



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/OMN/CO/2
29 September 2006

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Forty-third session

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION**

Concluding observations: OMAN

1. The Committee considered the second periodic report of Oman (CRC/C/OMN/2) at its 1165th and 1167th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1165 and 1167) held on 13 September 2006, and adopted at the 1199th meeting, held on 29 September 2006, the following concluding observations:

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's second periodic report as well as the written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/OMN/Q/2). It further notes with appreciation the constructive efforts made by the cross-sectoral delegation to provide additional information in the course of dialogue.

B. Follow-up measures undertaken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes the accession/ratification of the State party to:

(a) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on 2 January 2003;

(b) The Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 17 September 2004;

(c) The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime on 13 May 2005;

(d) Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 21 July 2005; and

(e) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 7 February 2006.

4. The Committee welcomes the State party's unique cooperation with UNICEF, particularly that the costs of the total cooperation programme as well as partial operations are covered by Government funding and that the State party has seconded four officers from the Ministries of Health, Education, National Economy and Social Development to work as part of the UNICEF Team in Oman.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

1. General measures of implementation

(arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Committee's previous recommendations

5. The Committee notes with satisfaction the State party's efforts to address various concerns and recommendations (CRC/C/15/Add.161) made upon the consideration of the State party's initial report (CRC/C/78/Add.1) through legislative measures and policies. However, some of the concerns it expressed and recommendations it had made regarding, for example, the State party's reservations to the Convention, non-discrimination, nationality, violence against children and child abuse, children with disabilities and the administration of juvenile justice, have not been sufficiently addressed.

6. The Committee urges the State party to make every effort to address the recommendations issued in the concluding observations on the initial report that have not yet been implemented and to address the list of concerns contained in the present concluding observations on the second periodic report.

Reservations

7. The Committee regrets that no progress has been made in withdrawing, or limiting the extent of, the State party's reservations to articles 7, 9, paragraph 4, 14, 21 and 30 of the Convention since the consideration of the State party's initial report (CRC/C/78/Add.1).

8. The Committee reiterates, in the light of article 51, paragraph 2 of the Convention, its previous recommendation that the State party review its reservations with a view to withdrawing them, or limiting their extent, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23).

Legislation

9. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Legal Committee, in cooperation with UNICEF and other competent experts, through the Ministry of Social Development, has made a comparative study of the Omani legislation in relation to the provisions of the Convention. Although some legislative measures are being taken, or proposed such as a bill for the care and

rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and the draft act on juveniles, to strengthen the legal protection of children, the Committee is of the view that they are insufficient. In particular, the Committee is concerned about the limited rights-based approach to children.

10. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen its efforts to provide better legal protection for children and to ensure that relevant domestic laws are in full conformity with the principles and provisions of the Convention. It also recommends that the State party expedite the adoption of the bills on the care to and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and the law on juveniles and ensure that these laws, including all other new laws, are based on a child rights approach.

11. The Committee encourages the State party to accede to other major international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which would have a positive impact on the implementation of the rights of the child.

National plan of action

12. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party in the written replies to the list of issues indicating that the Ministry of Social Development, in cooperation with the Ministry of the National Economy, UNICEF, governmental and non-governmental organizations and private bodies, is currently involved in the preparation of a national strategy for children and that in 2006 the Ministry of Health began drawing up a draft strategy for children's health based on the articles of the Convention. However, the Committee regrets that the State party has not yet adopted a national plan of action for children.

13. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to develop, adopt and implement, in consultation and cooperation with relevant partners, including civil society, a comprehensive national plan of action for children, with concrete and time-bound targets that cover all provisions of the Convention while taking into account the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its 2002 special session on children, "A World Fit for Children" (resolution S-27/2, annex). It further recommends that the State party provide a specific budget allocation and adequate follow-up mechanisms for its full implementation.

Coordination

14. While welcoming the coordination activities of the National Committee for the Care of the Child and the reporting, implementation and monitoring functions of the National Follow-up Commission on the Implementation of the Convention and its sub-committees, the Committee notes with concern that the multi-sectoral coordination of the implementation of the Convention at all levels, including regional and local levels, remains inadequate.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party further enhance the role and capacity of the National Committee for the Care of the Child and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination between the bodies and institutions working on the implementation of the Convention at all levels in order to ensure adequate implementation throughout country.

Independent monitoring

16. The Committee regrets the absence of an independent and child-sensitive monitoring structure with a mandate that includes the power to receive and address individual complaints of alleged violations of the rights of the child.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party establish an independent national human rights institution, or a child commissioner or children's ombudsperson, with a clear mandate to monitor children's rights and implement the Convention at national, regional and local levels, in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (the "Paris Principles", annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134). It recommends that, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights (CRC/GC/2002/2), such an institution be mandated to receive, investigate and address complaints from the public, including individual children, and provided with adequate financial, human and material resources.

Data collection

18. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to collect, analyse and disaggregate statistical data on children. However, the Committee regrets the lack of a central database on children and notes with concern the insufficient data concerning many areas covered by the Convention, particularly groups of children in need of special protection, for example, children affected by violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, children in alternative care, street children, migrant children and working children.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen its mechanisms for data collection by establishing a central database on children and developing indicators consistent with the Convention in order to ensure that data are collected on all areas covered by the Convention and disaggregated, for example, by age for all persons under 18, sex, urban and rural areas, and by groups of children who are in need of special protection. It further encourages the State party to use these indicators and data to formulate policies and programmes for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Cooperation with civil society

20. The Committee takes note of the active role played by civil society in the provision of services, particularly health and social services, for example for children with disabilities.

21. The Committee recommends that , being guided by the recommendations adopted on the Committee's day of general discussion on the private sector as service provider and its role in implementing child rights held on 29 September 2002 (CRC/C/121, paragraphs 630-653), the State party:

(a) **Continue and strengthen its cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGO) and involve them systematically at all stages in the implementation of the Convention as well as in policy formulation;**

(b) **Provide NGOs with adequate financial and other resources when they are involved in discharging governmental responsibilities and duties with regard to the implementation of the Convention; and**

(c) **Ensure that NGOs, both for profit and non-profit, comply with the principles and provisions of the Convention, for example, by providing guidelines and standards for service provision.**

Dissemination/training of the Convention

22. The Committee is encouraged by the efforts of the State party to disseminate information about the Convention, for example in the form of flyers and posters, in close collaboration with UNICEF. However, the Committee is concerned that insufficient measures have been taken to disseminate and raise awareness of the civil rights and freedoms of children, and international human rights standards in general, in a systematic and targeted manner.

23. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to systematically disseminate information about the Convention among children, their parents and other caregivers and all relevant professional groups working with and for children. The Committee also recommends that the State party provide professionals with targeted and regular training on the provisions and principles of the Convention and international human rights standards in general. The Committee further recommends that the State party take specific measures to make the Convention available to and known by all children in Oman, paying attention to the civil rights and freedoms of children, and that the State party continue its cooperation with UNICEF in this regard.**

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

Non-discrimination

24. While noting that the Basic Law of the State and other domestic laws are based on the principle of non-discrimination and that the State party has taken measures to promote the principle of equality between women and men, particularly in the domain of civil and labour laws, the Committee is concerned about the weak implementation of these laws and the persisting de facto discrimination against women and girls in the Omani society. Despite the ongoing efforts of the State party to provide equal opportunities for children with disabilities, including through community-based support and services, the Committee notes that the traditional charity-based welfare approach to address the issue of children with disabilities still prevails. Furthermore, discrimination against children born out of wedlock is an issue of particular concern to Committee. As regards the high number of children of migrant workers in Oman, the Committee is concerned about discrimination on the basis of national origin in terms social benefits, health, education and housing.

25. The Committee recommends that the State party, by effectively implementing the existing laws which guarantee the principle of non-discrimination, make greater efforts to ensure that all children within its jurisdiction enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Convention without discrimination, in accordance with article 2 of the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy to eliminate de facto discrimination on any grounds and against all children, paying particular attention to girls, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock and children of migrant workers, and prioritize social and health services and equal opportunities to education and recreational activities for children belonging to the most vulnerable groups. The Committee also encourages the State party to create a supportive gender sensitive environment which promotes the equal rights of girls to participate in the family, at school, within other institutions, in local communities and in society in general.

26. The Committee requests that specific information be included in the next periodic report on the measures and programmes relevant to the Convention undertaken by the State party to follow up on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education (art. 29 (1)).

Best interests of the child

27. The Committee is concerned that the general principle of the best interests of the child contained in article 3 of the Convention is not fully included in laws, regulations and practices concerning children.

28. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the general principle of the best interests of the child is fully incorporated in legislation as well as in judicial and administrative decisions and in projects, programmes and services which have an impact on children.

Respect for the views of the child

29. The Committee notes with appreciation that, according to the information communicated by the State party both in the written replies to the list of issues and during the dialogue with the Committee, the National Committee for the Follow-up on the Convention on the Rights of the Child held a series of meetings for Omani children from different regions of the country in order to provide them with an opportunity to express their views and ideas freely and through organized channels and to develop their cultural, artistic and perceptive skills. However, the Committee expresses its concern that children are only allowed a very limited level of expressive freedom and that traditional perceptions of children as objects rather than subjects of rights hinder their full participation in the family, schools, local communities as well as in judicial and administrative proceedings.

30. In the light of article 12 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party notably strengthen its efforts, including legislative, to ensure that children's views are heard and taken into consideration in all judicial, administrative and other decisions affecting them, in accordance with the child's age and maturity. The Committee

also recommends that the State party seek opportunities for children's participation at all levels of society, including the family, schools, local communities as well as judicial and administrative proceedings, and continue and strengthen collaboration with civil society organizations in this respect. Furthermore, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations adopted on the Committee's day of general discussion on the right of the child to be heard held on 15 September 2006.

3. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8, 13-17, 19 and 37 a)

Right to identity

31. As regards children born out of wedlock, the Committee notes with concern that their right to identity, including nationality, name and family relations, is not fully protected. The Committee regrets that no specific follow-up has been given to its recommendation on the right to a nationality contained in the previous concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.161, para. 34) and reiterates its concern that, according to the Nationality Law, children of Omani women married to non-nationals are not granted citizenship, whereas it is the case when the father is Omani.

32. In accordance with articles 2, 7 and 8 of the Convention and referring to the recommendation contained in paragraph 6 above, the Committee recommends that the State party, taking into account the principle of the best interests of the child, ensure the respect of the right of all children to preserve her or his identity, including all elements which constitute the identity of the child such as nationality, name and family relations. The Committee urges the State party to review its Nationality Law in order to ensure that an Omani mother has the right to confer Omani citizenship to her children equally and without discrimination.

Corporal punishment

33. The Committee notes that measures are being taken to address corporal punishment in the context of disciplinary measures in schools. However, the Committee is concerned that corporal punishment is widespread throughout society as a method of discipline. The Committee notes with particular concern that corporal punishment of children is lawful in the home and institutions.

34. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Review its current legislation with a view to preventing and ending the use of corporal punishment as a method of discipline, and to introducing new legislation prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in the family and within all institutions, including public and private institutions and the alternative care system;**

(b) **Introduce public education, awareness-raising and social mobilization campaigns on alternative non-violent forms of discipline with the involvement of children in order to change public attitudes to corporal punishment; and**

(c) Seek international technical assistance from, among others, UNICEF in this regard.

35. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the Committee's general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment.

**4. Family environment and alternative care
(arts. 5, 18 (1-2), 9-11, 19-21, 25, 27 (4), and 39)**

Alternative care

36. The Committee notes the establishment of the Child Care Home which provides institutional care for orphaned children and children placed in out-of-home care due to other reasons. It also notes that over 300 children, mostly girls, are placed through *kafalah*. The Committee regrets that many children born out of wedlock lack parental care because pregnancies outside marriage are considered illegal and mothers are "corrected" for their behaviour deemed immoral by having their children placed in alternative care. The Committee also regrets the limited information and data on children placed in alternative care, particularly regarding an evaluation of the quality of care and the review of placement, including informal forms of alternative care.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take appropriate measures to abolish such punishments for behaviour deemed immoral which separate children from their parents and affect the right of the child to be cared for by her or his parents;

(b) Establish an effective evaluation mechanism for alternative care, including care provided by the Child Care Home and other forms of alternative care, such as *kafalah*;

(c) Develop, standardize and control the quality of alternative care and related programmes and services in consultation with children;

(d) Ensure that children placed in institutions have access to adequate complaint and consultation mechanisms; and

(e) Provide guidance for parents and other caregivers on their child-rearing responsibilities and on children's development, including their evolving capacities.

38. Finally, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations adopted on its day of general discussion on children without parental care held on 16 September 2005 (CRC/C/153, paras. 636-689).

Violence, abuse and neglect, maltreatment

39. While noting the State party's efforts to break the silence around the sensitive issues of child abuse and neglect, including the first-ever national workshop on the subject organized by UNICEF with the support of the Ministry of Social Development, the Committee is deeply concerned that children continue to be victims of direct and/or indirect violence and abuse in the home and notes with concern the high rate of injuries caused by the negligence of parents and other caregivers. The Committee regrets the lack of data on the magnitude of violence against children. Despite the fact that the Penal Code criminalizes sexual abuse of children, the Committee notes with concern that professionals working with and for children are not fully trained to report these cases and that the overall system to handle child abuse cases is defective.

40. In the light of article 19 and other relevant provisions of the Convention, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Review domestic laws and other regulations in order to ensure that children are protected against all forms of physical, sexual and mental violence and abuse;

(b) Conduct a comprehensive study to assess the nature and extent of ill-treatment and abuse of children, develop indicators and design policies and programmes to address it;

(c) Improve the reporting of cases of violence against children and child abuse, for example by establishing mandatory reporting for professionals working with and for children and train professionals, such as teachers, law enforcement officials, health professionals, social workers and judges, in identifying, reporting and managing child abuse and ill-treatment cases;

(d) Establish effective procedures and mechanisms to receive, monitor and investigate complaints, including intervention where necessary, and to prosecute cases of abuse and ill-treatment, ensuring that the abused child is not victimized in legal proceedings and that his/her privacy is protected;

(e) Ensure that all children victims of violence and abuse have access to adequate care, counselling and assistance with recovery and reintegration;

(f) Introduce awareness-raising campaigns, with the active involvement of children themselves, in order to prevent all forms of violence against children and to combat child abuse, including sexual abuse, with a view to changing public attitudes and prevailing cultural practices in this respect;

(g) Establish a toll-free, 3-digit number helpline with a 24-hour service for children and facilitate the collaboration of the helpline with State agencies, such as the police, health, and social welfare systems, and child-focused NGOs in order to enhance its intervention and follow-up model; and

(h) Seek assistance from, among others, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO).

41. In the context of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on the question of violence against children and the related questionnaire sent to Governments, the Committee acknowledges with appreciation the State party's participation in the Regional Consultation for the Middle East and North Africa held in Egypt from 27 to 29 June 2005 and in the Regional Follow-up Consultation held in Egypt from 25 to 28 March 2006. The Committee recommends that the State party use the outcome of these regional consultations as a tool for taking action, in partnership with civil society, to ensure that every child is protected from all forms of physical, sexual or mental violence and to gain momentum for concrete and, where appropriate, time-bound actions to prevent and respond to such violence and abuse.

42. In addition, the Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the report of the independent expert for the study on violence against children (A/61/299) and to encourage the State party to take all appropriate measures to implement overarching recommendations as well as setting-specific recommendations contained in this report.

**5. Basic health and welfare
(arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1-3))**

Children with disabilities

43. The Committee notes with appreciation the draft bill on the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities but regrets the lack of a national policy or strategy on persons with disabilities and the insufficient data on the wide range of disabilities in Oman and their possible causes. It also notes with concern that the service provision for children with disabilities is limited and not yet standardized and that a very limited number of children with disabilities is included in the mainstream education.

44. The Committee recommends that, taking into account the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96) and the recommendations adopted by the Committee on its day of general discussion on the rights of children with disabilities held on 6 October 1997 (CRC/C/69, paras. 310-339), the State party:

(a) Expedite the adoption of the bill for the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and ensure that it is built on a rights-based approach and in full conformity with the provisions and principles of the Convention;

(b) Consider developing and adopting a national policy or strategy on persons with disabilities, paying particular attention to children with disabilities;

(c) Collect adequate statistical data on children with disabilities and use disaggregated data in developing policies and programmes to promote equal opportunities for them in society, paying particular attention to girls with disabilities and children with disabilities living in the most remote areas of the country; and

(d) Provide all children with disabilities with access to adequate social and health services, including community-based support and services, inclusive quality

education, the physical environment, information and communication, and continue its efforts to standardize the service provision.

Health and health services

45. The Committee commends the State party for the quality of health care services available in Oman and notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to extend health care services to the remote areas of the country. The Committee notes with appreciation the declining infant mortality rate and the results of the successful immunization programme. Despite these positive steps taken, the Committee is concerned about children's malnutrition rates, including micronutrient deficiencies, which are generally higher in comparison to the high gross domestic product per capita levels. As regards exclusive breastfeeding of children, the Committee notes with regret that the length of a maternity leave in the public sector has been shortened from 60 to 45 days and that the breastfeeding hour for working mothers has been abolished.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to prioritize the allocation of financial and human resources to the health sector, in order to ensure equal access to quality health services for all children, including children of migrant workers and children living in the most remote areas of the country. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake urgent measures to improve the nutritional status of infants and children, for example, through education and promotion of healthy feeding practices on the household and community levels. The Committee recommends that the State party promote exclusive breastfeeding of children, inter alia, by extending the length of a maternity leave in the public sector to comply with internationally acceptable standards and by restoring the breastfeeding hour for mothers who wish to continue breastfeeding their children for a longer period of time. Finally, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to promote compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

47. The Committee notes with concern that injuries, many of them preventable, and particularly road traffic accidents are a leading cause of childhood morbidity and mortality.

48. In order to prevent childhood injuries, the Committee recommends that the State party develop and adopt adequate legislation to protect children from injuries, including road traffic accidents. It recommends that the State party include the prevention of injuries in national policy priorities and objectives, and develop injury-control programmes. As regards road traffic accidents, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt and implement a multidisciplinary national strategy and plan of action on road safety and continue its public campaigns to increase traffic awareness among children, parents, teachers and the public in general.

Adolescent health

49. The Committee takes note of the low HIV/AIDS prevalence in the State party and notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to raise general awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescents, including the campaign "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS" launched in 2005. However, the Committee notes with concern that adolescents know little about other sexually

transmitted infections (STIs) and have a limited knowledge of their own physical development during puberty. The Committee also notes with concern that many adolescents, both boys and girls, suffer from different types of mental disorders, including depression. As regards nutritional status of adolescents, the Committee expresses its concern about the high rate of anaemia among adolescent girls and the unbalanced diet of adolescents. In addition, the Committee is concerned that the level of smoking, alcohol consumption and substance abuse among adolescents is underestimated in the State party.

50. The Committee recommends that the State party, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 3 on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child and general comment No. 4 on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

(a) Promote adolescent health by establishing a national programme on adolescent health in order to support adolescents' successful transition to adulthood and ensure that this programme is rights-based, participatory and locally driven;

(b) Strengthen age-appropriate school education on sexuality and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and family planning;

(c) Provide adolescents with youth-sensitive counselling and health care services that respect privacy and confidentiality;

(d) Establish adequate mental health services tailored for adolescents;

(e) Improve the nutritional status of adolescents, for example by introducing a school nutrition programme and proposing healthy choices in school canteens;

(f) Aiming at prevention, provide adolescents with information on the harmful consequences of alcohol, drug and tobacco use; and

(g) Seek technical cooperation with, among others, UNICEF, WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Harmful traditional practices

51. The Committee notes with concern that a few communities still practice female genital mutilation in Oman. It also notes with concern the findings of the comprehensive health survey of 2001 which indicated that a very high percentage (85 %) of women still approved this harmful traditional practice. The Committee strongly emphasizes that female genital mutilation is incompatible with the principles and provisions of the Convention.

52. The Committee urges the State party to continue its efforts to end the practice of female genital mutilation), for example, through legal prohibition and the implementation of targeted programmes with a view to sensitizing the population to its extremely harmful effects. The Committee recommends that the State party involve and mobilize all partners

at the local level, including teachers, midwives, traditional health practitioners, religious and community leaders, to prevent the practice of female genital mutilation. It also draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations adopted on the day of general discussion on the girl child held on 23 January 1995 (CRC/C/38, paras. 275-299).

Standard of living

53. The Committee notes with appreciation the various measures adopted by the State party to improve the standard of living among its population, including the implementation of the Seventh Five-year Development Plan (2006-2010) and the measures taken to assist low-income families with children, for example social security transfer payments. However, the Committee regrets the lack of information on poverty in general and child poverty in particular and is concerned at reports that many families still live in economic hardship. Concern is also expressed at the regional disparities in the standard of living.

54. In the light of article 27 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party continue to take measures to raise the standard of living among its population, particularly rural population living in poverty, inter alia, through implementing the Seventh Five-year Development Plan (2006-2010) and providing well coordinated financial assistance support for all economically disadvantaged families. In addition, the Committee encourages the State party to strengthen community mobilization, including the participation of children, for poverty reduction at the local level.

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

Education, including vocational training and guidance

55. While noting with appreciation that the State party provides free primary school education for all children, including non-citizen children, the Committee reiterates its concern that primary education is not yet made compulsory by law. The Committee notes as a positive factor that girls and boys have equal enrolment in primary education but it regrets that not all children are enrolled in school and that not all enrolled children complete a full course of primary education. The Committee notes the slight increase in the enrolment rate of secondary education but regrets the lack of updated information on vocational education and training. Finally, the Committee notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to incorporate human rights education in the school curricula.

56. In the light of articles 28 and 29 of the Convention and taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education, the Committee recommends that the State party continue to allocate adequate financial, human and technical resources in order to:

(a) Ensure that primary education is made compulsory by law and that all children are enrolled in school;

- (b) Take measures to prevent children dropping out of primary education;**
- (c) Continue to take measures to increase enrolment rates in secondary education and technical and vocational training;**
- (d) Further strengthen efforts to improve the quality of education both in public and private schools through providing appropriate and continuous training to teachers;**
- (e) Continue to include human rights in general, and the rights of the child in particular, into the school curricula; and**
- (f) Seek cooperation, among others, with UNESCO and UNICEF to further improve the education sector.**

57. The Committee notes with concern the very low rate (5-8 %) of children enrolled in pre-primary education. While noting that the pre-primary education services have fully been entrusted to the private sector, the Committee is concerned about the low quality of pre-primary education, the severe limitation of teacher training capacity and the inadequate monitoring of private service providers.

58. The Committee recommends that the State party provide access to early childhood education for every child, including low-income families and families living in rural areas and raise awareness and motivation of parents with respect to pre-schools and early-learning opportunities by taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 7 (2005) on implementing child rights in early childhood. As regards the process of privatizing or contracting out pre-primary education services to the private sector, the Committee recommends that the State party set uniform quality standards for pre-primary education and enter into detailed agreements with the service providers in this regard, and ensure independent monitoring of the services provided. Finally, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations adopted on its day of general discussion on the private sector as service provider and its role in implementing child rights held on 20 September 2002 (CRC/C/121, paragraphs 630-653).

7. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 38, 39, 40, 37b-d, 32-36 and 30)

Children of migrant workers

59. As regards the large number of migrant workers, some of them without legal status, in the State party, the Committee notes with concern that the children of migrant workers are often vulnerable to violations of their human rights.

60. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement policies and practices that will better protect and provide basic services for children of migrant workers. It also recommends that the State party consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

61. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party has introduced the ban on the use of child camel jockeys and notes with appreciation that the task force established to monitor the situation of children in camel racing has held a number of meetings with race organizers and parties interested or involved in racing activities.

62. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to effectively implement the prohibition of the use of child camel jockeys and carry out regular unannounced inspections in camel races to ensure that no children are used as jockeys. As regards prevention, the Committee also recommends that the State party share its good practices through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Gulf region. It further recommends that the State party provide detailed information on the results of the implementation of the ban on the use of child camel jockeys in its next periodic report to the Committee.

63. The Committee appreciates the particular efforts of the State party to prohibit the use of child labour in the formal sector but it notes with concern that some children work in the informal sector, for example, in agriculture, fishing and small family businesses.

64. In accordance with article 32 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party continue to take effective measures to prohibit the economic exploitation of children, in particular in the informal sector where the phenomenon is prevalent, for example by designing special programmes aimed at combating child labour. It recommends that the State party strengthen the labour inspectorate to monitor the extent of child labour, including unregulated work, through the provision of adequate human and financial resources and training. Finally, the Committee encourages the State party to seek technical assistance from the International Labour Organization and UNICEF.

Sexual exploitation and trafficking

65. While noting that the domestic legislation prohibits forced child prostitution, manufacturing, acquiring or distribution of pornographic materials, bondage and slave trade, the Committee is concerned about the potential of the State party to be or become a destination country of trafficking in children owing to the large number of migrants in search of employment. It notes with concern the lack of data and the lack of research on the prevalence of national and cross-border trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. Concern is also expressed about the lack of a comprehensive procedure to identify children who may be victims of trafficking and the absence of adequate recovery and reintegration services for these victims.

66. In the light of articles 34, 35 and other related articles of the Convention, the Committee recommends that measures be taken to:

(a) Conduct an in-depth study on sexual exploitation of children, including trafficking in children for this purpose and, in this context, collect data on trafficking and

sexual exploitation of children and ensure that all data and indicators are used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;

(b) Develop comprehensive procedures for the early-identification of child victims of trafficking;

(c) Ensure that victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking are not criminalized and that they are provided with adequate recovery and social reintegration services and programmes in accordance with the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the 1996 and 2001 World Congresses against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children;

(d) Seek to establish bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperation programmes with countries of origin and transit to prevent the sale and trafficking of children; and

(e) Seek cooperation, among others, with the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations.

Administration of juvenile justice

67. The Committee takes note of the special administration for children in conflict with the law established within the General Administration of Criminal Inquiries and Investigation and special protection measures provided for juveniles deprived of their liberty by the Prison Regulation System No. 28/94. However, the Committee notes with concern that the minimum age of criminal responsibility, which is set at 9 years, is still too low. It regrets the insufficient information and data on the implementation of current laws and penal practice. The Committee, while appreciating legislative efforts to improve the administration of juvenile justice, regrets that little progress has been made regarding the adoption of the Juvenile Law bill, which would, inter alia, provide for introducing alternative measures to deprivation of liberty and the establishment of a juvenile court system with judges who have specialized knowledge of juvenile law.

68. The Committee recommends that the State party continue and strengthen its efforts to ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, in particular articles 37, 40 and 39 of the Convention and other relevant international standards in this area, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty (the Havana Rules), taking into account the recommendations adopted by the Committee on its day of general discussion on juvenile justice held on 13 November 1995 (CRC/C/46, paras. 203-238). It recommends in particular that the State party:

(a) Raise, as a matter of priority, the minimum age of criminal responsibility to an internationally acceptable level;

(b) With reference to the Committee's previous recommendation (CRC/C/15/Add.161, para. 54 c), expedite and strengthen as a matter of urgency its efforts to adopt the Juvenile Law bill;

(c) Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive system of alternative measures to deprivation of liberty, such as probation, community service orders and suspended sentences, in order to ensure that deprivation of liberty is used only as a measure of last resort;

(d) Take the necessary measures, for example suspended sentencing and early release, to ensure that deprivation of liberty is limited to the shortest time possible;

(e) Take measures to significantly improve collection of data on all relevant aspects of the juvenile justice system in order to obtain a clear and transparent picture of the practices; and

(f) Seek technical assistance from the United Nations Inter-agency Panel on Juvenile Justice.

8. Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child

69. The Committee welcomes the State party's accession to the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict in September 2004. In order to be able to examine the implementation of the Optional Protocols, the Committee underlines the importance of a regular and timely reporting practice.

70. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the State party fully meet its reporting obligations under the reporting provisions of the Optional Protocols and the Convention.

9. Follow-up and dissemination

Follow-up

71. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure full implementation of the present recommendations, *inter alia*, by transmitting them to the members of the Cabinet and the bicameral Majlis (Majlis al-Dawla and Majlis al-Shura), and to governorates, when applicable, for appropriate consideration and further action.

Dissemination

72. The Committee further recommends that the second periodic report and written replies submitted by the State party and related recommendations (concluding observations) adopted by the Committee be made widely available in the languages of the country, including through the Internet (but not exclusively), to the public at large, civil society organizations, youth groups, professional groups, and children in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention, its implementation and monitoring.

10. Next Report

73. The Committee invites the State party to submit a consolidated third and fourth report by 7 July 2012 (that is 18 months before the due date of the fourth report). This is an exceptional measure due to the large number of reports received by the Committee every year. This report should not exceed 120 pages (see CRC/C/118). The Committee expects the State party to report every five years thereafter, as foreseen by the Convention.
