



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Georgia\*

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the fourth periodic report of Georgia (CRC/C/GEO/4) at its 2178th and 2179th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.2178 and 2179), held on 25 January 2017, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2193rd meeting, held on 3 February 2017.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fourth periodic report of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/GEO/Q/4/Add.1), which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegation of the State party.

#### II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State party in numerous areas, including the ratification of or accession to international instruments, in particular the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on a communications procedure in 2016. It also welcomes the adoption of numerous legislative acts and institutional and policy measures, including the revision of the social assistance system to make it more child-sensitive and the adoption of the Juvenile Justice Code, both in June 2015, and the revision of the Civil Code in December 2015, abolishing exceptions to the minimum age for marriage, which is set at 18 years.

#### III. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

4. The Committee notes that Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, remain outside the effective control of the State party, which is a serious obstacle to the implementation of the Convention in those regions. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the State party to support health and education services in those regions. However, it is concerned about restrictions in those regions to freedom of movement, the access to quality health-care services, the right to education in one's native

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-fourth session (16 January-3 February 2017).



language, the rights of internally displaced children and continued discrimination on the basis of ethnicity in those regions.

#### **IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations**

5. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: corporal punishment and child abuse (paras. 21-22), sexual exploitation and abuse (paras. 23-24), family environment (paras. 26-27), children with disabilities (paras. 29-30), health and health services (paras. 31-32) and internally displaced children (paras. 38-39).

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

###### **Legislation**

6. **The Committee encourages the State party to continue its efforts to adopt a law on the rights of the child, to incorporate all provisions of the Convention and its optional protocols, and to seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to do so.**

###### **Comprehensive policy and strategy**

7. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Carry out the necessary evaluation of progress achieved by the three child action plans which have been implemented, to identify possible deficiencies and develop indicators and measurable targets for monitoring the chapter on children in the national action plan for the protection of human rights for the period 2016-2017;**

(b) **Ensure sufficient human, technical and financial resources for the implementation of the national action plan;**

(c) **Develop a distinct comprehensive action plan for the protection of the rights of the child, with prevention as its core component and in coordination and complementarity with policy measures aimed at minorities.**

###### **Coordination**

8. **The Committee notes the efforts made for the establishment of a coordination council for the implementation of the national action plan. It recommends that the State party allocate to a single body at a high interministerial level, with a clear mandate and sufficient authority, the principal responsibility for the coordination and evaluation of the implementation at cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels of all aspects of the Convention, related strategies and child action plans. The State party should also ensure that the coordinating body is provided with the necessary human, technical and financial resources for its effective operation.**

###### **Allocation of resources**

9. **In the light of its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State party set up a budgeting process that includes a child-rights perspective, that specifies clear allocations to children in the relevant sectors and agencies and that includes specific indicators and a tracking system to monitor and evaluate the adequacy, efficacy and equitability of the distribution of resources allocated for implementation of the Convention, including by:**

(a) **Ensuring adequate budget allocation for the implementation of children's rights and for children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations, in**

accordance with article 4 of the Convention, and guaranteeing that fluctuations or reductions in budget allocations for the delivery of services do not reduce the existing level of enjoyment of children's rights;

(b) Developing detailed budget lines and codes for all planned, enacted, revised and actual expenditures that directly affect children;

(c) Setting performance targets linking child-related programme goals to budget allocations and actual expenditures, to allow monitoring of the outcomes and the impacts on all children;

(d) Strengthening audits to increase transparency and accountability with regard to public expenditure across all sectors, in order to mobilize the maximum available resources for the implementation of the rights of the child.

#### Data collection

10. While welcoming the collection of data on several areas of the Convention, including through the national census in 2014, the Committee, in the light of its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention, recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 16) and recommends that the State party:

(a) Continue and strengthen its efforts to develop a comprehensive data-collection system on the implementation of the Convention, especially at municipal level, which reaches all regions of the country. The data should be disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographic location, ethnic origin and socioeconomic background, in order to facilitate analysis of the situation of all children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability and especially in the areas of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, sexual exploitation and of children in street situations;

(b) Ensure that the data-collection system covers the collection of disaggregated data for all areas of the Convention, including child abuse, neglect, exploitation and sexual exploitation of children and children in street situations;

(c) Take into account the conceptual and methodological framework set out in the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) entitled *Human Rights Indicators: a Guide to Measurement and Implementation*, when defining, collecting and disseminating statistical information.

#### Independent monitoring

11. While welcoming the activities of the Child's Rights Centre, the Committee recalls its previous recommendation (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 13) and, in line with its general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent human rights institutions in the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, recommends that the State party:

(a) Allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources to enable the Centre to execute its mandate throughout the country adequately;

(b) Provide the Centre with unhampered access to all institutions caring for children, including institutions led by religious groups;

(c) Strengthen the capacities of the Centre to effectively receive, examine and address complaints by children in a child-sensitive manner.

#### Dissemination, awareness-raising and training

12. The Committee recommends that the State party expand to all professional groups working with and for children the existing systematic introductions and continued in-service professional training and/or awareness-raising programmes on children's rights for judicial actors, delivered by the High School of Justice.

### Cooperation with civil society

13. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 19), encouraging the State party to collaborate more actively with civil society, including non-governmental and children's organizations, in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to the Convention and in the promotion of children's rights.

### Children's rights and the business sector

14. In the light of its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights and the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (see A/HRC/34/55/Add.1, paras. 30 and 76), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Examine and adapt its legislative framework (civil, criminal and administrative) to ensure the legal accountability of business enterprises and their subsidiaries operating in or managed from the State party's territory, especially in the tourism industry;

(b) Establish monitoring mechanisms for the investigation and redress of violations of children's rights, with a view to improving accountability and transparency;

(c) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns for the tourism industry and the public at large on the prevention of child sex tourism, and widely disseminate the World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics for Tourism among travel agents and in the tourism industry;

(d) Strengthen its international cooperation against child sex tourism through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for its prevention and elimination.

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

### Non-discrimination

15. While welcoming the adoption of the law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination in May 2014, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 22) and urges the State party to:

(a) Allocate the necessary human, technical and financial resources to institutions in charge of monitoring the implementation of the law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and especially to the Office of the Public Defender, and collect disaggregated data on cases of discrimination against children, including children with disabilities, children in street situations, children in the juvenile justice system, children belonging to minorities, children of disadvantaged families, children living in rural or remote areas and children who are refugees or internally displaced, with a view to developing comprehensive strategies aimed at ending all forms of discrimination;

(b) Ensure that the law is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied, that perpetrators are adequately sanctioned and child victims of discrimination are provided with effective and appropriate remedies;

(c) Combat the practice of sex-selective abortion, including by addressing its root causes and the long-term implications for society, expanding family planning services and carrying out awareness-raising activities on the detrimental impact of sex selection and on the equal value of girls and boys, in line with previous recommendations of the Human Rights Committee (see CCPR/C/GEO/CO/4, para. 7 (f)).

### **Best interests of the child**

16. The Committee welcomes the inclusion of the definition of the best interests of the child in the Juvenile Justice Code and in the revised Civil Code. However, in the light of its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated, consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions, as well as in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to and have an impact on children, including procedures concerning child asylum seekers and unaccompanied children. In that regard, the State party is encouraged to develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance to all relevant persons in authority for determining the best interests of the child in every area and for giving them due weight as a primary consideration.

### **Respect for the views of the child**

17. While noting the establishment of child-friendly courtrooms, the Committee, in line with its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, encourages the State party to strengthen methods to ensure that children's views are given due consideration in the family, at schools, at the community level, in institutions and in administrative procedures concerning them through, *inter alia*:

- (a) The refinement of appropriate legislation;
- (b) The continuous training of professionals;
- (c) Support of various forms for children's meaningful participation;
- (d) Collaboration with civil society organizations, to increase opportunities for children's participation, including in the media.

## **C. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 and 13-17)**

### **Birth registration**

18. Taking into account the adoption of decree No. 18 of the Minister of Justice of Georgia on approval of the rule on the registration of civil acts in January 2012 and officials going door-to-door to establish identification documents, the Committee, taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, recommends that the State party:

- (a) Set a realistic timeline for effective birth registration throughout the country and address administrative obstacles, with special attention paid to minority groups, refugees, stateless persons and families living in high mountain areas;
- (b) Continue and strengthen ongoing efforts to establish institutional structures, such as mobile registration centres, in line with the Committee's previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 28), in order to attain equal rates of birth registration for minority groups;
- (c) Seek technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF, among others, for the implementation of these recommendations.

### **Name and nationality**

19. Noting the regulation of birth registration of children born in Georgia through surrogacy under article 19 of decree No. 18 of the Minister of Justice on approval of the rule on the registration of civil acts, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Address possible obstacles to the implementation of the decree, especially with regard to international surrogacy arrangements;

- (b) **Ensure that a child born through surrogacy motherhood will be able to get access to the information about his or her origin;**
- (c) **Amend the law on the legal status of aliens and stateless persons to fully comply with the provisions of the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons;**
- (d) **Establish an effective and efficient identification and referral mechanism for children who are undocumented and at risk of statelessness;**
- (e) **Accede to the 1997 European Convention on Nationality and the 2006 Council of Europe Convention on the avoidance of statelessness in relation to State succession.**

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

##### **Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

20. **The Committee is concerned at reports of the arbitrary detention of children and of the torture and ill-treatment of children in police stations, including children diverted from the criminal system, and, in rare cases, juvenile detention centres. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 30) and recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Investigate thoroughly all allegations of torture and ill-treatment by public officials, especially the police, and ensure that the perpetrators are rapidly tried and brought to justice;**
- (b) **Provide adequate reparations, rehabilitation and recovery programmes for child victims of such abuses;**
- (c) **Strengthen independent monitoring by and coordination between civil society, the Public Defender and the human rights monitoring unit and reinforce their actions in detention centres for juveniles;**
- (d) **Ensure the accessibility of the existing mechanisms for receiving complaints of ill-treatment or abuse from or on behalf of children.**

##### **Corporal punishment and child abuse**

21. **While welcoming the efforts made by the State party to combat domestic violence, including amendments to the law on combating domestic violence and the new child protection referral mechanism adopted in 2016, the programme on the identification and prevention of violent and behavioural disorder, piloted from 2016 onwards, and the standing programme on violence against children and the redirection procedures in case of the need for child protection, implemented since 2015, the Committee is strongly concerned by:**

- (a) **The prevalence of corporal punishment in the home as well as schools and institutions;**
- (b) **The lack of legislation criminalizing corporal punishment and of awareness-raising activities to combat that practice;**
- (c) **The limited implementation of the child protection referral mechanism with regard to kindergartens and professionals working with families and children, as well as in the school environment;**
- (d) **The predominant role of the police in the implementation of the child referral mechanism;**
- (e) **The limited counselling services provided in schools for children and parents on the prevention of violence;**
- (f) **The existence of psychological service centres in seven cities only and limited coverage of schools by *mandaturi* (school resource officers);**

(g) Low awareness of child protection referral procedures among the general population and of the child protection system among professionals, the absence of guidelines for the implementation of those procedures for all health and education professionals in the child protection system and for the law enforcement agents involved, and reluctance among law enforcement offices over implementation of the procedures.

22. **In the light of its general comments No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment and No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Adopt legislation explicitly prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, including educational institutions, alternative care institutions and the home;**

(b) **Further strengthen programmes and policies combating violence against children, including community-based programmes and campaigns aimed at preventing and tackling domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and involve children, former child victims, volunteers and community members in their implementation so as to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline;**

(c) **Improve the implementation of the child referral protection mechanism by increasing the number of professionals working with families and children, in particular law enforcement personnel, social workers and service providers;**

(d) **Support social workers to ensure that the best interests of the child are addressed in the child referral mechanism and adopt the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims as the ultimate goal of the services provided by social workers;**

(e) **Extend the coverage of counselling services for children and parents for the prevention of violence and increase the number of psychological service centres for children;**

(f) **Ensure that *mandaturi* are active in all schools, extend their mandate to kindergartens and childcare facilities and reinforce their capacity for the identification, reporting and management of cases of violence and abuse in schools, using a multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach;**

(g) **Develop appropriate guidelines for the implementation of child referral protection procedures for all professionals involved in the child protection system (including teachers, social workers, kindergarten personnel, medical professionals and members of the police and the judiciary) and ensure that they receive training on those procedures and the corresponding guidelines, as well as on their obligation to report on and take appropriate action in suspected cases of domestic violence affecting children;**

(h) **Cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and other relevant United Nations bodies.**

#### **Sexual exploitation and abuse**

23. The Committee is deeply concerned by:

(a) The lack of comprehensive legislation to criminalize and prevent the sexual exploitation of children and the lack of a corresponding strategy and coordination body in charge of its implementation;

(b) Insufficient data on the scope and different forms of sexual abuse, exploitation and abuse in the family and studies on the root causes of those phenomena and on the impact of information and communications technologies on child sexual abuse and exploitation;

(c) Challenges in the investigation of child sexual abuse cases and the identification of victims, such as the non-existence of the planned digital evidence research unit, the limited activity of the cybercrime unit, the insufficient geographic coverage of the toll-free helpline and the length of the number of the helpline;

(d) Insufficient awareness in the general population and specifically among children, parents and professionals, of the referral and reporting mechanisms for cases of sexual exploitation, of the potential dangers to children in their online behaviour and of the existence of a toll-free child helpline;

(e) The absence of protocols to regulate and reinforce cooperation between the public and private sectors and of international cooperation to combat online child abuse and exploitation;

(f) The outsourcing of rehabilitation services for child victims of neglect, abuse and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and the lack of financial resources for such services.

**24. The Committee reiterates its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 67) and urges the State party to:**

**(a) Establish a national database on all cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, including cases of online abuse and exploitation and cases happening within the family, and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the extent, causes and nature of these phenomena, with a particular focus on the impact of information and communications technologies on child sexual abuse and exploitation;**

**(b) Reinforce the victim identification process for cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including by adopting proactive investigation and prosecution strategies, allocate the necessary human, technical and financial resources to the specialized cybercrime unit and establish the planned digital evidence research unit;**

**(d) Train actors potentially involved in the detection of children suspected of having been subjected to sexual exploitation or abuse, on applicable international child-rights norms and standards, on protection, reporting and referral procedures and a child-friendly and gender-sensitive approach to them;**

**(e) Change the toll-free helpline into a three-digit-number, in order to facilitate its use by children, and guarantee access to the toll-free helpline in all regions of the country;**

**(f) Raise the awareness of parents, children, teachers, health officials and others working with and for children, and especially of children who are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, of reporting and referral procedures and of ways of minimizing the risks to children in their online conduct;**

**(g) Develop public and private sector protocols and strengthen international cooperation between law enforcement bodies to combat child sexual exploitation online;**

**(h) Strengthen the financial resources and support for assistance allocated to child victims of abuse and neglect, in order to ensure that they have access to services for recovery, counselling and other forms of rehabilitation, and meet the childcare standards defined in August 2012;**

**(i) Continue collaboration with relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF.**

#### **Harmful practices**

**25. The Committee welcomes the abolishment by 1 January 2017 of the legal provisions allowing the marriage of children before the age of 18 and recommends that the State party develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes to reinforce the implementation of the law.**

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

**Family environment**

26. The Committee notes the reform of the childcare system and the process of deinstitutionalization of children, but remains seriously concerned by:

- (a) The insufficient human, technical and financial resources allocated to the social protection system, especially when supporting or replacing a family environment;
- (b) The limited geographical coverage of the social protection system;
- (c) Inadequate initiatives for the early identification and management of children's needs;
- (d) Insufficient measures for the reconciliation of work and family life to support working parents in providing quality care for their children;
- (e) The limited access that the Child's Rights Centre has to childcare institutions run by religious organizations and private individuals.

27. **The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 35) and urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Reinforce and allocate the necessary human, technical and financial resources to the social protection system and to education and family policies and programmes, especially by significantly increasing the number, training and remuneration of social workers;**
- (b) **Guarantee all children and their families access to social services, especially in rural areas;**
- (c) **Establish mechanisms and procedures for the early identification of children and families in need of the services of the social protection system;**
- (d) **Further strengthen assistance and support services to parents and legal guardians in their child-rearing responsibilities and promote measures to support working parents, including considering collaboration with the business sector;**
- (e) **Introduce and enforce a mandatory registration requirement for childcare institutions, make running an institution without a licence a criminal offence and enforce standards for childcare in all institutions.**

**Adoption**

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party expedite the adoption of the draft law on adoption and foster care, which will prohibit, inter alia, direct adoption, introduce capacity-building for adoptive parents and foster carers and comply with all safeguards in relation to adoption under the Convention.**

**F. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)-(3) and 33)**

**Children with disabilities**

29. While welcoming efforts for the integration of children with disabilities in social, recreational and cultural activities, the Committee is seriously concerned by:

- (a) Limited availability of early identification and intervention programmes, the system exclusively based on health needs determining disability status, which ignores some developmental disabilities of infants and young children, and the absence of an effective referral system based on cooperation between medical personnel, social workers and service providers;

- (b) Slow progress in the deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities in rural areas;
- (c) Incomplete data on children with disabilities;
- (d) Low awareness in the families concerned of the services available for children with disabilities and the limited access to health, education and care services for children with disabilities, especially those with autism, Down syndrome and severe disabilities, as well as for children in rural areas.

30. **In the light of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability, set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities and:**

- (a) **Introduce individual functional assessments of disability status, based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, and a biopsychosocial approach for their support, train service providers on the assessments, guarantee effective cooperation between services and timely medical interventions and referral to adequate health and educational services, and establish early identification and referral mechanisms for vulnerable children;**
- (b) **Accelerate the deinstitutionalization process in rural areas, ensure sufficient alternative family- and community-based care options for children deprived of a family environment, in particular for children with disabilities, and reinforce reintegration services;**
- (c) **Organize disaggregated data collection on children with disabilities;**
- (d) **Develop a monitoring system for children with disabilities and their participation in health and education systems;**
- (e) **Undertake awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the public and families, to combat the stigmatization of and prejudice against children with disabilities, promote a positive image of such children and strengthen knowledge of the specific services available.**

#### **Health and health services**

31. While noting the launch of the universal health-care programme in 2013, the creation of a programme and a coordination council for mother and child health within the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs in the same year, the adoption of a policy for the regionalization of maternal and newborn care and the implementation of a corresponding pilot programme in 2015, the Committee remains concerned at:

- (a) The high rates of infant mortality and stillbirth and the low technological capacity of pre- and postnatal health care;
- (b) Reports of the continued prevalence of malnutrition, anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies, as well as obesity in children and the limited coverage of the educational health visits made by primary health-care professionals, leading to inappropriate childcare practices.

32. **In the light of its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and taking note of target 3.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 45) and urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Strengthen efforts to decrease rates of infant mortality and stillbirth by, inter alia, improving ante- and postnatal care, enhancing the capacity of health-care providers all over the country, and implement and apply the OHCHR technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to eliminate preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age (A/HRC/27/31);**

(b) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to ensure full coverage of educational visits by primary health-care professionals, define the periodicity of visits, expand the programme to pregnant women and introduce information on levels of delivery care and the corresponding perinatal institutions;

(c) Address issues of malnutrition, anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies, as well as obesity through, inter alia, education and the promotion of healthy feeding practices;

(d) Seek financial and technical assistance from UNICEF and the World Health Organization, among others, in this regard.

#### Adolescent health

33. Taking note of the high rate of early pregnancies and the absence of sexual and reproductive health education in school curricula, and in the light of its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that the strategy for reproductive health includes a specific focus on adolescent health and expedite its adoption;

(b) Develop and implement a policy to protect the rights of pregnant teenagers, adolescent mothers and their children and combat discrimination against them;

(c) Introduce sexual and reproductive health education into the mandatory school curriculum for adolescent girls and boys, with special attention paid to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

(d) Reinforce measures to raise awareness of and foster responsible parenthood and sexual behaviour, with particular attention paid to boys and men.

#### HIV/AIDS

34. In the light of its general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 52) and recommends that the State party:

(a) Develop and implement national guidelines on HIV disclosure counselling for children;

(b) Improve follow-up treatment for HIV-infected mothers and their infants to ensure early diagnosis and early initiation of treatment;

(c) Improve access to quality, age-appropriate HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health services;

(d) Seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and UNICEF.

#### Standard of living

35. While noting the monetary and social support provided to families living in poverty, the Committee draws attention to target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals on implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all and reiterates its previous recommendation (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 54) that the State party:

(a) Take steps to improve the standard of living of children as a matter of priority, paying particular attention to housing, water and sanitation;

(b) Allocate sufficient funds to counteract persistent inequality, effectively reduce the disparities and improve the extremely low standard of living of, inter alia, families with several children, refugee and internally displaced families and families living in rural and remote areas;

(c) Make increased access to basic services a priority target, including clean running water and sewerage disposal;

(d) Seek technical cooperation from, inter alia, UNICEF for the regular monitoring of the poverty of children and take urgent measures to address all negative indicators.

#### **G. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28-31)**

36. In the light of its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education and taking note of target 4.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take the necessary measures to improve the accessibility of education and focus on creating the conditions to increase the access of children of vulnerable groups, such as children in situations of poverty, those from ethnic minorities and those with disabilities, as well as young mothers after childbirth;

(b) Take the necessary measures to improve the quality of education and strengthen quality training for teachers, with particular emphasis on rural areas, in line with the Committee's previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 57 (b));

(c) Further develop and promote quality vocational education to enhance the skills of children as an alternative for those who leave school early;

(d) Take all necessary measures to implement the draft law on early learning and preschool education and allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood education, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development;

(e) Adopt and implement the national standards and technical regulations on water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition for preschool institutions and establish monitoring mechanisms and tools for their enforcement in order to eliminate existing regional disparities in the quality of water and sanitation facilities in preschool institutions and schools, which continue to have a negative impact on the health of children in rural areas.

#### **H. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)-(d) and 38-40)**

##### **Asylum-seeking and refugee children**

37. Taking into account the ongoing reform of the State party's national refugee legislation and in line with its general comment No. 6 (2005) on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Expedite the adoption of the draft law on international protection to facilitate the access of asylum-seeking children to the asylum system, including for children in need of international protection, bringing the national legislation in line with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;

(b) Allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources for the implementation of the migration strategy and action plan for the period 2016-2020 to facilitate local integration of refugee and asylum-seeking children and their access to naturalization;

(c) Collaborate with relevant NGOs and seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNHCR.

### **Internally displaced children**

38. The Committee notes the revision of the Law on Internally Displaced Persons in February 2014 and the adoption of the strategy for internally displaced persons and the accompanying action plan. The Committee is however concerned by:

(a) The lack of consideration of the specific needs of internally displaced children in the definition of assistance modalities and inheritance of the status of internally displaced persons;

(b) Reports of internally displaced children in the State party facing inadequate living conditions and the limited educational services and opportunities for integration for internally displaced families.

39. **The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 61) to give the highest priority to the protection of the rights of internally displaced children and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Mainstream needs-based assistance to internally displaced children into national social protection systems and development plans and guarantee their inclusion in professional programmes;**

(b) **While seeking long-term solutions, ensure that appropriate alternative accommodation is made available to all residents upon the closure of collective centres, especially families with children and strengthen support to community-based initiatives to generate livelihoods and employment for internally displaced persons;**

(c) **Continue to follow up the recommendations of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons (see E/CN.4/2006/71/Add.7).**

### **Economic exploitation, including child labour**

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to combat all forms of child labour, including in the informal sector, and urges the State party to restore the labour inspectorate, thus strengthening the monitoring of prohibitions of child labour based on the law.**

### **Children in street situations**

41. **Taking into account the adoption on 22 June 2016 of the legislative reform package affecting children in street situations and the development of a fully fledged system for the reintegration of children in street situations into society, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Strengthen the implementation of action plans for the protection of the rights of the child by incorporating a separate goal on preventing and combating the sale and exploitation of children and on addressing the situation of children in street situations throughout the country;**

(b) **Include effective identification and referral mechanisms for comprehensive and long-term care, recovery and reintegration programmes, follow-up and measures in support of families and communities;**

(c) **Carry out a comprehensive study to assess the scope, nature and root causes of the presence of children in street situations in the country in order to develop a national prevention policy;**

(d) **Consider putting in place a mechanism to collaborate with neighbouring countries to ensure the protection of children in street situations;**

(e) **Conduct public awareness campaigns to address the stigma attached to children in street situations.**

**Sale, trafficking and abduction**

42. In line with its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/GEO/CO/3, para. 69), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Integrate a comprehensive child-rights perspective into the next action plan on combating trafficking in persons to develop further prevention, protection and prosecution measures to combat the sexual and labour exploitation, sale, abduction of and trafficking in children;

(b) Specifically target children in vulnerable and marginalized situations in the action plan, including children from ethnic minorities, children placed in institutions, children living in street situations, children with disabilities, children affected by migration, asylum-seeking and refugee children, children of foreign nationality and girls who are victims of domestic violence;

(c) Ensure that all cases of sexual and labour exploitation, sale, abduction and trafficking are investigated and that the perpetrators are charged and punished;

(d) Ensure that child victims of sexual exploitation, sale, abduction and trafficking are protected and that they are provided with adequate recovery and social reintegration services and programmes.

**Administration of juvenile justice**

43. In line with its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children's rights in juvenile justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Guarantee adequate human, technical and financial resources for specialized juvenile court facilities and ensure that specialized professionals receive continuous education and training;

(b) Further promote alternative measures to detention and ensure the availability of sufficient possibilities for community work and mediation;

(c) Seek technical assistance from, inter alia, UNICEF.

**Child victims and witnesses of crimes**

44. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that in practice, enough specialized personnel, including child psychologists and psychiatrists, are available to support child victims and witnesses of crime.

**I. Ratification of international human rights instruments**

45. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the following core human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party:

(a) The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;

(b) The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;

(c) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**V. Implementation and reporting****A. Follow-up and dissemination**

46. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations

are fully implemented. The Committee also recommends that the fourth periodic report, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

## **B. Next report**

47. The Committee invites the State party to submit its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports by 1 July 2022 and to include therein information on the follow-up to the present concluding observations. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 31 January 2014 (CRC/C/58/Rev.3) and should not exceed 21,200 words (see General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16). In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the treaty body cannot be guaranteed.

48. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document, not exceeding 42,400 words, in accordance with the requirements for the common core document contained in the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I) and paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/268.

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