).

¹⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 16 (b)).

bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, people with disabilities, trade union movements and other minority groups.¹⁶

23. The National Strategy for Business and Children is the material expression of the plan for prioritizing the management of the risks and potential impacts generated by corporate operations in the economic sectors that are most prone to social conflict and most likely to have negative impacts on children, such as the extractive sectors (mining and hydrocarbons), agribusiness and road infrastructure works. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 8, on decent work and economic growth, and with the participation of 380 company representatives, the Colombia Network against Child Labour and ICBF (2016) developed action lines for the prevention and eradication of child labour that are based on risk management and due diligence for the protection of children in their territories, in their companies and in their spheres of influence.

24. In order to ensure the protection of the children of El Hatillo and to address the situation in that township, a resettlement action plan has been drawn up in cooperation with the National Family Welfare System, local authorities (the Office of the Governor of Cesar and the Mayor's Office and Family Commissioner's Office of El Paso) and representatives of the mining companies in question. The plan sets out an individual and collective resettlement timetable and specifies lines of actions for safeguarding and restoring children's rights and strengthening their family ties.¹⁷

B. Definition of the child (art. 1)

25. The definition of the child in Colombian law as set forth in the preceding report has not changed.

C. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

26. Colombia has stepped up its efforts to safeguard the rights of vulnerable migrant children and their families. ICBF programmes and services were made available to 380,600 Venezuelan beneficiaries and restored the rights of 7,251 migrant children and adolescents in 2015–2021. The temporary protected status for Venezuelan migrants established by Decree No. 216 of 2021 is a mechanism that affords differentiated treatment based on age and degree of vulnerability. It applies to persons under 18 years of age who are eligible for the administrative rights restoration process and to adolescent and other young migrants in the juvenile criminal justice system and is implemented in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination, co-responsibility, primacy of rights and the best interests of the child.

27. The community councils and other organizations of the black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquera communities have been strengthened by awareness-raising initiatives focusing on the elimination of racial discrimination and racism. In 2020 the Racial Discrimination and Racism Observatory worked with 17 local entities in 11 departments.

28. The methodological road map for the formulation of the section of the National Policy for Children and Adolescents on black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquera communities is being drawn up in coordination with the Indigenous Women's Round Table; Col\$ 3.199 billion was allocated for this purpose in 2020 and another Col\$ 2.189 billion was allocated in 2021. A total of 13 authorities of the Wounnan People, 9 of the Nasa People and 11 of the Awá People were involved in the inter-institutional and intercultural strategy for addressing and preventing sex- and gender-based violence among Indigenous Peoples (2016),

¹⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 18 (a)).

¹⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 18 (d)).

which was aimed at strengthening mechanisms for recognizing, detecting and dealing with cases of sexual violence.¹⁸

29. By Decree No. 762 of 2018, the Government adopted a public policy to ensure that persons forming part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and other persons of diverse sexual orientations and/or gender identities, including those belonging to Indigenous communities, are able to exercise their rights. The action plan for the LGBTI Public Policy 2020 defines the mechanisms to be used for its implementation.¹⁹

30. Under the comprehensive Women Free of Violence Strategy, the “National School for Unlearning Machismo” was launched in 2020. This training process seeks to transform the cultural preconceptions and sexist gender stereotypes that are at the root of violence against women. A pilot project was carried out with 185 civil servants from the 10 departments with the highest rates of violence against women.²⁰

31. In accordance with the Policy for the Prevention of Wrongful Harm (2018), steps are taken to follow up on petitions, complaints or claims regarding situations that adversely affect children covered by protection measures under the administrative rights restoration process or the juvenile criminal justice system.²¹ In accordance with the technical guidelines applying to the protocol for the care of children and adolescents engaged in the administrative rights restoration process (2021), communication channels such as suggestion boxes must be made available, satisfaction surveys must be conducted, and agreements governing institutional and foster care modalities must be in place. Children placed in foster care participate in workshops held for the purpose of identifying and reporting possible situations of physical, psychological or sexual violence, neglect or negligence to which they or other children in such care may be exposed.

32. Children and adolescents with sensory, visual, hearing or motor disabilities or with mild intellectual disabilities who are able to read and write have direct access to complaint mechanisms. In the case of children and adolescents with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, steps are taken to determine the level of understanding of each individual and to determine whether they require support from their family to facilitate their participation in relevant activities.²² In the case of ethnic communities, cultural specificities are taken into account, since the main form of communication is verbal rather than in writing. In the case of adolescents and young people in conflict with the law, the technical guidelines for the application of the adolescent criminal responsibility model provide for the use of a satisfaction survey for obtaining data from adolescents and young people in the juvenile criminal justice system.

33. Since 2019, the Unified School Socialization Information System has been used to receive reports of violations of children’s rights, early pregnancies, the consumption of psychoactive substances and possible commission of crimes that may undermine human, sexual and/or reproductive rights. In 2020, training in the use of this system was provided at 2,681 educational establishments. The system is interoperable with the ICBF Mission Information System and supports coordination with the National Police Force of Colombia for following up on suspected crimes.

Best interests of the child

34. The testimony of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence is admissible in court for the purpose of avoiding their revictimization (Constitutional Court, Decision T-116 of 2013). Pursuant to article 284 of Act No. 906 of 2004, evidence may be heard in advance during the investigation and up to the time that oral hearings are held when: (i) this is done in the presence of the supervisory judge; (ii) it is requested by the Attorney General or the

¹⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 20 (b)).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 20 (d)).

²² Ibid.

delegated prosecutor, by defence counsel or by the Public Prosecution Service in the instances provided for in article 112; (iii) it is for justified reasons based on extreme necessity in order to avert the loss or alteration of such evidence; and (iv) it is conducted in open court and in observance of the rules established for the taking of evidence at trial.²³

Right to life, survival and development

35. The Attorney General's Office employs context analysis techniques in its investigations and in the laying of charges against members of organized crime, dissident groups, and organized and residual armed groups (Gulf Clan, Caparros and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) (ELN)) for the use of minors in the commission of crimes.²⁴

36. In cases of the enforced disappearance of children or adolescents, prosecutors' offices obtain authorization to activate the Urgent Search Mechanism, which issues immediately actionable orders to police detectives to launch an investigation. Family advocates' offices in the area where the child has been reported missing are notified and, if the child is found alive, they order the corresponding medical and legal examinations and initiate the administrative rights restoration process.²⁵ Colombia has 34 prosecutors' offices and 40 investigative police units in its major cities whose staff are trained to respond swiftly to requests for the activation of the Urgent Search Mechanism.²⁶

37. Information is available on investigations carried out concerning criminal organizations whose victims were minors during the period 2015–2020, the status and the nature of the proceedings and the number of persons involved.²⁷

38. The Attorney General's records indicate that, from 1 January 2015 to 31 January 2021, there were 5,983 victims under 18 years of age of the crimes of homicide, femicide and enforced disappearance.²⁸ During the same period, those records show that 3,294 suspects were bound over for trial for those crimes. As of 5 March 2021, the records showed that formal charges had been brought in 15,219 instances and that there had been 7,258 convictions in cases concerning homicides, femicides and enforced disappearances of children and adolescents.

39. The Attorney General's Office court records indicate that, since 2015, there have been 4,982 victims of the crime of illicit recruitment of persons under 18 years of age and use of minors in the commission of crimes. In addition, 6,945 members of illegal armed groups were registered as suspects in cases of illegal recruitment of persons under 18 years of age and the use of minors in the commission of crimes. Charges were brought in 1,774 cases, 780 of which have resulted in convictions.

40. A total of 1,282 minors who have been extricated from organized illegal armed groups have entered the specialized ICBF programme for such youths.

Respect for the views of the child

41. The National Advisory and Consultative Council for Children and Adolescents has been in operation since 2015 (Resolution 1620 of 2017).²⁹ This resolution represents a concurrence of wills whereby the Council represents children and serves as a consultative body in respect of decisions taken to safeguard their rights. In 2015–2020, 3,411 child-led round tables were held to strengthen children's role as key actors in the design and implementation of public policy.

²³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 22).

²⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 24 (b)).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 24 (d)).

²⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 24 (a)).

²⁹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 26 (c)).

42. Since 2014, steps have been taken in the juvenile criminal justice system to ensure the participation of the population in conflict with the law.³⁰ To this end, the Human Rights Verification Commission was established to monitor the conditions in which adolescents and young people are being held in transit centres, preventive detention centres, specialized treatment centres and judicial service centres for adolescents in 17 cities.

43. Colombia is working to ensure that children's interests prevail and that they have access to their right to the restitution of their lands within a framework of transitional justice and transformative, comprehensive reparations. Their voices are heard, and they are authorized to apply for enrolment in the Land Registry, as the Government recognizes their ability to act as representatives or as spokespersons in all administrative proceedings and in related judicial processes. Since 2015, a total of 69 applications have been received from children or adolescents.

44. Colombia is committed to supporting the transition from childhood to youth, to ensuring children's and adolescents' recognition and effective enjoyment of their rights and to the harmonization of public policies. Thus, it has worked to transform its institutional architecture with the creation of the ICBF Adolescence and Youth Directorate and the Presidential Council for Youth Affairs. Within this framework, the Colombia Youth Pact, encompassing all young people between 14 and 28 years of age, was initiated in 2021. The Pact is to serve as a framework for a participatory effort to build a road map for promoting comprehensive public policy actions for Colombian adolescents and youth. The Pact embodies the feelings, proposals and interests of more than 14,000 adolescents and young people who, through their participation in 400 different active listening discussion groups, contributed to the approval of the National Economic and Social Policy Council youth strategy for 2021–2030, which entails an intersectoral investment of 25.6 trillion pesos.

D. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 and 17)

Birth registration

45. Colombia is implementing its "Open Arms" project by establishing civil registry offices in hospitals and clinics nationwide to promote early birth registration and thereby guarantee the right of children born in the country to a nationality, including the children of Venezuelan parents.³¹ There are 36 registration units in public hospitals across 15 departments.

46. In order to protect the right to recognition as a person before the law, to a name and to a nationality, along with all the rights that can be accessed through birth registration, the National Civil Registry Office runs free workshops in partnership with ICBF in mobile units for persons who are displaced or at risk of displacement and/or vulnerability and who are living in remote areas of the country, including members of Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities. Between 2011 and 2021, it has facilitated the registration of 86,954 Afro-Colombian and Indigenous children who were not registered at birth. To ensure that civil registration takes place, registry offices have been established in Nazareth, in the territory of the Wayuu and Nabusimake Indigenous communities in the municipality of Uribia, and in the Indigenous territory of the Arhuaco People in the municipality of Pueblo Bello in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range.

47. In order to guarantee the fundamental, cultural and identity rights of Indigenous Peoples as set forth in the Constitution and article 2 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), when any of the documents legally required in order to record a birth in the civil birth register is missing, a document entitled "Indigenous authorization" can be used in its stead; these documents are issued by the community's traditional authority and/or an individual acting on his or her behalf.

³⁰ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#) (para. 26 (a) and (b)).

³¹ Resolution 8470 of 2019.

Access to relevant information

48. The ConVerTIC project offers screen magnification and screen reading software free of charge to children with a visual impairment so that they can have access to web pages offering information, entertainment and cultural content. Similarly, the “Relay Centre” project is a web-based platform that allows children with hearing impairments to communicate with hearing people using Colombian Sign Language (CSL).

49. The “In ICT I Trust +” programme encourages the development of digital skills so that individuals can safely face the risks associated with using the Internet and information and communications technology. It also promotes the use of the Internet as an opportunity to generate a positive digital footprint in the digital environment. The programme offers strategies to its beneficiaries, who include children, adolescents and adults, to help them develop their digital skills by raising their awareness of how to identify risks and by promoting social harmony and digital activism. It also seeks to raise the awareness of teachers, parents, caregivers, local authorities and society in general as partners in this process in order to ensure that interaction with information and communications technologies is a positive experience.³²

50. In 2019, the Digital Coexistence initiative produced 300 items of multiplatform content to teach children between 13 and 18 years of age in public and private educational institutions about topics such as correct conduct online and the peaceful resolution of differences. The initiative’s aim is to position children as agents of change who can help to improve the quality of life of their communities.

E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)

Freedom of the child from all forms of violence

51. Colombia joined the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children as a pathfinding country and established the National Partnership against Violence against Children and Adolescents based on the INSPIRE methodology.³³ In 2021, the Partnership put together a national action plan encompassing 180 initiatives launched by international cooperation agencies, civil society organizations and national bodies, 32 departmental plans on violence prevention and response that are currently being developed and a probabilistic statistical model of violence against children.³⁴ The National Partnership against Violence against Children and Adolescents is using a mechanism for national and local inter-institutional coordination referred to as the Coordinating Mechanism for a Comprehensive Approach to Sex- and Gender-based Violence against Women, Children and Adolescents as a Public Health Management Strategy.

52. The “Loving Parenting + Play” strategy launched in 2020 is focused on helping social actors and members of the judicial system to develop the ability to recognize and report violence against children by de-normalizing violence and creating a culture of parenting based on changes in past practices, play within the family and dialogue. A total of 1,216 public servants have been trained and 8,569 parenting and physical punishment prevention kits have been delivered; 306 children and adolescents have participated in child and adolescent round tables and councils; a national awareness-raising forum was held that was attended by 8,000 people; and 2,261 people were given training on the issue in 2020 that

³² Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 20 (c).

³³ “INSPIRE: Seven strategies for ending violence against children” is a compilation of strategies and programmes that are being implemented around the world and provide integrated responses to improve the lives of children and adolescents.

³⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (a)–(h), (j) and (k).

placed emphasis on actions that could be taken within the home during the national lockdown imposed to protect against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).³⁵

53. By way of Resolution No. 1796 of 2018, the Colombian Government updated the list of hazardous activities that, by their nature or because of the attendant working conditions, are harmful to the health and physical or psychological integrity of children, thus prohibiting activities that involve direct contact with high-risk animals or that involve human or animal suffering.³⁶

54. New avenues of access to justice have been created so that children can file a complaint with the presence of their parents, legal representative (non-aggressor) or responsible adult. If none of these individuals is present, an initial report is created, an urgent inquiry is set in motion and the Family Ombudsman is informed so that measures can be taken to verify that the child's rights are guaranteed and restored.³⁷ The Attorney General's Office has produced a handbook and a guide on providing assistance and handling complaints with respect to children, as subjects of special protection, with guidance on providing differentiated assistance suited to the child's age and stage of development.

55. Act No. 2126 of 4 August 2021 regulates the operation of the Family Commissioners' Offices and provides tools for designing their institutional structure and guaranteeing access to specialized, interdisciplinary forms of judicial assistance to prevent, protect and restore the rights of at-risk individuals.³⁸ It also strengthens mechanisms for monitoring protection measures for victims of domestic violence and the prosecution of aggressors.

Right of the child to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

56. Instances of violence against children and emergency care related to abuse and sexual violence (prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections, emergency contraception, mental health care, referrals to protection institutions and reports to the authorities) are recorded by the Public Health Violence Monitoring System.

57. The Information Committee of the Coordinating Mechanism developed the Integrated Gender Violence Information System (SIVIGE), which collects data from 19 different bodies. It is also working on a special chapter for citizen consultation that will serve as a clearinghouse for specific information on violence against children and statistics that can be used as inputs for the formulation of national and local strategies, plans and programmes for the prevention of violence.³⁹

58. Colombia has strengthened the capacities of health staff to apply the Protocol for Comprehensive Health Care for Victims of Sexual Violence in emergency, outpatient and hospitalization services for victims of sexual violence and in local facilities. The health sector has worked on the intersectoral coordination of access to justice and the restoration of people's rights as part of the effort to uphold universal guarantees and to ensure that, when cases of acts of violence against children are detected, they are reported.⁴⁰

59. The National Commission of Indigenous Women has been formalized and the creation of the Programme for the Protection of the Rights of Displaced Indigenous Women has been authorized.

³⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (e).

³⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (i).

³⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (h).

³⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (c).

³⁹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 28 (j).

⁴⁰ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 30 (c).

Respect for the rules of international humanitarian law⁴¹

60. The Attorney General's Office has implemented measures to guarantee the rights of child victims of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict. The Protocol for the Investigation and Prosecution of Cases of Sexual Violence contains a checklist and practical tools regarding investigation and prosecution.⁴²

Prevention of harmful practices

61. Cases of female genital mutilation are recorded by the Public Health Violence Monitoring System as instances of gender and domestic violence. The Government is introducing guidelines regarding the approach to be taken to cases of female genital mutilation and the provision of comprehensive health care to victims of this practice. It is also implementing community intervention strategies for the prevention of female genital mutilation among the Embera People, providing health education with an emphasis on preventing female genital mutilation in Risaralda and care for victims of this practice and conducting knowledge dialogues on sexual and reproductive health and mental health.⁴³

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

62. Colombia has set up various family and community psychosocial support programmes to build up families' resources and capacities with a view to promoting development and creating protective environments. Through programmes such as Family Well-Being for Peace (2015–2019), Ethnic Territory Well-Being (2015–2020), Family Support and Strength Units (2016–2019), Rural Communities (2016–2018), Alternative Care – Building Protective Environments Together (2016–2018) and My Family (2020), the Government seeks to reduce the risk of rights violations. My Universal Family (2021) is a virtual adaptation of the My Family programme. It will have a web portal open to all Colombian families that will focus on strengthening child-rearing practices and the protection of children and adolescents with a view to promoting zero tolerance for violence and physical punishment.

63. The Families in Action Programme is oriented towards overcoming poverty and promoting human capital formation in 1,103 municipalities through the provision of conditional cash transfers for families who assume their shared responsibility to guarantee children's rights to health and education. In 2020, it provided such transfers to almost 2.6 million households, benefiting 3,650,105 children and adolescents. (A total of 649,743 beneficiaries received the health incentive and 3,000,362 received the education incentive.)

64. In the last five years, the Families in Action Programme has been redesigned twice to strengthen its population and territorial coverage and ensure that the selection criteria target the most vulnerable members of the population. The main changes include: (i) the inclusion of children who are born after the family's enrolment in the programme, thus giving access to new members of beneficiary families; (ii) the inclusion of departmental townships in the programme's group 4 (municipalities with an Indigenous population and higher poverty levels according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index) geographic coverage classification, whose beneficiaries receive differentiated incentives; (iii) the modification of enrolment procedures for families participating in the UNITED (UNIDOS) strategy to ensure greater coverage for highly vulnerable families living in extreme poverty; and (iv) the extension of "transition grade" coverage to all municipalities in the country (except Bogotá), giving families with children between 4 and 6 years of age access to the incentive.

65. UNITED conducted a family support pilot programme for poor households in the departments of Córdoba and Nariño (2019). Profiling the 57,433 UNITED households and

⁴¹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 30 (a).

⁴² Resolution 1774 of June 2016.

⁴³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 32 (b).

their members made it possible to identify the developmental stage and needs of 16,003 children in early childhood, 20,545 children between 6 and 11 years of age and 26,045 children between 12 and 17 years of age, all of whom are provided with institutional services in order to reduce their vulnerability. In 2019, the Committee of Experts for the Measurement of Child Poverty was established, which models and measures child poverty and recommends measures for eliminating it.

66. During the COVID-19 pandemic, programmes were implemented to ensure that the most vulnerable families had effective access to the essentials for survival, such as the Solidarity Income Programme, through which resources were transferred to 3 million households on a monthly basis and efforts were made to identify the most vulnerable households to ensure their access to assistance; refunds of value added taxes paid and unconditional cash transfers to mitigate the impact of the value added tax on the most vulnerable households; the “Hands that Feed” (Manos que Alimentan) Programme, which provided rural families and ethnic communities with support to produce food for their own consumption; and additional payments from Families in Action. These strategies helped to provide assistance to 3.5 million children and adolescents.

Children deprived of a family environment

67. ICBF guides the country’s approaches to the provision of assistance and the restoration of rights. Since the publication in 2021 of its technical guidelines applying to the protocol for the care of children and adolescents engaged in the administrative rights restoration process, the focus has been on trying to ensure that children and adolescents remain in the care of their own family and on promoting deinstitutionalization and family reintegration.

68. Between 2015 and 2021, ICBF has made 120,608 places available in family support and reinforcement programmes to prevent the separation of family members; these programmes form part of the administrative rights restoration process.⁴⁴ In no case will a family’s economic situation give rise to the separation of its members.⁴⁵

69. If removal from the family environment is necessary, use is made of institutional modalities such as boarding schools and family protection modalities such as foster homes. This modality has been strengthened through: (i) the selection of 108 new foster homes in the context of the COVID-19 health emergency to increase the number of available homes in border departments; and (ii) the training of 3,136 foster parents.

70. Of the total number of rights restoration measures taken between 2015 and 2021, 74 per cent of the children and adolescents completed the process without being removed from their family; the remaining 26 per cent had to be placed in supportive environments in a non-family setting. In these cases, the process is aimed at reintegrating children into their family. Thus, 25,083 children and adolescents were reintegrated into their families during this period after having entered the administrative rights restoration process.⁴⁶

Adoption

71. As a definitive and exceptional measure to restore a child’s rights, adoption is used if it serves the best interests of the child by restoring his or her right to grow up in a family environment that provides protection, affection and stimulation. ICBF is the agency responsible for managing the adoption process on behalf of the State. It establishes the guidelines for the programme at the national and international levels, accredits international agencies that have previously been approved in their countries of origin to provide international adoption services in Colombia and inspects and monitors the authorized institutions.

⁴⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 34 (b).

⁴⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 34 (a).

⁴⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 34 (c).

72. From 2013 until 2021, the reception of new adoption applications was suspended in the case of families whose main residence is abroad and who wish to adopt a healthy child aged between 0 and 6 years old or two siblings if the eldest is no more than 6 years old and without special characteristics or needs. Since 2016, in cases where a foreign family is assigned to a Colombian child, the regional adoption committee or authorized adoption institution must certify the “non-existence of a Colombian family in the national territory or abroad”, as established in the technical guidelines for adoptions. During the last five years, 7,442 adoptions have been carried out; 54 per cent (4,017) of those adoptions have been by Colombian nationals.⁴⁷

73. In 2019, the Adoption Assistant (ADA) application became operational. This platform offers streamlined adoption procedures for individuals who intend to adopt a child. Applicants can submit their application online, complete the necessary forms, upload their documentation and schedule their first virtual appointment with a lawyer. The Adoption Assistant has been implemented in 12 regions and, as of 31 March 2021, there have been 2,286 requests to schedule an appointment to discuss adoption with a lawyer (22 in 2019, 1,278 in 2020 and 986 in 2021) and 215 requests to initiate adoption procedures (2 in 2019, 141 in 2020 and 72 in 2021).

74. Constitutional Court ruling T-844 of 2011 has been complied with through the issuance of a protocol for the application of measures regarding the administrative rights restoration process (2012) which was then incorporated into the technical and administrative guidelines for the restoration of the rights of children and adolescents whose rights have been disregarded, threatened or violated, which was issued in 2016.⁴⁸

G. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)–(3) and 33)

Children with disabilities

75. Pursuant to Act No. 1878 of 2018, ICBF has developed a capacity-building service module for children and adolescents with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 17 and their families (2019). It has also supported the transition of 128 children under 6 years of age from the outpatient–disability modality to early childhood services.

76. Statutory Act No. 1618 of 2013 establishes guarantees to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully exercise their rights. The Presidential Council for the Participation of Persons with Disabilities is the governing body of the National Disability System, which uses a differentiated, life-stage-based approach to disability in the various sectoral public policies.⁴⁹

77. Differentiated intersectoral services for children with disabilities are organized by an intersectoral commission which defines policy, technical and operational measures to ensure that children with disabilities have equitable access to quality intersectoral services at the national and local levels.⁵⁰

78. Decree No. 1350 of 2018 establishes measures for the creation and operation of organizations that represent persons with disabilities and promote their participation. Such organizations include the National Institute for the Blind and the National Institute for the Deaf.⁵¹

79. A total of 71 inclusive legal clinics for persons with disabilities have been held in order to furnish technical support to Family Commissioners’ Offices in connection with the provision of inclusive services and the elimination of physical, attitudinal, communication

⁴⁷ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 36 (a) and (b).

⁴⁸ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 36 (d).

⁴⁹ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 36 (c).

⁵⁰ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 38 (a).

⁵¹ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 38 (d).

and information barriers for persons with disabilities. A total of 3,000 judicial officials participated in the disability training programme from January 2020 to 30 April 2021.⁵²

80. The Transactional Affiliation System streamlines procedures, thereby promoting portability of care and the registration of family members through the inclusion of special residence permits as a valid document for the registration and enrolment of Colombians returning from Venezuela and of Venezuelan migrants and their children in the subsidized plan. In cases of default or non-payment, health care will continue to be guaranteed for pregnant women and children under 1 year of age. In the case of children in the child protection system, the registration process is expedited through the ICBF master census list.⁵³

81. The State covers health care for children under a capitation payment unit system that is based on medical autonomy and interdisciplinary intervention. For children under 3 years of age with profound bilateral pre-lingual or post-lingual deafness, health-care services include the fitting of cochlear implants, partial or total replacement of cochlear prostheses and post-implantation rehabilitation. Coverage also includes the application of a clinical protocol for diagnosis and treatment; comprehensive health care for children with autism spectrum disorders; and care in accordance with guidelines for the prevention and initial response to psychomotor agitation in children under and over 18 years of age with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.⁵⁴

82. As of July 2020, the register of persons who have self-identified as having disabilities contained entries for 166,154 children under 18 years of age, of whom 39.6 per cent are female. Pursuant to Resolution 113 of 2020, a register has been created of persons with disabilities who have submitted a certificate issued by a health service provider attesting to the existence of permanent impairments and noting relevant factors such as limitations in types of level of activity, geographic location, access to health services and rehabilitation. Between November 2020 and 5 March 2021, 6,453 people have been registered, including 1,102 children between the ages of 0 and 15. The most common categories of disability are intellectual (79.03 per cent; n=871), psychosocial (49.18 per cent; n=542) and physical (42.5 per cent; n=469). Persons with multiple disabilities represented 64.9 per cent of the persons on the register (n=716) (see Table 10).⁵⁵

83. Family Ombudsmen or the Public Prosecution Service are empowered to request any judicial measure to assist persons with mental disabilities, and a family judge appoints a personal advocate. Their work is informed by the Guide and Protocol for the Care of Persons with Disabilities in Access to Justice and the technical guidelines for the care of children and adolescents with disabilities.⁵⁶

84. The educational services which are provided include formal education at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels and takes into account basic factors relating to access and retention in the educational system and the quality of educational services in terms of the curricula, study programmes, timetables, content, skill-building, methodologies, performance, evaluation and advancement.⁵⁷

85. The universal design for learning methodology, pedagogical assessments and tailored reasonable accommodation plans are used for children with disabilities. Plans and programmes incorporating inclusive education indicators are implemented in conjunction with the National Institute for the Blind, the National Institute for the Deaf and the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education. In addition, consultations are held with organizations representing such children concerning guarantees for the right to inclusive education, both for regular-age students and older pupils and adults, at all levels of education.

86. Technical guidelines are in place for the different types of instruction (general, bilingual and bicultural instruction, instruction provided in the home and in hospitals), and books and other types of texts and materials are provided for students with visual impairments.

⁵² Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 38 (d).

⁵³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), paras. 38 (a) and 40 (c).

⁵⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), paras. 38 (a) and 40 (d).

⁵⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 38 (f).

⁵⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 38 (e).

⁵⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 38 (b).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, guidelines were developed for the provision of instruction to children and adolescents with disabilities, with exceptional abilities or talents and with learning or behavioural disorders. The educational community's socioemotional skills are being strengthened to help support mental health, the pedagogical practices of educators, and inclusion and equity in education. At the family level, progress has been made through the consolidation of the Family-School Partnership and the creation of support networks, among other initiatives. Furthermore, 100 per cent of certified educational institutions have received recruitment support from educational reinforcement instructors, other support professionals, typhlogists, linguistic experts, interpreter-guides and interpreters.

87. The enrolment of students with disabilities increased between 2017 and 2020 from 194,777 to 204,299. SGP resources allocated for persons with disabilities registered in the Integrated Enrolment System increased by 20 per cent, from \$69,312,406,39 in 2017 to \$85,515,268,233 in 2020. There are 124 temporary posts for teaching support staff to assist classroom teachers working with students with disabilities in 7 certified local institutions: Arauca (5), Cartagena (13), Nariño (32), Norte de Santander (15), Pereira (33), Putumayo (7) and Armenia (19).

88. In 2015, the Families in Action Programme provided education incentive payments to families with children with disabilities for enrolment from transition level to grade 11 in order to encourage school attendance, increase years of schooling and reduce dropout rates. The education incentive is granted regardless of the number of children in the family. The 2.6 million beneficiary households of the Families in Action Programme include 50,729 children with disabilities. In 2019, the households of 2,185 children with disabilities in Córdoba and Nariño received support to help them learn how to manage and make use of the services provided for this population group.

Health and health services

89. Colombia recognizes the importance of children's fundamental right to health. The Comprehensive Health-Care Policy plots out a number of different health-care road maps. These mandatory tools can be adapted to the specificities of different locations (urban, rural and remote rural areas) and population groups based on, for example, their life stage, ethnicity or disability status. The Road Map for the Promotion and Maintenance of Health sets out individualized interventions by life stage, collective interventions (families and groups) and population-wide interventions. The Comprehensive Maternal and Perinatal Health-Care Road Map establishes the individual and collective interventions offered starting at the pre-conception stage and continuing on through gestation, delivery, puerperium and newborn care up until 7 days of age.⁵⁸

90. When children's right to health is violated or when there are barriers to access, Family Ombudsmen apply the administrative measures provided for (applications, right of petition, legal guardianship, administrative appeals for reconsideration and complaints, among others). Over the last seven years, local intersectoral strategies have been implemented to ensure timely and continuous access to health services without necessitating recourse to judicial avenues.⁵⁹

91. A web-based maternal mortality epidemiological monitoring system has been in place since 2015. It is used to collect data and analyse each case of maternal mortality to establish the cause or causes of death and to inform decision-making and the design of public policies to promote equity and eliminate barriers to access to health-care services. All female deaths that occur during pregnancy, childbirth and the child's first year, including incidental and violent deaths must be reported to the Public Health Violence Monitoring System.

92. In 2017, the maternal mortality ratio was 51 per 100,000 live births. This ratio dropped more quickly than usual between 2000 to 2005, when the average annual change was -6.8 (CI 0.95 -2.9 to -10.6), and between 2011 and 2014, when the reduction in mortality steepened to an average annual rate of -9.11 (CI 0.95 -2.1 to -15.6). In 2020, maternal

⁵⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (a).

⁵⁹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (e).

mortality increased by 38.5 per cent over its 2019 rate owing to three factors: the direct influence of the increase in mortality seen during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of cases of the coronavirus disease, pneumonia and non-obstetric sepsis, which were responsible for approximately 41 per cent of the increase; the high mortality rate among Venezuelan migrants who have arrived in the country in an irregular situation or who have a regular migration status but are not yet registered with the health system; and the indirect effect of the pandemic on the continuity of prenatal care services from March to December 2020.⁶⁰

93. In the event of negligence on the part of health personnel, administrative measures involving direct reparations may be adopted. Disciplinary measures for very serious, serious or minor offences may take the form of a reprimand or the dismissal of the health professional by the Counsel General's Office, depending on the nature of the case. Penalties are imposed for unlawful, punishable conduct in accordance with the Criminal Code. Ethics violations incur the measures provided for in Act No. 23 and Decree No. 3380 of 1981 in the case of doctors and in Act No. 911 of 2004 in the case of nurses.⁶¹

94. Action has been focused on local emergency plans in areas where mortality indicators differ from national mortality figures; the reintroduction of measures called for in the Comprehensive Maternal and Perinatal Health-Care Road Map; technical assistance for local authorities and health insurers; and support for programmes aimed at increasing prenatal care coverage. During the pandemic, guidelines were issued for the care of pregnant women, newborns and breastfeeding women, along with measures designed to guarantee continuity of care. More than 1,000 staff members have received training.⁶²

95. The indicators for childbirth care remained steady over the reporting period. In 2019, in 84 per cent of the cases of live births, the mothers had received four or more prenatal check-ups, compared to 88 per cent in 2014; 98 per cent of deliveries took place in a hospital and were attended by qualified staff. The number of pregnant women who began to receive prenatal care early on in their pregnancies increased from 26 per cent in 2015 to 54.2 per cent in 2019. Breastfeeding counselling was given to 73.2 per cent of pregnant women, compared to 33 per cent in 2015. Micronutrients were given to 61 per cent of pregnant women in 2019, compared to 45 per cent in 2015. The comprehensive child health assessment shows that the coverage of children's health care increased from 42.3 per cent in 2015 to 70.8 per cent in 2019. In the same period, vision screening rose from 9.3 per cent to 21.5 per cent and bacterial plaque removal increased from 18.9 per cent to 37.3 per cent.⁶³

96. The country is making progress in the progressive realization of the right to food and closing the gap in access to food, especially in rural areas. In 2020, a special plan for the progressive realization of the right to food for the rural population, which calls for the development of coordinated intersectoral measures to achieve this objective, was approved. As a result, 61,593 households in rural communities now have access to food and improved housing conditions and have started up their own production projects.⁶⁴

97. The Great Alliance for Nutrition coordinates the efforts of government entities and private actors, among others, with the common purpose of progressively eradicating malnutrition. The Alliance seeks to strengthen high-impact strategies and interventions for providing support to pregnant women and children through the protection and promotion of breastfeeding practices and the prevention of stunting, acute malnutrition and anaemia. Thanks to the Alliance, and in coordination with the Intersectoral Food and Nutritional Security Commission, the Workplan for Combating Malnutrition: Not1More is being implemented. The Workplan prioritizes the 14 departments with the highest percentages of deaths caused by or linked to malnutrition. In the first year of the initiative's implementation, the preliminary results of a comparison of the reports for 2019 and 2020 indicates that the mortality rate for children under 5 years of age was reduced by 35.1 per cent in the most affected areas.

⁶⁰ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (b).

⁶¹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (b).

⁶² Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (c).

⁶³ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (c).

⁶⁴ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (g).

98. Within this framework, technical guidelines for the comprehensive management of moderate and severe acute malnutrition in children aged between 0 and 59 months have been defined, and the new Public Policy on Breastfeeding and Supplementary Feeding for 2021–2030 has been established. The National Public Policy for the Prevention and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in Colombia was formulated and, recently, with the support of the World Food Programme, the Innovation for Nutrition (I4N) initiative was launched. This initiative will serve as a platform to promote innovative and visionary strategies to actively support the fight against malnutrition in Colombia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

99. A strategy for setting up breastfeeding rooms in the workplace in public institutions and private companies. There are 13 human milk banks in operation with 22 facilitators who provide instructional support. Dietary guidelines are in place that are tailored to the needs of different regional and ethnic groups in Colombia, breastfeeding mothers and children under 2 years of age. A total of 33,963 educators have been trained in the promotion of healthy habits and lifestyles and in food and nutritional security topics.

100. Between 2015 and 2021, 183,651 children under 5 years of age with acute malnutrition or at risk of acute malnutrition and underweight pregnant women have received support as part of a strategy for addressing and preventing malnutrition. These persons have received care at nutritional rehabilitation centres and through programmes such as “A Thousand Days to Change the World” and Active Search Units. Over the last 5 years, 130,000 rural households have received assistance under programmes that include food security components.

101. The three most common causes of death in children under 5 years of age – acute respiratory problems, acute diarrhoea and malnutrition (2013) – are being monitored in an effort to sustain the steady decline observed in this age group’s mortality rate in Colombia since 1990. Between 2005 and 2019, this decline has been reflected in a 30 per cent reduction in this indicator. One of the decisive components of this effort has been the preparation of a barrier analysis that has been used in designing an improvement plan that is being constantly monitored by the national health authority.⁶⁵

102. Health service management efforts place emphasis on a clinical approach to prevalent conditions among young children. Strategies to promote the delivery of health care in remote and rural areas provide for the use of mobile teams, training sessions for community agents and the establishment of comprehensive community health-care units and acute respiratory disease rooms (714 socially and culturally appropriate rooms in 22 territorial units). Particular attention has been devoted to rural areas and high-priority post-conflict territories. Clinical guidelines have been issued concerning growth and developmental disorders in children under 10 years of age, refractive defects and amblyopia in children under 18 years of age. Suicide prevention measures have been put in place, and arrangements have been made for the provision of equipment and supplies to public health-care providers in rural and remote areas.⁶⁶

103. Key advances in protecting children against vaccine-preventable diseases include: the expanded immunization programme, which consists of 21 vaccines that protect against 26 diseases; individual follow-up of age-specific vaccination coverage; optimization of the cold chain network in both rural areas (using solar-powered refrigerators) and urban zones; a barrier-free strategy for the Venezuelan population (roll-out of 2,502,242 biologicals); and barrier-free vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Colombia has maintained its status as a country free of measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome and polio. In addition, Colombia was the winner of the “Measles and Rubella Initiative Champion Award” at the United Nations in 2019. Significant funding has been devoted to the purchase and distribution of biologicals (more than 90 per cent) and to the development of information strategies and to research and the formation of a technical management team.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (b).

⁶⁶ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (a).

⁶⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (f).

104. In 2020, a decrease linked to the isolation imposed by the pandemic was observed in infant mortality associated with acute respiratory infections according to the records for epidemiological weeks Nos. 45–48 (reduction of 33 per cent compared to 2018), malnutrition (reduction of 35 per cent compared to 2019) and acute diarrheal disease. Prior to the pandemic, early childhood indicators had also pointed to a downward trend, while differentials between territorial units had remained unchanged, with early childhood rates being higher in remote rural areas (with the exception of low birth weight) and in Indigenous territories and among population groups participating in the subsidized health plan.⁶⁸

Mental health⁶⁹

105. The State's mental health policies (2018) and the National Economic and Social Policy Council Strategy for the Promotion of Mental Health in Colombia (2020) categorize promotional measures by life stage. Progress has been made in the following areas: approval of guidelines for supporting the spiritual harmony and way of thinking of Indigenous Peoples and communities by the health subcommittee of the Standing Committee for Consultation with Indigenous Peoples and Organizations; training of ICBF operators in mental health first aid and initial responses to children and their families who present potential symptoms of mental illnesses or disorders; operation of the national mental health support hotline, with more than 17,457 calls received between April 2020 and March 2021, of which 1,928 calls were made by children or adolescents; strengthening of telemedicine as a modality for mental health care; and in-service training sessions for 1,600 health professionals on the intervention guide for the Mental Health Gap Action Programme. This guide, which has been adapted for intercultural use with Indigenous Peoples, was adjusted to ensure its suitability for use in relation to the Awá Indigenous People of the Department of Nariño.

106. Colombia gathers information on the principal causes of suicide and other mental health illnesses in children through its National Mental Health Survey. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which seeks to reduce the risk factors associated with suicide, is currently undergoing validation. In 2020, nearly 700,000 children and adolescents, teachers, counsellors, administrative and support staff, and primary caregivers from 300 educational institutions (among the 50 per cent of educational institutions that have been certified by the Ministry of Education), received social and emotional-self regulation skills training.

107. With regard to the expansion of health-care services in the areas of mental health and psychoactive substance use among children, as of February 2021 general medicine and nursing services are available throughout the country, and professionals are gradually being trained in the Mental Health Gap Action Programme strategy. In terms of specialized services, there are 12,215 outpatient services and 700 residential and hospital services, mainly in Bogotá, Antioquia, Atlántico and Valle del Cauca. Health care in rural and remote rural areas is carried out on the basis of integrated health-care network and telemedicine strategies, with 77 per cent of the territories having mental health teleguidance lines. The number of children receiving care for mental disorders or psychoactive substance use rose from 308,144 in 2015 to 594,961 in 2019. For 2020 (preliminary records), 353,674 children have been identified as receiving care, with an average of between 4 and 7 visits per child per year.

108. In response to the preventive isolation measures established by the Colombian Government in the face of the COVID-19 health emergency, ICBF designed the “My Hands Teach You” strategy for guaranteeing children's right to an uninterrupted early education by way of a remote instructional scheme. This strategy includes prioritized psychosocial support delivered by telephone or other community-based and alternative means of communication to address changes in behaviour, thoughts and emotions that can have a negative effect on individuals' mental health while they are in preventive isolation. The strategy offers families first-response psychological support tools for coping with the emotional, social, economic and other dynamics that arose during the pandemic as a result of such events as infection or death.

⁶⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 40 (c).

⁶⁹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 42 (a)–(c).

Adolescent health

109. In the second Families in Action Programme evaluation (2006), a systematic reduction in birth rates in the evaluated municipalities was observed, along with a significant reduction in adolescent pregnancies in large urban centres. A pilot programme was then designed for young people in rural areas between 15 and 18 years of age. Between 2014 and 2016, within the framework of a national strategy for the prevention of adolescent pregnancies, the pilot programme was implemented to promote sexual and reproductive health, to encourage informed and responsible decision-making and to prevent unplanned pregnancies among adolescents aged 14 to 17 years. The measures used for this purpose included conditional cash transfers and community welfare components of the Families in Action Programme.⁷⁰

110. Colombia provides conditional cash transfers in the amount of Col\$ 30,000 to adolescents for attending adolescent- and youth-friendly health services. Additionally, the Generations and Family Well-Being Programme has been implemented in five departments and has transferred Col\$ 95,870,000 to 533 adolescent beneficiaries. As a result, health-care attendance increased by 51 per cent. The Social Innovation Strategy was implemented in three departments, with an investment of Col\$ 310,219,740, creating five participatory social incubators involving 1,444 adolescents. Educational, entertainment and interpersonal communication guidance materials have been used as peer-based tools for the protection and promotion of rights.⁷¹

111. The adolescent fertility rate among women aged 15–19 years decreased between 2015 and 2019 from 63.95 to 57.95 births per 1,000 women in that age group. This represents a decline of more than 17,000 births among adolescent women between 2015 and 2019. Adolescent fertility rates are monitored at the local level and then linked to indicators for access to contraceptive and family planning services. Births among girls under 14 years of age are monitored for the purpose of providing access to health services for victims of sexual violence and for the voluntary termination of pregnancy in cases of sexual violence.⁷²

112. To reduce the number of unsafe abortions and promote the right to reproductive self-determination among girls and female adolescents, the Government has worked to build capacity in the following areas: (a) political and health authorities' familiarity with the relevant medical, psychological and technical issues, with special emphasis on services for girls and adolescents and access to the voluntary termination of pregnancy at the first level of care in accordance with ruling C-355; and (b) the familiarity of Family Ombudsmen with the technical guidelines on health services for child and adolescent victims of sexual violence whose rights have been threatened or undermined, procedures for gaining access to the voluntary termination of pregnancy as a right of victims of sexual violence and the means of identifying barriers that prevent the realization of that right.⁷³

113. The State has built capacity for the implementation of the Sexuality, Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights Policy. Additionally, projects aimed at strengthening sexual and reproductive health services have promoted the participation and involvement of civil society groups, organizations and networks in improving the quality of health-care service delivery.⁷⁴

HIV/AIDS⁷⁵

114. In 2019, 42 per cent of pregnant women with gestational syphilis completed treatment for the condition compared to 4.3 per cent in 2015. There was a steady increase in the proportion of pregnant women screened for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B (77 per cent,

⁷⁰ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 44 (a).

⁷¹ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 44 (a).

⁷² Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 44 (a)–(c).

⁷³ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 44 (c).

⁷⁴ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 44 (d).

⁷⁵ Recommendation CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 46.

80 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively, in 2019, compared to 35 per cent, 40 per cent and 30 per cent in 2015).⁷⁶

115. Colombia is on track to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV: HIV rates among newborns dropped from 2 per cent in 2015 to 1.7 per cent in 2018 (i.e. 14 infected children per 820 live births exposed to HIV). This reduction has been made possible by the availability of free universal health coverage for interventions in five key areas.

Drug and psychotropic substance abuse⁷⁷

116. The Strong Families Programme fosters communication and family relationship skills among 40,219 families (140,767 persons) from 229 municipalities in 30 departments. This evidence-based programme works at the local level to strengthen protective factors that will help to prevent the consumption of psychoactive substances.

117. A drug treatment tracking programme run by drug treatment courts has been operating as part of the juvenile justice system since 2016. This programme is currently in place in 10 cities in Colombia and combines legal, health, social inclusion and restorative justice components in order to provide comprehensive responses aimed at reducing consumption and reoffending. In 2017, the Colombian Drug Observatory conducted a national study on the consumption of psychoactive substances among adolescents in conflict with the law. In addition to providing an overview of drug use among this population group, it produced estimates on the relationship between drug use and criminal behaviour and the effects of the interventions carried out in this segment of the population.

118. With a view to orchestrating an intersectoral effort to address and prevent psychoactive substance use by children, the “Way Forward”, a comprehensive policy to address the drug problem, was issued in 2018, and a comprehensive policy for the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances was issued in 2019. This policy calls for the use of evidence-based interventions in a range of settings (the home, school, the community, institutional settings and places of employment) to strengthen protective factors and to prevent the consumption of such substances by children of all ages and by adolescents.

119. Colombia has made a cross-sectoral investment amounting to more than Col\$ 1 trillion in an attempt to raise the age of drug use initiation. Currently, 50 per cent of adolescents have consumed tobacco and alcohol by the age of 13 and other harmful substances by the age of 14.

120. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 35 municipalities in remote rural areas developed 35 projects for the prevention of psychoactive substance use. Community mechanisms such as School Orientation Zones, Listening Centres and University Orientation Zones have been established in all 32 departments. In addition, for the past three years, health monitoring and surveillance operations have been carried out to ensure the provision of health services for people who use psychoactive substances.

Environmental health

121. The State has increased the local coverage of water distribution services and improved quality indicators for the water supplied to urban and rural areas of the country with the help of departmental plans for the business management of water and sanitation Services. It has also implemented a “culture of water” programme and a programme to provide more indoor water and sewerage hook-ups, among other projects. Since 2017, guidelines have been applied that set out minimum criteria and measures based on risk studies, risk reduction programmes and contingency plans for drinking water supply systems.⁷⁸

122. The State carries out health promotion and risk prevention actions at the local level in compliance with the relevant regulatory framework, which establishes distance exposure

⁷⁶ CUBO SISPRO Territorially Focused Development Programmes. Consulted November 2020.

⁷⁷ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 48.

⁷⁸ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 50 (a).

limits and procedures for calculating levels of exposure to electromagnetic fields generated by telecommunication antennas.⁷⁹

H. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29, 30 and 31)

Early childhood development⁸⁰

123. Intersectoral work has been pursued over the last 10 years by the Intersectoral Commission for Integrated Early Childhood Services, which was approved by Act No. 1804 of 2016. Between its creation and the cut-off date for this report, the Commission has held 101 meetings, at which sectors committed to comprehensive early childhood development have provided guidance and taken relevant decisions to make progress in implementing the policies that cover all children in early childhood.

124. Significant process has been made in the area of early childhood education, such as the development of nursery and preschool curricula and a subsidized education support model. A technical and operational programme is also being carried out at the local level to promote continuity in education with a view to ensuring that children can successfully make the transition to the first grade of compulsory education at the age of 5. In addition, the coverage of the different modalities of nursery education as part of the country's comprehensive education services is increasing: 1.5 million children received nursery education in 2020, compared with 1.1 million children in 2015. These modalities include formal preschool education as well as a specific modality for the care of girls living with their mothers in prison and another for girls and boys from Indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera, Raizal and Roma communities. In 2020, 74 per cent of this population received six or more priority services as part of the Comprehensive Road Map for Services for Children and Adolescents.

125. These modalities are accessible to victims of armed-conflict-related violence, children with disabilities or certain health conditions and the migrant population. Progress has been made in redesigning services for delivery in rural and remote areas.

126. Some 2.9 million children (an estimated 75 per cent of children in early childhood over the period 2018 to 2021, based on data from the national population census) are tracked using the comprehensive early childhood development monitoring system. Between 2015 and 2020, four collections of books were produced especially for young children and the Maguaré and MaguaRed portals were developed. These portals provide high-quality content created for young children and teachers relating to literature, music and art, including content in the languages of Indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera, Raizal and Roma communities.

Education, including vocational training and guidance

127. In the period to 2021, 300,000 students who had enrolled in upper secondary education earned diplomas from both the Ministry of Education and the National Training Service through programmes relevant to each region which have enabled these young people to enhance their skills in accordance with their needs and interests. A total of 1,279 young people in upper secondary education have received support and 413 teachers have been trained in 23 municipalities under the national careers guidance programme, whose aim is to improve the future prospects of young people and help them to make decisions about their career paths. Innovative initiatives are being implemented to support upper secondary school students in rural municipalities that have been prioritized for post-conflict support. Educational projects on sustainable development in technical secondary education programmes focusing on agricultural education are being enhanced in recognition of economic realities in those regions.

⁷⁹ Recommendation [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 50 (b).

⁸⁰ [CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5](#), para. 54.

128. In addition, Act No. 1955 of 2019 established the “Sacúdete” (“Shake It Up”) strategy, which helps to close equity gaps by focusing on development and boosting productivity in strategic sectors to promote equity among adolescents and young people. Implementing the “Sacúdete” strategy is a strategic and relevant way to mitigate the social pressure experienced by adolescents and young people facing barriers to access to the labour market, the economy and other income-generation opportunities and to lessen the impact of those barriers by promoting employment, education and entrepreneurship.

129. Colombia has prioritized the strengthening of high-quality education as a key social policy tool in the two national development plans corresponding to the period covered by this report. In the National Development Plan for 2014–2018, education was viewed as the route to reducing inequalities and creating better opportunities for Colombians. The National Development Plan P for 2018–2022 included an important chapter entitled: “High-quality education for a future providing opportunities for all” in recognition of the fact that education is a key element of human, social and economic development. Investment earmarked for education has increased, with the education budget rising from Col\$ 20.8 billion in 2010 to Col\$ 38 billion in 2018 and Col\$ 47 billion in 2021. Investment in the sector has therefore doubled in the last 10 years, and the education sector is now the sector with the largest budget.⁸¹

130. With respect to the quality of education,⁸² 1.27 million children and adolescents (17 per cent of all children enrolled in education) benefit from the full-day school schedules programme (the Jornada Única Programme). The aim of this initiative is to promote their holistic development through a comprehensive approach, closing gaps and significantly transforming the school experience by optimizing the use of time and developing learning environments that allow students to immerse themselves in arts and culture, recreation, sports, innovation and technology.

131. The “Inspiring, life-changing teachers”⁸³ initiative provides opportunities for professional development and runs projects that have enabled 8,000 teachers to attend postgraduate training programmes; 10,000 school leaders to engage in leadership training; 129 teacher-training colleges to build the skills that future teachers need to implement innovative teaching practices; and 9,000 teachers to follow in-service training programmes to strengthen their instructional skills in the areas of inclusive and intercultural education, bilingualism, reading and writing.

132. In line with the strategic commitment to improve the quality of education, the “Learning for All” programme⁸⁴ has been running since 2012. Its objective is to strengthen nursery and primary schoolteachers’ skills in order to enhance the learning experiences of their students, particularly in the areas of language and mathematics. More than 90,000 teachers, including 11,000 nursery teachers and 3,000 teachers of African descent, have reworked their teaching practices. The programme has been implemented in around 900 municipalities and 15,000 nurseries and schools, 74 per cent of which are located in rural areas, with priority being placed on remote areas. Nearly 2 million children and adolescents have benefited from this programme. In the last three years, 10 million textbooks have been delivered to schools targeted by the Learning for All, the Jornada Única Programme, National Reading and Writing Plan and Bilingual Colombia initiatives.

133. One of the prioritized lines of action is the promotion of school environments conducive to life, coexistence and citizenship. This initiative works alongside families and society as a whole to enhance children’s social and emotional development, the exercise of their rights and the development of ethical, democratic and inclusive citizenship. The teaching of history, ethics, civics and citizenship has been strengthened to help create a national identity that honours cultural diversity, historical memory, reconciliation and peace.⁸⁵ Each year, technical assistance is provided to the country’s 96 local school district offices to support the promotion of sexual and reproductive human rights. The Andean Week

⁸¹ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

⁸² CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

⁸³ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

⁸⁴ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

⁸⁵ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (d) and (g).

for the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy is also held on an annual basis. Steps are being taken to develop technical, administrative and pedagogical guidelines on educational support for students with health issues, including adolescents with high-risk pregnancies, who must be assured of continued access to education.

134. Decree No. 1421 of 2017 addresses inclusive educational support for persons with disabilities. Its objective is to regulate and establish pathways, schemes and conditions for the provision of preschool, basic and secondary education to this population group.

135. Prior consultations on the regulations for the Indigenous Education System are under way within the framework of the National Commission on Labour and Educational Cooperation for Indigenous Peoples. The consultations are structured into three pillars: education, politics and organization, and administration and management. In 2015, the Standing Committee for Consultation with Indigenous Peoples (MPC) approved three phased components of the methodological road map.

136. Prior consultations on the Statute for the Teaching Profession with teachers from black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera and Raizal communities are also ongoing. This process is based on the prior consultation road map designed in accordance with Constitutional Court Ruling No. C-666 of 2016. Since 2018, the Ministry of Education has ensured the availability of the necessary technical and financial resources for the implementation of the road map, which has enabled the parties to enter into agreements with one another.

137. Key ethnically and culturally relevant activities for black, Afro-Colombian, Palenquera and Raizal communities include the training of ethno-educators, the establishment of positions for teachers of Afro-Colombian studies in local school districts and the design and implementation of community education projects. Multilingualism has been promoted, as have Indigenous, Creole and Raizal languages. These activities informed the development of the Ten-Year Indigenous Language Plan 2020–2030, which is being implemented to further promote multilingualism.

138. The school meals programme is one of the State education system's key strategies for helping children and young people of school age to attend and remain in school.⁸⁶ The programme leverages its impact on development and the promotion of continued school attendance and learning. In 2018, it benefited 5.3 million children and adolescents. At Col\$ 1.075 billion, its 2019 budget was 45 per cent than it had been the previous year. To date, the programme has benefited close to 6 million children. In addition, the special administrative school meals "Food for Learning" module has been established and operationalized.

139. To ensure the safety and appropriateness of learning environments,⁸⁷ steps are being taken to strengthen the educational infrastructure fund. To date, 541 projects have been implemented, resulting in nearly 13,000 new and improved classrooms for children in basic education and improvements in rural educational infrastructure valued at \$170 billion. Some 557 projects were prioritized for development in 2019–2020. The Government has worked with the private sector to secure investments of over Col\$ 100 billion through the Works for Taxes initiative, which has permitted the creation of new and better learning spaces in schools in areas affected by poverty and conflict.

140. Priority has been given to the development of a comprehensive rural education policy⁸⁸ to promote regional development, reduce gaps and improve access to and the quality of nursery, preschool, basic and secondary education in the most remote areas of the country. As part of this policy, the Special Rural Education Plan contributes to the provision of comprehensive services for children and helps to ensure the coverage, quality and relevance of education and to eradicate illiteracy in rural areas. The Plan is aligned with the State's commitment to supporting the recovery of the rural sector and to complying with the provisions of item 1 (comprehensive rural reform) of the Final Agreement for Ending the

⁸⁶ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (c).

⁸⁷ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a) and (c).

⁸⁸ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, taking into account the definitions set out in the Framework Plan for Implementation of the Agreements.

141. An analysis of educational models based around active learning was conducted, with an emphasis on the *escuela nueva* method, and progress was made in upgrading educational strategies through the development of up-to-date curricula and a framework for the implementation of such strategies in the various regions of the country.⁸⁹

142. Three sets of protocols on emergency assistance for at-risk public schoolteachers have been issued in the last 10 years.⁹⁰ These protocols are the outcome of the analysis, evaluation and development of appropriate, relevant public policies with the support and active participation of teachers' unions.

143. The Government is implementing Decree No. 1075 of 2015, which establishes the criteria and procedures for the relocation of public-school teachers for security reasons in a manner that protects their rights to life, liberty, integrity and security and their right to work. The National Protection Unit is a national security agency that helps to implement this decree by developing strategies for the analysis and evaluation of risks, threats and vulnerabilities and by implementing individual and/or collective protection measures for target populations, including public school teachers, using differential approaches suited to the groups' locale, ethnicity and gender.

144. With the agreement of the Colombian teachers' unions, a national committee has been set up to oversee the relocation of teachers for reasons of personal safety. In addition, guidelines have been established for coordination, through this committee, of actions taken by local school district offices and other government bodies aimed at protecting teachers' lives and helping them to remain in the teaching profession.

145. The Education in Emergencies Programme and the School Risk Management Strategy have been designed in coordination with local school districts to ensure that children in emergency and disaster situations can exercise their right to education.⁹¹ In this context, local education departments have been provided with guidelines on the responsibilities and actions required of actors in the education sector during the prevention, risk management, crisis and post-emergency phases of emergencies caused by environmental factors or the impact of internal armed conflict. They have also been invited to implement emergency and contingency action plans, and education institutions have been encouraged to implement school disaster risk management plans.

146. The recommendations of the Intersectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings are followed in the event of emergencies arising from armed conflict. Actors in the education sector coordinate with the Directorate of Mine Action in Colombia in the event of accidents and incidents caused by anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and booby traps; with the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment, Use and Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations in cases where children or adolescents have been, or are at risk of being, recruited or used by organized armed groups or criminal organizations; and with the Ministry of Defence in cases where educational institutions are being used for military purposes.

147. In 2020, the Family-School Alliance strategy was launched to support the comprehensive development of children and adolescents, help them to gain access to and remain in the education system, promote their well-being and improve their future prospects. This strategy was developed in line with the National Policy for Comprehensive Early Childhood Development ("From Zero to Forever") as well as the National Public Policy to Support and Strengthen the Family and all other policies focused on encouraging families and schools to join forces to ensure the holistic development of children and adolescents. Additionally, Act No. 2025 of 2020 establishes guidelines for the implementation of the Schools for Parents and Caregivers initiative in preschool, basic and secondary education

⁸⁹ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (a).

⁹⁰ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (f).

⁹¹ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 52 (e).

institutions in Colombia, which is one of the many tools for the implementation of the Family–School Alliance strategy.

I. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40)

Displaced children

148. Progress has been made in the further development of the component of the Public Policy for Victims of the Armed Conflict that focuses on children and adolescents through the conclusion of an agreement on the provision of specialized services to victims of the conflict that supplements the services provided for by the State Policy on Early Childhood and the National Policy on Children and Adolescents. A total of 15 specialized services for child victims of the conflict have been established in the following four areas: prevention and protection; care and assistance; comprehensive reparation; and truth and justice.

149. Under the ICBF Mobile Units Strategy, psychosocial support was provided to 628,563 children and adolescents in the country's 32 departments between 2015 and 2020. Almost 50 per cent of the beneficiaries were girls. In order to promote the rights of displaced girls, prevent child labour, lower the school dropout rate and counter violence associated with specific risks during that period, services were made available to 209,513 children and adolescents who were displaced and/or victims of the armed conflict. Girls and female adolescents made up approximately 52 per cent of this group.

150. The Comprehensive Mobile Protection Teams Strategy is designed to ensure that coordinated measures are taken to restore the rights of children engaging in child labour. In 2020, 44 comprehensive mobile protection teams were operating throughout the country, benefiting 168,436 users and their families in 96 municipalities and in another 31 municipalities with local development programmes.

151. A total of 14,588 girl and female adolescent victims of the armed conflict received support under ICBF rights promotion and risk prevention programmes, which address the problems of child labour, school dropout and violence. The methodologies of these programmes are tailored to the dynamics and contexts of the areas in which the target population groups live.

152. The procedure for recognizing refugee status is governed by Decree No. 1067 of 2015. If applications are submitted by minors, the appropriate steps are taken by the parents or persons exercising parental authority. In the event that a child is separated or unaccompanied, ICBF represents him or her during the process. Between 2020 and 22 June 2021, 678 applications for refugee status were filed by children and adolescents whom the Institute was asked to represent.

Children belonging to minority ethnic groups

153. Between 2015 and 2020, more than 160,000 families belonging to minority ethnic groups in the country benefited from the Ethnic Territories Welfare Programme of ICBF. A cultural and socio-organizational empowerment initiative is being carried out to promote the survival, autonomous development and social inclusion of families and communities belonging to minority ethnic groups. This initiative provides beneficiary communities with an avenue for addressing issues such as the prevention of rights violations, including violations involving violence, recruitment and the loss of traditions.

154. Between 2016 and 2021, ICBF made use of its group-specific and intercultural early childhood care modality to allocate \$930,523,659,644 to support pregnant women and infants belonging to ethnic minority communities living in rural and remote areas.

155. Steps taken to provide health care for Indigenous communities have included technical and financial support for: the formulation and validation of the comprehensive health-care road map for 13 ethnic communities, which incorporates measures aimed at countering

gender-based violence, armed conflict and other forms of interpersonal violence; for the establishment of the Indigenous and Intercultural Health System, in coordination with Indigenous peoples and communities and the Health Subcommittee of the Standing Committee for Consultation with Indigenous Peoples; the Support Plan for the Community Life of Indigenous Peoples; the guidelines on acute diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections for Indigenous communities; and lines of action for preventing and addressing violence being pursued in conjunction with the National Commission of Indigenous Women.

156. ICBF has designed a community road map for the prevention of sexual violence against children, adolescents, women and families of the Kamentsá People and the provision of support to victims. The road map ties in with the Life Plan, the Safeguard Plan and the Indigenous Justice Manual. Together with the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, the same type of road map has been defined and developed for the Maiben Masiware People in order to benefit the Indigenous Peoples of San José de Ariporo, in the Caño Mochuelo reserve in the Department of Casanare.

157. As part of the process of restoring ethnic land rights established in Decree-Laws No. 4633 and No. 4635 of 2011, investigations into acts of violence and violations of the rights of the child are being conducted to identify land rights violations suffered by minority ethnic communities during the internal armed conflict. These investigations are drawing on both primary (community-based) and secondary (institutional) sources in order to identify claims lodged with the competent judge that may lead to the recovery and recognition of land rights and the provision of differentiated support.

158. With regard to the follow-up given to the action plan for the Strategy for the Comprehensive Approach to Gender-based Violence among Indigenous Peoples 2017–2018, technical, administrative and operational guidelines for dealing with sexual and gender-based violence have been developed so that measures may be taken to recognize, detect and provide support in cases of sexual violence that occur within these communities and to initiate support pathways.

159. Support was provided to two Indigenous councils in the departments of Vaupés and Amazonas, where challenges in the area of victim support were identified and community pathways for preventing violence were formulated. Guidelines for a comprehensive approach to gender-based violence in this community were developed on the basis of a systematic review of the experiences of eight Indigenous councils in the departments of Córdoba, Putumayo, Cauca, Guainía, Vaupés and Amazonas.

160. Thanks to the Mobile Units Strategy, ICBF has a presence in prioritized municipalities in the 32 departments, where it supports victims of forced displacement or persons in emergency situations and works to ensure the protection and restoration of rights and the provision of comprehensive reparations to children, adolescents, pregnant women, nursing mothers, Indigenous families, and black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palenquera families and Roma communities.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

161. In Colombia, adolescents have the right to protected employment from the age of 15 years, the right to protection and comprehensive training, and the employment protections established in the Substantive Labour Code and other supplementary regulations. On an exceptional basis, persons under 15 years of age may obtain a permit from the Labour Inspectorate or the local authority acting in its place to carry out remunerated artistic, cultural, recreational or sporting activities. Such permits establish the maximum number of hours and define the conditions under which the activity may be carried out. Under no circumstances may a permit be granted for more than 14 hours of work per week.

162. In accordance with the National Strategy on the Prevention and Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Protection of Young Workers 2008–2015, an identification protocol has been established to address and give focus to institutional measures that deal with the root causes of child labour. The strategy provides that departmental, district and municipal social policy councils should form part of committees for the prevention and

eradication of child labour operating at the local level in order to endow prevention and eradication mechanisms with a comprehensive, intersectoral and inter-institutional framework for action. This approach provided the basis for the current National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour and the Comprehensive Protection of Adolescent Workers 2017–2027.

163. With regard to the figures for 2015–2016, the child labour rate fell from 13 per cent in 2011 to 9.1 per cent in 2015.⁹² The integrated information system for identifying and recording the worst forms of child labour (SIRITI) is used to gather, analyse, consolidate and coordinate information on child labour and the worst forms of such labour.

164. In the October–December quarter of 2018, the child labour rate was 5.9 per cent for the country as a whole. For the same quarter in 2017, the rate was 7.3 per cent.⁹³ For the corresponding quarter in 2019, the child labour rate was 5.4 per cent for children between 5 and 17 years of age. For the same quarter in 2018, the rate was 5.9 per cent.⁹⁴ The child labour rate of 5.4 per cent recorded for 2019 equates to 585,897 children and adolescents undertaking hazardous activities. Compared to the previous year, the rate fell by 0.5 percentage points, which means that 58,597 fewer children and adolescents were engaged in child labour in 2019 than in 2018.

165. The issuance of work permits for children and adolescents is monitored, and monthly and quarterly figures are compiled on the number of work permits issued for adolescents and, exceptionally, children. Websites offering work to persons under 17 years of age are tracked. Inspection strategies and guidelines for the protection of children's labour rights are developed, and forums on child labour involving different stakeholders in the various departments are organized.

166. The Inter-Agency Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour and the Protection of Young Workers⁹⁵ is led and coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and the departmental inter-agency committees for the eradication of child labour and the protection of young workers. These bodies head up efforts to prevent and eradicate child labour in the country's 32 departments. A total of 684 municipal inter-agency committees for the eradication of child labour and the protection of young workers are in operation. There are 87 boards in other municipalities that work to prevent and put a stop to child labour.

167. Since 2014, the bodies that make up the Inter-Agency Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour and the Protection of Young Workers have led the development of a new instrument for gathering information on national progress, lessons learned and guidance resulting from the evaluation by the National Planning Department of efforts carried out under the National Strategy on the Prevention and Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Protection of Young Workers 2008–2015. Account has also been taken of the Committee's concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Colombia and the annual *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* of the United States Department of Labor.

168. In 2015, work began on the participatory development of the National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour, with particular attention being paid to dangerous forms of work and the protection of adolescent workers and their families.

⁹² The figures for the child labour rate between 2011 and 2017 are as follows: 2011: 13 per cent, corresponding to 1,465,500 children and adolescents; 2012: 10.2 per cent, corresponding to 1,160,000 children and adolescents; 2013: 9.7 per cent, corresponding to 1,091,000 children and adolescents; 2014: 9.3 per cent, corresponding to 1,039,000 children and adolescents; 2015: 9.1 per cent, corresponding to 1,018,000 children and adolescents; 2016: 7.8 per cent, corresponding to 869,000 children and adolescents, with 149,000 having left child labour; 2017: 7.3 per cent, corresponding to 796,000 children and adolescents, with 73,000 having left child labour; 2018: 5.9 per cent for the period from October to December 2018. (Large-scale integrated household survey) – National Department of Statistics.

⁹³ National Department of Statistics, April 2019.

⁹⁴ National Department of Statistics, April 2020.

⁹⁵ Decree No. 859 of 1995.

169. Data from the impact evaluation conducted under the Families in Action Programme show that beneficiaries of the programme between 12 and 17 years of age were 1.62 per cent less likely to engage in child labour in urban areas and 3.71 less likely to do so in rural areas. It can therefore be inferred that conditional cash transfers contribute to the prevention of child labour. Within the framework of the Programme, State agencies coordinate their efforts to implement the Strategy for Promoting School Retention and the Comprehensive Protection of Children's Rights, in accordance with which alerts are issued when school absences are reported by the Families in Action Information System.

170. With regard to the technical assistance provided under the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8, an agreement on collaboration with ILO was signed in 2015 to pool institution-building efforts and resources. This has made it possible to strengthen the National Strategy on the Prevention and Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Protection of Young Workers.

171. With the support of ILO and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Colombia took part in the design of the Child Labour Risk Identification Model: Methodology for designing preventive strategies at local level. In 2018, ILO supported the implementation of the Model, which is a tool for identifying territories and enclaves where, owing to situations of vulnerability, children are more likely to engage in labour.

172. In 2015, within the framework of the national Inter-Agency Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour and the Protection of Young Workers, ILO provided technical assistance for the development of the final version of the National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour and the Comprehensive Protection of Adolescent Workers.

Children in street situations

173. In 2019, a study to profile migrants in street situations was conducted in conjunction with the International Organization for Migration. In 2020, an overview of the population of children living in street situations in the country was developed as a basis for differentiated mapping of the need on the ground for measures to prevent children from remaining in street situations.

174. The guidelines on the care of children and adolescents in street situations or living in the streets whose rights have been ignored, threatened or violated (2016) have strengthened and enhanced the comprehensive set of services made available for this group through mechanisms for supporting and strengthening family and non-family environments. Between 2015 and 2021, administrative rights restoration processes were initiated for 4,489 children and adolescents living in street situations or in the streets.

175. In 2016, as part of the "Circopolis" project, an edutainment campaign was conducted to promote social change and create opportunities for engaging in leisure activities for children and adolescents at risk of rights violations. In 2017, measures were taken to identify and analyse specific cases of children living in the streets or in street situations in order to launch differentiated prevention and care pathways.

176. In 2019, a dedicated hotline for children living in the streets or in street situations made it possible to identify 402 children and adolescents in such situations. These children and adolescents were enrolled in the traditional and ethnic components of the "Welfare for Generations" programme of ICBF. Prevention processes were established for the Indigenous population in view of the large number of children and adolescents from Indigenous communities who are in street situations. Efforts are being made to identify the characteristic cultural aspects of their practices and those relating to begging.

Administration of child justice

177. In 2015, following the issuance of Decree No. 1885, the National System for the Coordination of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System was established, along with the National Technical Committee and the departmental and district committees.

178. ICBF, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, promotes the provision of services and the strengthening of non-custodial measures and sanctions by the judicial authorities. It also works to ensure that greater emphasis is placed on these services by the judicial and instructional staff of the juvenile criminal justice system.

179. In order to facilitate the implementation of crime prevention initiatives at the local level, the Ministry of Justice designed and implemented a campaign entitled “There is Another Way” (La Vuelta es Otra) (2016). The campaign is targeted at adolescents and young people who face a high risk of becoming involved in crime. The campaign conducts awareness-raising activities, using everyday language to which the young people can relate, in schools located in high-risk areas in the city of Bogota.

180. The Ministry of Justice, with funding provided by the European Union under the Project of Institutional Support for the Colombian Criminal Justice System, conducted a study on the problem posed by gang activity in seven areas around Colombia (2016 and 2017). This study contributed both to the understanding of the phenomenon and to public measures for addressing it. In this connection, a committee for the prevention of gang activity was set up, and a conceptual framework was established from a rights-based perspective with a view to creating a value chain for public policy guidelines.

181. In 2020 and 2021, the National System for the Coordination of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System designed and disseminated a methodological manual on the technical strengthening of departmental and district committees working to prevent adolescents and young people from becoming involved in crime. ICBF then issued the instructions required to enable the regional directorates to act as the technical secretariats for the departmental committees responsible for the juvenile criminal justice system and for the establishment of the 32 departmental and 1 district committees and the development of action plans.

182. Since 2020, the State has implemented a “Coordinate + Prevent = Safe Future” strategy for the technical strengthening and coordination of the departmental and district crime prevention committees of the National System for the Coordination of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System.

183. In order to strengthen restorative justice within the framework of the National System for the Coordination of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System, technical assistance was provided to the departmental committees (2016) for the publication of a document entitled *Diagnóstico y Lineamientos de Política para la Aplicación de la Justicia Juvenil Restaurativa en Colombia* (Diagnosis and Policy Guidelines for the Implementation of Restorative Juvenile Justice in Colombia) (2017) by the Ministry of Justice and the International Organization for Migration. The purpose of the Restorative Juvenile Justice Programme is to guarantee victims’ rights to truth and full reparation and to help ensure that adolescents in conflict with the law learn to bear responsibility for their actions and that the social fabric affected by the commission of the offence is repaired.

184. Since 2018, the Ministry of Justice, ICBF, the International Organization for Migration, the United States Agency for International Development and other actors in the juvenile criminal justice system have held three international congresses on restorative practices and justice with a view to strengthening knowledge management in the field.

185. Since 2015, 59 specialized training courses have been conducted in conjunction with the Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Judicial Training College. The courses were delivered to 3,344 officials on subjects specific to the juvenile criminal justice system, such as the intersectoral pathway and support strategies for persons in conflict with criminal law, with a focus on the consumption of psychoactive substances and mental health at the local level, risk mitigation in detention centres, differential approaches, the application of restorative justice, the application of the principle of prosecutorial discretion as a means of reducing rates of deprivation of liberty, and international standards on juvenile justice systems. The course on the juvenile criminal justice system was taken by 350 officials, who were trained in the application of the principles of comprehensive protection, the best interests of the child and restorative justice.

186. In order to promote the effective protection of the rights of child victims and children in conflict with the law within the framework of administrative and legal proceedings, the

following tools have been developed: guidelines on supporting child and adolescent victims; a technical annex on information exchange with a view to identifying victims and high-risk environments; and a strategy for the preferential application of the principle of prosecutorial discretion and inter-institutional coordination. Furthermore, forums for dialogue between the sectoral directors of the Attorney General's Office and the regional directors of ICBF have been established.

Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – Article 42

187. In Colombia, the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents has been prioritized in the main regulatory instruments that govern measures, plans, programmes and national policy for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against this form of sexual violence.

188. Pursuant to Act No. 1336 of 2009, the National Policy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents 2018–2028 was adopted. The policy governs the measures taken by the State to prevent and care for victims using a differentiated approach, provides for more effective prosecution of perpetrators and sets out annual action plans.

189. The National Policy defines the Optional Protocol (Act No. 765 of 2002) as a basic law.

190. According to the Attorney General's Office, there were 193,788 child and adolescent victims of sexual violence, in and outside the context of the armed conflict, between 2015 and 5 March 2021. The records indicate that 147,175 suspects are facing proceedings in connection with these offences in which at least one victim was registered in the information systems as being under 18 years of age. Court records show that, over this period, charges were brought in 28,259 cases involving sexual violence and judgments were handed down in 5,919 such cases.

191. The Ministry of Labour, which presides over the Inter-Agency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, allocated Col\$ 154 million to the Inter-Agency Committee for 2021. In addition, each agency has its own resources for financing measures to implement the Committee's action plan.

192. Between 2016 and 2020, ICBF implemented specific risk prevention strategies focused on preventing violence and sexual exploitation against children. In 2016, the strategies were implemented in 18 municipalities, with 2,900 children and adolescents participating in the associated activities, at a cost of Col\$ 3.383 billion. In 2017, they were implemented in 11 municipalities, with 1,845 participants and a budget of Col\$ 1.978 billion. In 2018, they were implemented in 17 municipalities, attending to 2,610 children and adolescents at a cost of Col\$ 3.042 billion. In 2019, the strategies were targeted at 35 municipalities, with 4,683 participants and a budget of Col\$ 3.7 billion. In 2020, they covered 27 municipalities, benefitting 2,946 children and adolescents at a cost of Col\$ 1.755 billion. Between 2016 and 2020, direct measures targeting 14,984 children and adolescents were implemented.

193. The Ministry of Trade leads the National Strategy for the Prevention of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in the area of travel and tourism. The strategy is based on a commitment to responsible tourism and the protection of children's rights in accordance with the laws in force. It covers three ongoing areas of activity.

194. In the area of awareness-raising and capacity-building, workshops, regional forums, and national and international meetings have been held since 2009 to build tools for the production sector. An online course entitled "Everyone united against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in travel and tourism" is made available to support the training of entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. During the reporting period, the course was completed by 37,700 people, 80 per cent of whom are stakeholders in the tourism sector.

195. On 6 and 7 June 2018, the first International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism was held in accordance with Act No. 1336 of 2009. The summit brought together representatives and leaders from different Governments and international and multilateral organizations to expand and strengthen measures to protect children and adolescents in the context of travel and tourism. The outcome documents of the summit included the Declaration and Call for Action for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in Travel and Tourism and an open letter from the Colombian tourism sector, signed by the companies and guilds attending the summit, the World Travel and Tourism Council and Foundation ECPAT International.

196. In the area of information activities, the national prevention campaign #OjosEnTodasPartes (Eyes Everywhere) has been running since 2015 to raise awareness and inform the members of society about the importance of protecting and guaranteeing the rights of children. The campaign is led by the tourism sector and makes use of different channels for reporting offences of commercial sexual exploitation. A number of communication strategies have been implemented, including the placement of billboards in large cities, airports and public transport terminals and stops.

197. In the area of oversight and monitoring, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Tourism and the National Tourism Police undertake surveillance and oversight activities as provided for by law, such as establishing and updating the National Tourism Registry and requiring tourism service providers to adopt and adhere to a code of conduct.

198. In order to combat sexual violence directed at women and girls in certain regions and along certain routes, the following measures have been taken: inter-agency and interdisciplinary teams have been established and trained to investigate sexual violence perpetrated by criminal organizations; high-resolution cameras have been used to monitor public places in which there are large numbers of tourists; the confiscation of properties where criminal offences have been committed; extradition requests for foreign members of criminal organizations accused of engaging in sexual exploitation have been issued; investigations in cases of sexual violence have been prioritized; contacts have been made with government protection agencies to advocate for the provision of medical and psychological care for victims and for the proper intake of children, adolescents and young migrants from Venezuela; and large-scale training sessions have been held for staff working in different fields in both the private and public sectors.

199. In the area of awareness-raising, the following training sessions have been held: in 2016, 183 family welfare officers and members of psychosocial teams in the departments of Cundinamarca (97), Huila (36) and Antioquia (50) received training in the application of a strategy entitled “Sexual violence: the importance of the first 72 hours”; in 2017, 1,290 officials, including members of administrative authorities (lawyers and family welfare officers), members of the National Police Force and 371 officials in various departments received technical assistance in the application of the comprehensive care pathway for administrative processes to restore the rights of pregnant girls under 14 years of age; in 2019, 1,129 members of administrative authorities and professionals from interdisciplinary technical teams and mobile units received technical assistance in the application of the road map of measures for administrative processes to restore the rights of children and adolescents whose rights have been threatened or violated, including victims of sexual violence.

Follow-up to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

200. Since the last report was submitted, the State succeeded in putting an end to the conflict with the then guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) and has been carrying out the relevant support and protection measures since that time in compliance with point 3.2.2.5. of the Peace Agreement regarding the reincorporation of minors.

201. The Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment, Use and Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations has been in operation since 2007. The Commission oversees, coordinates and monitors efforts

to prevent the violation of the rights of children and adolescents by protecting them from being recruited, used or sexually abused by illegal armed groups. Through this intersectoral body, and in compliance with the National Development Plan 2018–2022, the national policy set out in document No. 3673 of 2010 of the National Economic and Social Policy Council was updated pursuant to Decree No. 1434 of 3 August 2018 and was subsequently amended in November 2019.⁹⁶

202. This national policy addresses the establishment of the national action plan, adopted on 15 July 2020, and defined the measures and resources available to the 22 State agencies responsible for preventing the recruitment, use and sexual abuse of children and adolescents. The measures in question are intended to meet the six specific objectives of the national policy: (1) to guarantee recognition of children and adolescents as subjects of rights; (2) to strengthen tools for their protection; (3) to strengthen measures for combating various forms of violence and exploitation of children; (4) to promote families' social and economic stability; (5) to establish forums for participation; and (6) to generate mechanisms for coordinating the various rights protection systems.

203. In order to implement the action plan at the local level, the State has assessed recruitment risks, making use of municipal prioritization measures to target institutional services and incorporating information on early warnings issued by the Ombudsman's Office. In 2020, 608 technical assistance activities were carried out for local agencies in order to build local capacities, implement public policy, shape local development plans and prevention pathways, and establish and reinforce rapid response teams.

204. The Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment, Use and Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations has a strategy for implementing national policy at the local level entitled "Join for Me – Protective Environments for Children and Adolescents". It is funded by the United Nations multi-partner trust fund for sustaining peace in Colombia and the United States Agency for International Development and is supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Organization for Migration. The strategy, which is being implemented in the 86 municipalities where children face the highest risk of being recruited, has five components: (1) training and empowerment to promote recognition of human rights and the rights of children and adolescents; (2) the mobilization and social participation of children, their families and communities; (3) the provision of psychosocial support to families; (4) the management of institutional and community-based networks to prevent recruitment and exploitation; and (5) knowledge systematization and management.

205. The different agencies that make up the Intersectoral Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment, Use and Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups and Criminal Organizations have strategies for preventing such offences, including "Mambrú Is Not Going to War" ("Mambrú no Va a la Guerra"), which has been implemented since 2010 by the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization. They also rely on institutional services for guaranteeing rights, preventing violations and strengthening protective environments for children, adolescents and young persons.

206. In situations where children's rights are threatened or violated, the State responds swiftly to early warnings issued by the Ombudsman's Office, in accordance with Decree No. 2124 of 2017, and the Inter-Sectoral Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings establishes measures for coordinating and targeting institutional services that provide comprehensive support and reparation to victims. ICBF works to restore the rights of children and adolescents whose rights have been threatened or violated in coordination with the local authorities, which establish protection measures, including transfers to safe places, depending on the case.⁹⁷

207. Strategies for disengaging and rescuing persons under 18 years of age from organized illegal armed groups have been adopted. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace has been responsible for the implementation of disengagement measures.

⁹⁶ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (a).

⁹⁷ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (b).

208. Pursuant to point 3.2.2.5 of the Peace Agreement, Decree No. 671 of 2017 was promulgated for the issuance of certificates of disengagement of minors in the event that peace agreements were reached; 132 minors have been certified under the terms of that decree. In addition, 274 people were certified who had been minors at the time that Joint Communiqué No. 70 of 15 May 2016 was signed following the negotiations between FARC-EP and the State and ratified by the National Reintegration Council. Under the Peace Agreement, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace certified the disengagement of 406 minors recruited by the demobilized FARC-EP, opening the way for the provision of support for the restoration of their rights and the provision of access to reintegration programmes and benefits and services established for victims of the armed conflict within the framework of the “Different Life Path” (Camino Diferencial de Vida) programme.

209. With a view to incorporating the differential approach for children into the Peace Agreement, differentiated measures have been developed that prioritize their best interests and take the effects and impact of the armed conflict on their lives into account. The Framework Plan on the Implementation of the Peace Agreement established indicators for assessing the specific measures taken at the national level to promote and restore children’s rights and avert specific types of risks. Measures to promote dialogue and active listening have been prioritized with a view to learning more about the children’s interests and fostering their development.⁹⁸

210. The Ministry of Defence and the armed forces are working to rescue minors associated with organized illegal armed groups. To this end, they make use of strategies for demobilizing members of such groups on an individualized basis, bringing the members of such groups to justice and preventing the illegal recruitment of minors. Steps are taken to identify the members of such groups who are minors so that they may be duly recognized as victims of the armed conflict. The Operational Committee on the Surrender of Arms is subsequently informed, and the minors are referred to ICBF. Between 2010 and 2020, a total of 2,477 case files relating to demobilized minors were received.

211. ICBF and the Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation Unit coordinate with other institutions responsible for assisting, supporting and providing full reparation to children and adolescents within the framework of the National System for Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation. The purpose of this coordination effort is to bring together all the various measures needed in order to provide full reparation, taking into account the guarantees for children’s rights, their primacy and their interdependence based on the principles of comprehensive protection, non-discrimination, participation and the best interests of the child. ICBF is implementing the first stage in the process of restoring the rights of children and adolescents under a special programme for the restoration of the rights of child and adolescent victims of unlawful recruitment who have been disengaged from illegal armed groups.⁹⁹

212. ICBF provides psychosocial support and differentiated services to help minors and their families to benefit from the comprehensive reparation measures provided by the agencies that make up the National System for Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation. Once the victims reach the age of majority, they enter into a second stage under the Agency for Reintegration and Normalization in which they receive services and benefits on an equal footing with persons who demobilized as adults, in accordance with the regulations in force.

213. The Attorney General’s Office is making progress in investigating these offences. Its records indicate that, since 2015, 4,982 persons under 18 years of age had been illegally recruited or used in the commission of offences. A total of 6,945 members of illegal armed groups are registered as suspects in cases involving the illegal recruitment or use of persons under 18 years of age in the commission of offences. Charges have been brought against the persons in question in 1,774 proceedings, 780 of which have resulted in a conviction or a sentence being handed down. The Attorney General’s Office has a protocol and a checklist for investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual violence.

⁹⁸ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (j).

⁹⁹ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (d).

214. The Ministry of Defence has issued instructions for the timely implementation of institutional directives for the protection of children and adolescents by the security forces. Between 2012 and 2020, more than 3,435 inter-institutional prevention activities were organized, resulting in the issuance of guidelines on monitoring the implementation of regulations prohibiting the use of rescued and demobilized children and adolescents in military operations and intelligence activities.

215. The State does not carry out joint civilian-military activities and does not seek to involve children and adolescents in such activities. Rather, development support days are held to promote the fulfilment of national social objectives. The purpose of these days is to ensure the public's rights to health, education, recreation, social services, production projects and infrastructure. They are supported by observers, guarantors, the Ombudsman's Office, ICBF and the Juvenile Police Department with a view to strengthening efforts to prevent the illegal recruitment of children.¹⁰⁰

216. In the area of training, capacity-building and education, the security forces lead strategies for promoting and safeguarding human rights. These strategies have been applied over the years in every military and police unit, ensuring their legitimacy and enhancing the State's commitment to its social responsibilities. The men and women of the security forces are required to respect and protect the rights of the civilian population and to comply with international humanitarian law, rejecting and preventing any conduct that violates human dignity.

217. The Ministry of Defence implements a standing instruction on capacity-building to strengthen the training and education of the security forces in human rights and international humanitarian law. In 2021, ICBF provided technical assistance to the armed forces to enable 80,000 of their members to be trained in promoting and guaranteeing the rights of children, adolescents and young people between 2021 and 2022.

218. "We Protect Them with All Our Forces" is an online course covering a number of subjects, including an inspirational introduction to the role of the security forces in safeguarding the rights of children and young persons as part of the process of transforming and developing the country. The course also covers children's rights; gender and sexual diversity perspectives; changing established practices in order to protect people's rights; strengthening the security forces' ability to provide a protective environment for the participation of children, adolescents and young persons; preventing the recruitment, use and sexual abuse of children and adolescents; and launching protection pathways. An online diploma course on the rights of children, adolescents, young persons and their families was also produced for the Ministry of Defence with a view to training 9,000 officers of the security forces.¹⁰¹

219. In the case brought by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace relating to the recruitment of children and adolescents, it has initially been determined that 18,677 children and adolescents were recruited during the conflict. It is hoped that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace will swiftly issue its findings concerning the facts and actions taken in that case so that the persons responsible can be tried and punished and the victims can be compensated.

¹⁰⁰ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (f).

¹⁰¹ CRC/C/COL/CO/4-5, para. 65 (h).