



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Written replies by the Government of Cameroon to the list of issues (CRC/C/CMR/Q/2) prepared by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in connection with the consideration of the second periodic report of Cameroon (CRC/C/CMR/2)

[Received on 19 November 2009]

1. In accordance with its commitments as a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (“the Convention”), particularly in relation to article 44, paragraph 1, under which the States parties are required to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention, Cameroon submitted its second periodic report in 2007 for consideration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (“the Committee”).
2. In preparation for the fifty-third session of the Committee during which the report is to be considered, on 12 October 2009 the Committee requested the Government of Cameroon to provide additional information so as to facilitate the Committee’s assessment of the progress made in implementing the rights enshrined in the Convention.
3. In the framework of its constructive dialogue with the Committee, Cameroon has the honour to submit herewith its replies to the concerns raised by the distinguished Committee.

Part I

Please describe the various stages in the preparation of the State party’s report (CRC/C/CMR/2), particularly the steps taken to involve non-governmental organizations and civil society, including children, in the preparation of the report.

4. Leading up to the preparation of Cameroon’s report, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were closely involved in the following phases:
 - Establishment of an ad hoc committee composed of NGOs and other bodies responsible for drafting the report
 - Organization of a preparatory and briefing session for the officers and other members of the ad hoc committee
 - Participation of NGOs and other bodies in data collection: international organizations (United Nations Children’s Fund, World Health Organization, United

Nations Population Fund, International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization); international NGOs (Plan Cameroon, SOS Kinderdorf International [SOS Children's Villages]); children and young people (junior members of Parliament); national NGOs (Cameroon Coalition for the Rights of the Child, Defence for Children International; *Association Camerounaise pour les Droits de l'Enfant*, *École Instrument de la Paix*, AGIR, Cameroon Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, *Association Emmanuel du Cameroun*)

- Participation of NGOs and other bodies in a national workshop on report evaluation, adoption and validation

Please indicate what progress has been made in adopting the draft child protection code and the draft personal and family code.

5. After completion of the draft codes in 2007, intersectoral harmonization workshops were organized in 2008 to avoid contradictions and duplication of efforts. Validation of both draft codes is under way.

Please describe any measures taken to bring domestic legislation into line with the Convention with regard to a minimum age for marriage, criminal liability and enlistment in the armed forces.

6. Cameroonian legislation on criminal liability is inline with the Convention. According to article 80, paragraph 4, of the Criminal Code, children do not incur full criminal responsibility until the age of 18. The child's age at the time of commission of the offence is the starting point for determining criminal responsibility (para. 5).

7. The legal age for enlistment in the armed forces is also age 18. Article 12 (1) of Decree No. 2001/190 of 25 July 2001 on the specific status of defence force personnel below the rank of officer states: "enlistment in the armed forces is open to Cameroonian nationals of both sexes between the ages of 18 and 23".

8. The draft bills on the child protection code and the individual and family code largely reflect the provisions of the Convention in conjunction with domestic legislation. The bills provide for strict equality of treatment for all children, regardless of status or gender. This is the case in matters of inheritance, where children born out of wedlock enjoy the same rights as legitimate children, in accordance with article 2 of the Convention.

9. The preliminary draft code on the individual and the family sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 for both boys and girls.

Please indicate whether the State party has set up a mechanism to coordinate the implementation of the Convention. If so, please describe its powers and the human and financial resources allocated to it to enable it to effectively coordinate the work of the ministerial departments and bodies responsible for implementing the rights of the child at the national, regional and local levels, taking account of the decentralization process under way in Cameroon.

10. The Cameroonian Government's concern about the need to set up a mechanism to coordinate and monitor issues relating to the protection and promotion of the rights of the child was demonstrated by the establishment, by Decree No. 90/524 of 23 March 1990, of a national commission to protect children at risk, juvenile delinquents and abandoned children.

11. Having been established as part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which has statutory responsibility, inter alia, for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of the national children's policy, the Commission serves as an umbrella entity to enhance the

interaction between the various stakeholders in the interests of improved coherence, efficiency and impact.

12. However, the Commission experiences operational problems, including in particular the limits on its funding, which prevent the holding of regular sessions, even annual ones; the lack of a permanent secretariat to facilitate daily follow-up of multisectoral activities; and the lack of regional and local offices.

13. Discussions have been initiated with a view to proposing an appropriate mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of legal instruments aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of the child.

Please specify whether the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms has a special unit for children. If so, is the unit accessible to children and authorized to handle complaints about violations of children's rights?

14. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms does not have a special unit for children. However, it remains accessible to children and receives complaints relating to the violation of their rights.

Please provide the Committee with information on the financial benefits received by the State party as a result of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, and explain how children have benefited from this additional finance.

15. The financial benefits derived from the HIPC Debt Initiative have made it possible to improve children's living conditions in the following areas:

(a) Social affairs: A project aimed at making basic social services more efficient and effective within the framework of a poverty reduction campaign was implemented in Ministry of Social Affairs social welfare centres, with HIPC funding. As a result, some CFAF 5 billion in subsidies for private care facilities for children in distress and financial aid for destitute families were allocated between 2005 and 2009;

(b) Health: All health programmes run by the Ministries of Health, Basic Education, Secondary Education, Defence and Justice receive funds from the HIPC Debt Initiative aimed at improving the lives of mothers, children and adolescents. In 2007, the programme on the integrated management of childhood illness received CFAF 150 million; maternal and child health programmes were allocated CFAF 100 million in 2006, CFAF 200 million in 2007 and CFAF 260 million in 2009;

(c) Education: Investment credits from the HIPC Debt Initiative were used to finance the following projects:

- (i) Building classrooms in public primary and secondary schools;
- (ii) Building water points and latrines in public primary schools;
- (iii) Equipping public primary schools with tables or benches;
- (iv) Supplying basic educational and teaching kits for public primary schools;
- (v) Recruiting 4,000 primary school teachers between 2003 and 2005;

For example, the Ministry of Secondary Education received additional funds from the Initiative amounting to CFAF 2,065,000,000 during the 2008 fiscal year.

Please provide information on all aspects of the physical and mental abuse of children in the State party, including corporal punishment and abuse and ill-treatment in the family, schools and alternative care institutions. Please also provide the results of the study on violence against women and information on the bill on violence against women that covers female genital mutilation.

16. Child protection is a matter of permanent concern in Cameroon. Yet despite the Government's many efforts to ensure the protection of their rights, children continue to suffer from ill-treatment, exploitation and violence.

17. There are reports of corporal punishment at home and at school, rape, incest and abuse and ill-treatment on the streets, at home and in prisons. Other cases include genital mutilation in certain regions, forced labour, trafficking in persons, people smuggling and sexual exploitation, indecent behaviour, abduction and assault of children.

18. Pursuant to Act No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on education guidelines in Cameroon, article 35 of which prohibits physical abuse and all other forms of violence, all forms of discrimination and the sale, distribution and consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, several circulars were issued to fight effectively against violence in schools. They include:

- Circular No. 38/B1/1464 of 8 December 2000 on action to combat violence in schools
- Circular No. 10/B1 of 13 May 2002 on violence and vandalism in schools
- Circular No. 005/B1/1464 of 13 February 2002 on the prevention of occult practices in schools
- Circular No. 006/B1/1464 of 4 March 2002 on the secularity of public schools
- Circular Letter No. 05/06/MINESEC/CAB of 12 January 2006 on the prevention of violence in schools

Thus, the perpetrators of or accomplices in acts of violence as described above may be subject to disciplinary proceedings or legal action.

19. The study on violence against women helped determine the areas of prevalence of such violence, in particular that of female genital mutilation in the regions of Sud-Ouest near Mamfe and Extrême-Nord in Logone and Chari. More than 50 per cent of girls in the region are affected by those practices, mainly excision and infibulation. In addition to the border areas where those procedures are widely practised (borders with Chad and Nigeria), the study indicates that 1.4 per cent of all girls in Cameroon are subject to female genital mutilation.

20. A national action plan to combat female genital mutilation, drawn up and updated in October 2009, focuses on the following areas:

- (a) Prevention, awareness-raising and advocacy measures targeting the national community, especially religious leaders;
- (b) Care for victims through psychosocial support and health measures, and for perpetrators through financial and material support for rehabilitation;
- (c) Punishment through implementation of the Criminal Code provisions penalizing all forms of assault causing bodily harm.

21. The draft bill criminalizing gender-based discrimination, which includes female genital mutilation, is being finalized for adoption.

Please provide information on specific measures taken by the State party to eliminate traditional practices that are harmful to the health and well-being of the child, including early marriage and "ironing" the breasts of adolescent girls. In this connection, please provide updated information on the impact of the 1998 strategic plan to combat female genital mutilation in terms of eliminating this practice in Cameroon, particularly in the far north, east and south-west.

22. The strategic plan to combat female genital mutilation, drawn up in 1998, was revised in 2009. A draft bill on female genital mutilation and other gender-based offences is being prepared.

23. However, the Government, in cooperation with partners such as the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and local NGOs, is conducting campaigns to heighten public awareness of the dangers of these practices with a view to their eradication. To that end, several activities have been carried out, including the following:

(a) A forum on female genital mutilation, held in 2006, during which NGOs involved in combating this scourge, victims and female genital mutilation practitioners were invited to discuss the dangers of that practice. Separately from the concern to safeguard customary practices and uphold the moral integrity of the family, which, according to the practitioners, should be the responsibility of women, the discussions revealed that the practitioners' motives were financial;

(b) Campaigns to prevent female genital mutilation and domestic and sexual violence, organized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development and women parliamentarians;

(c) Support for income-generating activities to retrain former female circumcisers;

(d) Implementation of a school attendance programme for girls to eradicate early marriages in priority education zones, particularly in the northern part of the country and the East region. The aim is to keep girls in school as long as possible as a way to root out the practice of early marriage;

(e) Inclusion of the measures taken to combat harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, early or forced marriage, sexual violence, physical abuse and domestic violence in the sectoral health strategy paper (2001–2015), specifically in the National Reproductive Health Programme.

Please provide information on measures taken between 2005 and 2008 to prevent and reduce the incidence of infant and maternal mortality, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Please also explain how children, particularly girls, are involved in the drafting and implementation of health policies and programmes that affect them.

24. The Sectoral Health Strategy originally drawn up for the period 2001–2010 was updated in 2008 with a view to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (2001–2015). One of the four focal areas identified in the Sectoral Health Strategy concerns maternal, child and adolescent health.

25. The Ministry of Health continued implementing programmes aimed at improving maternal, child and adolescent health: the expanded programme on immunization, the national malaria control programme, the national tuberculosis control programme and the national programme against HIV/AIDS.

26. Further, to reduce mortality and morbidity among children under the age of 5, the Ministry of Health developed a strategy for the integrated management of childhood illness.

27. The Ministry of Health gives priority to community participation to implement the various health programmes described above.

28. In the fight against malaria, the prevention plan was characterized by the distribution of insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets to children under the age of 5. Of the total target of 825,495 insecticide-impregnated mosquito nets, some 674,062 were distributed to

households with children in that age group. Likewise, with regard to the target of placing 60 per cent of all pregnant women on intermittent preventive treatment, 30 per cent have already been placed on treatment with sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine.

29. In addition, 2,316 out of 2,445 service providers were trained in artemisinin-based combination therapies and 394 out of 750 microscopes are available. Management of those therapies on a household basis using treatment kits has not yet begun. However, more than one million home visits have been made.

30. In the area of research, one study on the efficacy of antimalarial drugs and two studies on vector susceptibility were carried out.

31. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, activities were decentralized at the operational level as follows:

(a) Prevention programmes for young people and women were strengthened: 12,937,394 condoms, including 61,800 female condoms, were distributed. Two mobile teams screened 14,445 people, 952 of whom tested positive, representing 6.6 per cent of those examined;

(b) Diagnostic and counselling services for persons suffering from tuberculosis were reinforced as a means of managing people living with the AIDS virus;

(c) Appropriate management of persons living with the AIDS virus by prescribing antiretrovirals and treating opportunistic infections;

(d) Home treatments and scheduling of activities by district to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

32. With a view to ensuring the effective deworming of children, the Government is launching a national programme to combat schistosomiasis.

33. In the framework of the fight against tuberculosis, diagnostic and treatment centres dealing with that disease were devolved; national coverage of all 191 centres resulted in the provision of free anti-tuberculosis drugs.

34. In the educational sector, various actions were taken to improve the health and well-being of schoolchildren:

(a) Implementation of Circular No. 057/05/MINESEC/SG/DSSAPPS of 25 April 2005 on health administration in public and private schools;

(b) Signature of joint interministerial Order No. 281/07/MINEDUB/MINESEC of 18 January 2007 on the incorporation of curricula focusing on family life, population and HIV/AIDS in training and educational programmes in Cameroon;

(c) Signature of Circular Letter No. 18/07/MINESEC/SG/ of 27 August 2007 authorizing the compulsory use of biomedical registers in public and private schools;

(d) Implementation of a programme on adolescent participation and development by involving children as peer educators in awareness campaigns and the development of health clubs in school and out-of-school environments;

(e) Setting up a mobile unit for free voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Please provide information on the adoption of the national policy on the comprehensive development of young children and describe the measures taken to implement it, including budgetary measures.

35. A project portfolio to be implemented by various government ministries was drawn up, including 11 programmes to be carried out by those ministries directly concerned with the development of young children.

36. The national policy on the comprehensive development of young children is a participatory policy involving the State, local government, communities, civil society, the private sector and development partners. It aims to incorporate into a coherent framework and under the coordination of the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development all projects for young children, aged 0–8 in Cameroon.

37. To that end, a framework document (DCPN/DIJE) was drafted and validated by all services concerned at a workshop held on 25 August 2009. The document clearly identifies steps to be taken between 2010 and 2012 and each sectoral ministry must make budgetary provision, as of 2010, for the implementation of programmes identified by the national policy on the comprehensive development of young children (budget appeal 2010 relating to the national policy on the comprehensive development of young children).

Table 1

Programmes identified within the framework of the national policy on the comprehensive development of young children

No.	Programmes	Cost in 2010	
		(millions of CFAF)	Ministries concerned
1	Tightening the links between maternal and child health care	808	
	(a) Actions envisaged	734	
	(b) Additional measures identified	74	Ministry of Health
2	Nutritional promotion and food safety	5 091	
	(a) Actions envisaged	4 628	
	(b) Additional measures identified	509	Ministry of Health
3	Detection and rehabilitation of children with disabilities or developmental delays	1 179	
	(a) Actions envisaged	275	Ministry of Social Affairs
	(b) Additional measures identified	904	
4	Protection and care of vulnerable children	1 030	
	(a) Actions envisaged	275	
	(b) Additional measures identified	755	Ministry of Social Affairs
5	Awareness, preschool education and consolidation of learning acquired in preschool	3 831	Ministry of Social Affairs
5.1	Social aspects		
	(a) Actions envisaged	64	
	(b) Additional measures identified	1 213	Ministry of Social Affairs
5.2	Educational aspects		
	(a) Actions envisaged	128	
	(b) Additional measures identified	2 426	Ministry of Basic Education
6	Health education, water supply and sanitation	4 636	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
6.1	Sanitation aspects		
	(a) Actions envisaged	2 996	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
	(b) Additional measures identified	713	
6.2	Health aspects		
	(a) Actions envisaged	749	
	(b) Additional measures identified	178	Ministry of Health

No.	Programmes	Cost in 2010	
		(millions of CFAF)	Ministries concerned
7	Parental education	831	
	(a) Actions envisaged	42	
	(b) Additional measures identified	789	Ministry of Basic Education
8	Capacity building and retention of staff dealing with the comprehensive development of young children	1 238	Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development in coordination with technical ministries
	(a) Actions envisaged	0	
	(b) Additional measures identified	1 238	
9	Planning, monitoring, evaluation and action research	1 080	Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development in coordination with technical ministries
	(a) Actions envisaged	0	
	(b) Additional measures identified	1 080	
10	Communication and development of partnerships for the comprehensive development of young children	377	
	(a) Actions envisaged	0	
	(b) Additional measures identified	377	Ministry of Communication
11	Total	20 101	
	(a) Actions envisaged	9 891	
	(b) Additional measures identified	10 210	All ministries

Note: "Actions envisaged" refers to activities budgeted in 2009. "Additional measures identified" refers to activities requiring additional action by the State and its partners in 2010.

Please provide detailed information on measures taken to ensure an adequate standard of living and social security for children living in poverty, including those expelled from their place of residence with their families.

38. The social security reform under way in Cameroon aims at extending social coverage to all sectors hitherto excluded from the system. These include population groups living in poverty (peasant farmers, persons not in active employment and their descendants).

39. The advisory committee on the modernization of the social security system in Cameroon established by the Prime Minister and Head of Government in November 2009 has submitted its report. The texts generated by the work of that committee are currently being validated.

40. With a view to securing an adequate standard of living for children living in poverty and ensuring that they remain in the family environment, the Government is implementing a number of measures in different sectors aimed in particular at strengthening the capacity of families and communities. The following examples may be mentioned:

(a) Establishment of school canteens in priority education areas with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP) in order to give nutritional support to children in need;

(b) The national programme of support for orphans and other children made vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS, under which some 65,000 such children have been cared for since 2006 and given multifaceted assistance, including educational, health, nutritional, psychosocial and legal support;

(c) The project on the effectiveness and efficiency of social services for Cameroonian populations living below the poverty line, under which deprived children and

their families have since 2005 been given multifaceted assistance (educational, health, nutritional, psychosocial and legal, etc.) by social welfare centres. Regarding the care of street children specifically, since 2007 the project has made 270 million CFA francs (CFAF) available to 30 social welfare centres, or CFAF 3 million for each centre per year;

(d) In the context of the statutory functions of the Ministry of Social Affairs, various types of aid and support are provided to deprived children and their families. A total of CFAF 99 million was allocated to 186 social welfare centres in 2009 for this purpose;

(e) The ongoing process of establishing a system of sponsorship in Cameroon in order to provide care for vulnerable children, following the validation in 2009 of a sponsorship guide and preparation of a 2009 draft order introducing such sponsorship.

Please provide detailed information on measures taken between 2005 and 2008 to give effect to the rights of indigenous children in the areas of education, health care and social welfare, taking account of their cultural identity, language and values.

41. The measures taken on behalf of indigenous children, who in Cameroon are defined as the children of marginal populations (Pygmies, Mbororos) are the following:

(a) In the area of education:

- Specific government support for target children through provision of school supplies
- Facilitation of access to academic and vocational training
- Construction and fitting out of preschool centres and schools
- Specialized training for teachers in ORA (Observe, Reflect, Act) techniques
- Provision of special grants to student teachers from marginal population groups, for training in teacher training colleges and technical teacher training colleges
- Augmentation and improvement of education options on offer through the recruitment of qualified teachers, the building and fitting out of schools, classrooms, latrines and water points
- Enhancement of the quality of education through the review of school syllabuses and improvement of the pedagogical chain
- Establishment of strategies for realizing the rights of the child through the programme entitled *Ecole Amie des Enfants, Amie des Filles* (Child-friendly and girl-friendly school), children's government and schooling for girls, comprehensive development of young children, establishment and opening of community preschool centres, action to combat geographical disparities in access to education

(b) In the area of health care:

- Awareness-raising for marginal population groups in respect of access to health-care services
- Training of local teams, including traditional midwives, in the areas of health care, bodily hygiene and housing
- Consideration of the lifestyles of marginal population groups in the implementation of health programmes (planning and micro planning of activities)

(c) In the area of social welfare:

- Renovation of certain residential shelters for indigenous children
- Participation of indigenous children in the children's parliament
- Support for income-generating activities
- Action to facilitate the production of birth certificates
- Provision of food to destitute and needy people

42. Steps are also being taken to promote the settlement of indigenous population groups, encourage recognition of their communities and make it easier for them to own property.

Please provide information on Act No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on refugee status, and indicate whether the decree implementing the Act has been adopted. Please also indicate whether a body with the authority to grant refugee status has been set up, and describe measures taken to register the births of refugee children and protect them from sexual exploitation and early marriage.

43. Act No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon, the implementing decree for which is currently in the process of adoption, is a salient example of the Cameroonian Government's determination to step up its action to combat discrimination against refugees.

44. Within the limits of the rights recognized to citizens, article 9 of the Act recognizes that refugees are entitled to benefit from the following fundamental rights:

- Non-discrimination
- The right to practise their religion freely
- The right to own property
- Freedom of association
- The right to take part in court proceedings
- The right to work
- The right to education
- The right to housing
- The right to public social welfare provision
- Freedom of movement
- The right to obtain identity papers and travel documents
- The right to transfer assets
- The right to naturalization

45. In the area of child welfare, article 5 of the Act recognizes the refugee status of a refugee's family members (spouses and minor children). It also specifies that "any unaccompanied child, subject to the necessary verifications, shall benefit from refugee status", and that "the State of Cameroon, in collaboration with the international organizations, shall provide assistance for family reunion" (art. 6). Persons recognized as refugees "shall receive the same treatment as nationals with regard to access to education, school and university enrolment fees and the fees of university student welfare centres" (para. 2).

46. Cameroon has set up a body responsible for determining refugee status. The Commission on eligibility for refugee status was established under article 16 of the 2005 Act.

47. With regard to the registration of births, the above-mentioned Act of 2005 entitles refugees to exercise “the right to produce [...] any document necessary for the fulfilment of various civil law acts”. To this end, and in accordance with the 1981 Order on the organization of the civil register, “foreigners resident in Cameroon are required to effect personal registration or to enter births in the population registers open in their places of residence”.

48. Thus, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), all newborn refugee children are registered and receive birth certificates in Cameroon. Civil registry staff are trained for this purpose, and the Government regularly delivers official birth certificates to refugees.

49. As regards the protection of refugee children against sexual exploitation and early marriage, Cameroon, in accordance with its international commitments, has taken all possible steps to prohibit all forms of violence against children.

50. For example, on 29 December 2005, Act No. 2005/015 on trafficking in and smuggling of children was promulgated. The Act criminalizes the exploitation of children (procuring or any other form of sexual exploitation, exploitation of child labour or forced services, slavery or similar practices, servitude or the removal of organs). Under the Act, “trafficking in and smuggling of children are punishable by a term of imprisonment of 15 to 20 years and a fine of between CFAF 100,000 (approximately US\$ 200) and CFAF 10,000,000 (approximately US\$ 20,000):

- (a) Where the offence is committed against a person aged under 15;
- (b) Where the perpetrator is a legitimate, natural or adoptive relative of the victim;
- (c) Where the perpetrator has authority over the child or is required, as part of his or her duties, to participate in efforts to combat trafficking or maintain public order;
- (d) Where the offence is committed by an armed gang;
- (e) Where the victim has sustained injuries of the type described in article 227 of the Criminal Code (serious injuries) or died as a result of acts related to the offence”.

51. With regard to early and/or forced marriage, article 356 of the Criminal Code provides as follows:

“1. Anyone who forces a person into marriage shall be punishable by a term of imprisonment of 5 to 10 years and a fine of between CFAF 25,000 (approximately US\$ 50) and CFAF 1,000,000 (approximately US\$ 250);

“2. Where the victim is below 18 years of age, the term of imprisonment, if mitigating circumstances are applied, will not be less than 2 years;

“3. Anyone who gives a girl aged under 14 or a boy aged under 16 in marriage shall be liable to the penalties provided for in the two preceding paragraphs;

“4. The Court may in addition deprive a convicted person of paternal authority and of all tutelage or guardianship for a period of five years or more.”

52. The Government’s strategy on the ground is geared mainly to awareness-raising and education.

53. The Government of Cameroon regularly organizes seminars and workshops all over the country on human rights in general and children's rights in particular, in order to give the necessary tools to justice officials, social welfare workers, teachers, law enforcement officers, prison and health-care staff and members of civil society organizations working with children, thereby enabling them better to protect the rights of children and eliminate the causes of violence against children.

54. Educational guidebooks on the prevention of the sexual exploitation of children have been produced and disseminated among children, telling them what attitudes and forms of behaviour they should adopt to protect themselves, and among parents and child-care workers, with a view to improving their ability to protect children against violence.

55. Awareness-raising and education campaigns for the general public and families are organized to provide information, through radio broadcasts, on the effects of violence against young girls. As part of this initiative, a weekly programme entitled *Tribune de liberté* ("Freedom forum") is broadcast by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms.

56. Together with UNHCR, the Government is helping to implement a programme of prevention and intervention in the field of sexual and sexist violence.

57. In the area of education, the Government organizes campaigns to alert parents to the benefits of educating girls. It has implemented a policy which places emphasis on the recruitment of refugee children in secondary schools and the construction of additional educational facilities in the proximity of target population groups.

58. As a result of the coordination of this policy with UNHCR, nearly 80 per cent of refugee children attended school in 2009.

Please list the children's issues that the State party considers to be of high priority and in need of urgent attention with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

59. The issues concerned are:

- Access to education for children with disabilities (special education and inclusive education)
- Action to combat the street children phenomenon
- Action to combat trafficking, smuggling and exploitation of children
- Administration of juvenile justice
- Protection of the children of marginal population groups
- Provision of care for refugee children
- Comprehensive care for orphans and vulnerable children and for abandoned children
- Efforts to combat HIV/AIDS
- Comprehensive development of young children (0–8 years)

Part II

Under this section, the State party is invited to briefly (3 pages maximum) update the information provided in its report with regard to:

1. New bills or enacted legislation

- Act No. 2005/007 of 27 July 2005 on the Code of Criminal Procedure

- Act No. 2005/015 of 29 December 2005 on action to combat the trafficking of children in Cameroon
- Act No. 2006/011 of 29 December 2006 on the establishment of Election Cameroon, an independent body for the management of elections in Cameroon, which replaces the National Elections Observatory in organizing and monitoring electoral operations. Presidential Decree No. 2008/372 of 11 November 2008 defines the implementing arrangements for certain provisions of the 2006 Act
- Act No. 2008/015 of 29 December 2008 on the administration of military justice, which establishes the rules of procedure applicable to military courts
- Act No. 2009/004 of 14 April 2009 on the organization of legal aid in Cameroon
- Draft bill on the Civil Code
- Draft bill on the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure
- Draft bill to amend the Criminal Code
- Preliminary draft framework law on social security
- Preliminary draft general framework law on mutual insurance companies
- Draft bill establishing the general framework for sickness insurance coverage
- Draft bill on female genital mutilation and other sexist offences
- Draft bill on cybersecurity and cybercrime

2. New institutions

- National Youth Council
- National community service programme for participation in development
- National Council on Decentralization
- National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
- National Anti-Corruption Commission

3. Newly implemented policies

- National integrated development policy for young children
- National youth policy
- Growth and employment strategy paper
- Development vision for Cameroon
- National health and reproduction policy paper

4. Newly implemented plans of action, programmes and projects, and their scope

- Project to combat the phenomenon of street children
- Integrated support project for participants in the informal sector
- Support project for the implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (PAMODEC)
- Project to promote decent work for poverty reduction in communities vulnerable to child trafficking in Cameroon
- Youth integration programme for the manufacture of sports equipment

- Development plan for the Pygmy peoples under the Sectoral Forest and Environment Programme
- Environmental and social capacity-building programme for the energy sector
- Support programme for rural and urban youth
- National support programme for orphans and vulnerable children
- Cameroon/UNICEF Cooperation Programme 2008–2012
- Global Water Partnership Programme
- Child survival programme
- Programme to promote the rights and dignity of the Baka people
- “Roll Back Malaria” Programme
- National programme to combat schistosomiasis (bilharzia) with a child deworming component

5. Newly ratified human rights instruments

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified on 1 October 2008)
- Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights relating to the Rights of Women (MAPUTO Protocol) ratified by Cameroon in June 2009

Part III

Data and statistics, if available

1. In the light of article 4 of the Convention, please provide data for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the budget resources (in absolute figures and as a percentage of the national budget or gross domestic product) allocated to the implementation of the Convention nationwide, in the following areas:

(a) Education (preschool, primary and secondary)

The budgets allocated to the Ministry of Secondary Education for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008, respectively, were as follows: CFAF 150.4 billion or 15.1 per cent of the national budget; CFAF 166.7 billion or 13.5 per cent of the national budget; CFAF 168.156 billion.

The budgets allocated to the Ministry of Basic Education for the years 2007 and 2008, respectively, were as follows: CFAF 121.929 billion and CFAF 117.636 billion.

(b) Health and nutrition

The budget allocated to the Ministry of Health for the year 2006 amounted to CFAF 84,250,137,237, or 4.5 per cent of the national budget.

(c) Juvenile justice

Information from the Prison Administration Directorate shows that 1,200 minors are being held in Cameroonian prisons in 2009 at a daily cost per person of CFAF 240, signifying an annual overall budget of CFAF 105.12 million.

(d) Smuggling and trafficking of children

The budgetary resources (in absolute figures and as a component of the national budget) allocated to the implementation of the Convention nationwide in the area of

smuggling and trafficking of children for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008, respectively, amounted to CFAF 20 million, CFAF 10 million and CFAF 60 million.

2. Please provide information on the birth registration rate, including for indigenous and refugee children in Cameroon, and on how it has changed over the past three years.

The findings of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS3) conducted in 2006 by the National Statistical Institute show that 70 per cent of the births of children aged 0 to 5 years were registered in the population register. The next MICS, currently in preparation, which is combined with the Demographic and Health Survey, will give an indication of trends in this indicator between 2006 and 2009.

3. With reference to children deprived of a family environment and separated from their parents, please provide disaggregated data (by sex, age group and urban/rural area) for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the number of children:

(a) Separated from their parents

According to the results of MICS3, 17 per cent of children in the 0–17 age group do not live with their biological parents. This indicator varies from 18 per cent for girls to 15 per cent for boys. Moreover, nearly 11 per cent of children in this age group are single orphans (having lost one parent), while 1 per cent are double orphans (having lost both parents).

(b) Placed in institutions (indicate how many institutions there are in the country)

In 2008, 11,077 children in the 10 regions of the country were placed in 64 orphanages and 13 public institutions.

(c) Placed with foster families

The social map currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Statistical Institute will provide statistics on the subject.

(d) Adopted domestically or through intercountry adoptions

Between 2007 and 2009, 68 children were placed for adoption.

4. Please provide disaggregated data (by sex, age group and geographical area) for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the number of children with disabilities:

(a) Living with their families

According to the results of MICS3, approximately 22 per cent of children between the ages of 2 and 9 have at least one disability. Disability is somewhat more common among boys than girls (24 per cent versus 21 per cent). In 2000 (MICS2) the indicator stood at 23 per cent, which means that there was a slight abatement of the phenomenon (by 1 percentage point) between 2000 and 2006. The most common types of disability, in decreasing order, are the following:

- Difficulty in sitting or standing (7 per cent)
- Inability to speak clearly (6 per cent)
- Difficulty in understanding instructions (5 per cent)

(b) Living in institutions

The social map currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Statistical Institute will provide statistics on the subject.

(c) Placed with a foster family

The social map currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Statistical Institute will provide statistics on the subject.

(d) Attending regular schools

For the 2006/07 academic year, 579 pupils with disabilities applied to sit the official examinations.

During the academic year 2007/08, 1,607 pupils with disabilities were enrolled in regular State schools, 976 of them having applied to sit official examinations.

(e) Attending special schools

The social map currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Statistical Institute will provide statistics on the subject.

(f) Not attending any school

The social map currently being prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Statistical Institute will provide statistics on the subject.

5. Please provide disaggregated data (by sex, age group and geographical area) for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 on the number of children attending primary and secondary schools, specifying the number of indigenous children and children with disabilities.

The 2007 schools distribution tables for Cameroon contain the following data:

Table 2

School attendance trends by region and by sex, 2006–2007, for the 6–11 age group in primary education

<i>Region</i>	<i>2005/2006</i>			<i>2006/2007</i>		
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Adamaoua	80 369	59 220	139 589	85 035	62 974	148 009
Centre	263 845	254 259	518 104	279 190	267 251	546 441
Est	78 914	67 956	146 870	86 849	74 069	160 918
Extrême-Nord	288 584	184 296	472 880	302 990	198 366	501 356
Littoral	153 071	148 456	301 527	160 871	155 429	316 300
Nord	155 644	96 403	252 047	172 083	109 777	281 859
Nord-Ouest	185 170	171 290	356 460	189 164	174 766	363 930
Ouest	232 199	217 412	449 611	236 972	221 111	458 083
Sud	54 840	50 455	105 295	59 225	54 705	113 930
Sud-Ouest	109 949	106 808	216 757	116 354	113 177	229 531
Total	1 602 585	1 356 550	2 959 135	1 688 733	1 431 624	3 120 357

**Secondary school enrolment by region, type of education and sex
2006**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Technical education</i>			<i>General education</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Adamaoua	1 679	488	2 163	15 604	7 940	23 544	17 283	8 428	25 711

Centre	13 683	10 900	24 632	66 433	64 307	130 740	80 116	75 207	155 323
Est	5 317	2 162	8 279	15 575	11 374	26 949	20 892	13 536	34 428
Extrême-Nord	3 830	2 122	5 952	47 553	12 956	60 509	51 383	15 078	66 461
Littoral	9 836	7 732	17 568	40 548	42 096	82 644	50 384	49 828	100 212
Nord	4 826	2 491	7 317	18 334	7 037	25 371	23 160	9 528	32 688
Nord-Ouest	10 828	7 180	18 008	36 126	41 695	77 821	46 954	48 875	95 829
Ouest	10 130	6 162	16 292	40 325	37 822	78 147	50 455	43 984	94 439
Sud	1 229	542	1 771	4 414	3 481	7 895	5 643	4 023	9 666
Sud-Ouest	9 152	4 227	13 379	23 211	22 458	45 668	32 363	26 685	59 048
Total	70 610	44 806	115 416	308 123	251 166	559 289	378 733	295 972	674 705

2007

<i>Region</i>	<i>Technical education</i>			<i>General education</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Adamaoua	3 301	1 039	4 340	16 522	7 872	24 394	19 823	8 911	28 734
Centre	21 893	16 816	38 709	92 143	83 634	175 777	114 036	100 450	214 486
Est	7 072	3 471	10 543	16 512	11 290	27 801	23 584	14 761	38 344
Extrême-Nord	6 278	7 763	14 041	55 035	14 037	69 071	61 313	21 800	83 112
Littoral	17 923	13 350	31 273	63 858	68 166	132 023	81 781	81 516	163 297
Nord	6 304	2 786	9 090	24 883	8 651	33 534	31 187	11 437	42 624
Nord-Ouest	10 425	5 637	16 062	34 924	37 739	72 663	45 349	43 376	88 725
Ouest	19 916	16 616	36 532	85 213	71 705	156 919	105 129	88 321	193 451
Sud	5 609	2 971	8 580	19 458	14 442	33 900	25 067	17 413	42 480
Sud-Ouest	10 461	4 803	15 264	35 166	31 226	66 392	45 627	36 029	81 656
Total	109 182	75 252	184 434	443 714	348 761	792 475	552 896	424 014	976 909

2008

<i>Region</i>	<i>Technical education</i>			<i>General education</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Adamaoua	3 622	1 408	5 030	17 125	9 398	26 523	20 747	10 806	31 553
Centre	28 053	18 426	46 479	106 707	95 504	202 211	134 760	113 930	248 690
Est	7 038	3 564	10 602	18 270	13 865	32 135	25 308	17 429	42 737
Extrême-Nord	5 007	2 242	7 249	59 166	17 597	76 763	64 173	19 839	84 012
Littoral	26 073	18 706	44 779	77 755	78 449	156 204	103 828	97 155	200 983
Nord	7 099	3 083	10 182	31 342	12 158	43 500	38 441	15 241	53 682
Nord-Ouest	12 234	9 257	21 491	446 616	42 816	87 477	56 895	52 073	108 968
Ouest	25 987	15 352	41 339	80 517	83 875	164 392	106 504	99 227	205 731
Sud	6 309	3 895	10 204	21 991	18 728	40 719	28 300	22 623	50 923
Sud-Ouest	10 686	7 179	17 865	40 167	42 380	82 547	50 853	49 559	100 412
Total	132 108	83 112	215 220	497 701	414 770	912 471	629 809	497 882	1 127 691

Part IV

The following is a preliminary list of major issues (which does not contain issues already covered in part I) that the Committee may take up during the dialogue with the State party. They do not require written answers. This list is not exhaustive, and other issues might be raised in the course of the dialogue.

1. Legislation
2. Coordination
3. Budget resources for children
4. Dissemination of the Convention
5. Definition of the child
6. Non-discrimination
7. Registration of births
8. Family environment (State support/assistance for parents)
9. Protection of children deprived of a family environment
10. Adoption (policy and legislation; adoption within the country or intercountry adoption)
11. Violence against children, including corporal punishment
12. Health (particularly expenditure on health, primary health care, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, adolescent health, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health)
13. Children with disabilities (including the legal framework for protection, accessibility of schools and health services, training of professionals working with children with disabilities, and support for families)
14. Education (including the availability of qualified teachers and adequate facilities, girls' access to education, school fees, and geographical disparities in access to education)
15. Economic exploitation, including child labour (in both the formal and the informal sectors)
 - Child labour continues to be a major problem in Cameroon. According to the results of MICS3 (2006) conducted by the National Statistical Institute, a little over 3 in 10 children aged 5 to 14 are economically active. This phenomenon affects girls (30 per cent) almost as much as boys (31 per cent).
 - The problem is growing. Indeed, the National Report on Child Labour in Cameroon (INS/ECAM3/2007) shows that 4 out of every 10 children (41 per cent) are economically active. This indicator is practically the same for boys (41.1 per cent) as for girls (40.6 per cent). Most child workers (84.5 per cent) are employed in the agricultural and hunting sector. It should be noted that 68.8 per cent of economically active children are forced into work that is to be abolished, and 11 per cent into dangerous work.
16. Sexual exploitation, and the smuggling and trafficking of children (within and beyond national borders)
17. Street children

18. Juvenile justice (age of criminal liability, alternatives to detention, living conditions in juvenile detention centres, and reorganization of the system of juvenile justice)
 - The age of criminal responsibility is fixed at 18 years. Before that, however, and more specifically between the ages of 10 and 18, minors are afforded special treatment, as provided in article 80 of the Criminal Code referred to above.
 - The Code of Criminal Procedure, which was adopted on 27 July 2005 and entered into force on 1 January 2007, introduced improvements in the administration of juvenile justice by modernizing the applicable legal regime so as to give due weight to relevant international standards.
 - In dealing with children in conflict with the law, the primary objective is reintegration into the family environment and social rehabilitation; internment is envisaged only as a last resort. Thus, during the preparatory stages of the proceedings, and more particularly at the stage of judicial investigation, restriction of liberty is the exception, preference being given under the law to placement (art. 701, para. 4) or custody arrangements (art. 702).
 - Detention is an exceptional measure. A minor aged between 12 and 14 may be placed in pretrial detention only in cases of violation of the right to life involving in particular murder, manslaughter or assault occasioning death (art. 704).
 - Following the establishment of the minor's guilt in the decisional phase, the Code also lays down the rules governing the measures or penalties applicable on the basis of the age of the minor. Thus, no penalty of imprisonment can be incurred by a minor aged between 10 and 14. The court issues an admonition and imposes one of the following measures: placement of the minor in the custody of his or her parents, tutor, guardian or any person worthy of trust; probation; placement in a vocational training institute or care facility or in a specialized institution; preventive recognizance (art. 724).
 - Minority status is a mitigating circumstance in the case of minors aged 14 to 18. The minor can only be subject to a reprimand for a misdemeanour (art. 729). If the minor has committed a crime or indictable offence, the sentence may be made subject to the measures referred to above where it is not a sentence of imprisonment without remission. In the latter case, the sentence can only be coupled with probation (art. 725) which takes effect only upon completion of the term of imprisonment. In both cases, the court orders placement of the minor for as long as is necessary for his/her upbringing, pending attainment of the age of civil majority (art. 726).
 - As a matter of principle, minors are held separately from adults before and after delivery of judgement. The improvement of conditions of detention is one of the guidelines of prison policy. Accordingly, in the context of cooperation with the European Union, Cameroon is committed to implementing the PACDET programme for the improvement of conditions of detention.
 - Other reforms of the juvenile justice system under the Code of Criminal Procedure entail simplification of the rules of jurisdiction, the involvement of childcare professionals in the administration of justice and improved protection of minors' rights.
 - In cases of juvenile delinquency, the court of first instance has jurisdiction over offences committed by minors aged between 10 and 18 without accomplices or co-principals.
 - As a rule, the court sits as a bench. Two non-presiding judges (*assesseurs*) selected on the basis of their interest in child-related issues and their expertise in the matter, assist the professional judge who presides over the proceedings. They are entitled to vote on the penalties and other measures to be imposed on the minor.

- The protection of the minor and the safeguarding of his/her rights are ensured by the official appointment of counsel, and restrictions on the public conduct of proceedings. The proceedings must be held in camera, failing which any decision will be rendered null and void. The representatives of human rights and child protection organizations may, however, be authorized to attend the hearing. The personality and state of health of the minor are ascertained by means of a social survey and a medico-psychological examination (art. 701).
 - In civil, commercial and social cases, article 388 of the Civil Code defines a minor as any individual of either sex who has not yet reached the age of 21. Minors are always represented by their parents, tutors or guardians.
 - Living conditions and needs of children in detention: a study on children needing special measures of protection, which was conducted in 2009 and is in the process of being validated, deals with the situation of children in conflict with the law.
 - In terms of judicial procedure, the period of pretrial detention continues to be a lengthy one in some cases, given the shortage of judges and courts. In order to remedy this deficiency, the Government took steps to recruit 540 judges over a period of three years (2008–2010) and to strengthen the capacity of the parties involved in the juvenile justice system, including in particular judges, law enforcement officers, social workers, *assesseurs* (non-presiding judges) and probation officers.
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