



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan¹ at its 2636th and 2637th meetings, held on 31 August and 1 September 2022,² and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2668th meeting, held on 23 September 2022.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fifth periodic report of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues,³ which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the 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 various areas, including the ratification, in 2021, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It also welcomes the establishment, in 2021, of the Office of the Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child; the progress made in registering births and reducing statelessness, and in eliminating mother-to-child HIV transmission and the widespread use of child labour; the equalization of the age of marriage at 18 years for boys and girls; and the measures taken to enhance the quality of and access to education.

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. 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: respect for the views of the child (para. 20), violence against children (para. 28), children deprived of a family environment (para. 32), children with disabilities (para. 36), health and health services (para. 38) and education (para. 43).

5. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the**

* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-first session (29 August–23 September 2022).

¹ [CRC/C/UZB/5](#).

² See [CRC/C/SR.2636](#) and [CRC/C/SR.2637](#).

³ [CRC/C/UZB/RQ/5](#).



involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.

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

Legislation

6. Taking note of the amendments made to the Children's Rights Safeguards Act in 2016 and 2017, the Committee reiterates its recommendation that the State party ensure the incorporation of all principles and provisions contained in the Convention and its Optional Protocols into domestic legislation and their application by relevant authorities.

Comprehensive policy and strategy

7. Taking note of the 2021 plan of measures to improve the child rights system, the Committee recalls its recommendation that the State party develop a comprehensive policy, strategy and action plan on children, encompassing all areas of the Convention, and that it allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to their implementation.

Coordination

8. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the National Commission on Children's Issues and its territorial divisions in 2021 and recommends that the State party ensure that it has the necessary authority and resources to coordinate all activities related to the implementation of the Convention at different levels.

Allocation of resources

9. The Committee notes as positive the measures to expand the social assistance to low-income families with children. Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) and Sustainable Development Goal target 16.5, the Committee recommends that Uzbekistan introduce evidence-based and results-based participatory planning and budgeting in social sectors by fostering a culture of learning within the public administration and mahallas on data collection, analysis and use.

Corruption

10. The Committee, taking note of the Anti-Corruption Act of 2017, the State anti-corruption programme of 2021–2022 and the establishment of structures to counter corruption at different levels, recommends that the State party ensure that corruption is addressed in practice in all areas, in particular in relation to birth registration, health care and education.

Data collection

11. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003), the Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its system of collection and analysis of disaggregated data and access thereto and ensure that it covers all areas of the Convention and its Optional Protocols, including violence against children, mental health, children in street situations, children with disabilities, children belonging to minority groups, children in employment, children deprived of liberty and children in the justice system, including those who are victims of and witnesses to crime, with a view to informing its policies and strategies.

Independent monitoring

12. Welcoming the establishment, in 2021, of the Office of the Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the State party provide the Office with adequate human, financial and technical resources to effectively discharge its mandate and to strengthen the mandate to address complaints from or on behalf of children in a child-friendly manner. It also recommends that the State party align the draft Act on the Children's Ombudsman with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and with the Committee's general comment No. 2 (2002), with a view to the Act's swift adoption.

Dissemination, awareness-raising and training

13. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its awareness-raising programmes, in cooperation with civil society and the media and with the participation of children, to ensure that the Convention and its Optional Protocols are widely known by the general public, including by parents and children themselves, and to provide mandatory training on the rights of the child to all professionals working with and for children.

Cooperation with civil society

14. Noting as positive the measures taken to enhance the role of NGOs since 2017, the Committee recalls its previous recommendations and urges the State party to create an enabling environment for NGOs, including those working on children's rights, to foster their participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies and programmes relating to the rights of the child and in the preparation of periodic reports to the Committee.

Children's rights and the business sector

15. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendations that the State party establish a clear regulatory framework for the business sector, ensure its effective implementation and appropriately sanction and provide remedies when violations occur.

B. Definition of the child (art. 1)

16. Welcoming the establishment of the age of marriage for boys and girls at 18 years in 2019, the Committee calls upon the State party to remove all exceptions that allow marriage below the age of 18.

C. General principles (arts. 2–3, 6 and 12)**Non-discrimination**

17. Recalling Sustainable Development Goal targets 5.1 and 10.3, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt, implement, monitor and evaluate a comprehensive anti-discrimination law and a strategy comprising measures, including awareness-raising and media campaigns, to change social norms and behaviours that contribute to discrimination, in particular on the basis of gender, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. It also recommends that the State party implement targeted policies and programmes to address discrimination against girls, children with disabilities, children belonging to minority groups, refugee, asylum-seeking and internally-displaced children, children in alternative care, children in street situations and other children in vulnerable situations.

Best interests of the child

18. Recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013), the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party explicitly stipulate the principle of the best interests of the child in its legislation and ensure that it is integrated and consistently applied in all administrative and judicial proceedings concerning children, including by developing specific procedures, criteria and tools and by providing training for education, justice, police, child protection and health professionals to strengthen their capacity to apply the principle of the best interests of the child in their work.

Respect for the views of the child

19. The Committee notes as positive that presidential decree No. 4296 on additional measures for further strengthening guarantees of the rights of the child of 22 April 2019 and subsequent legislative amendments provide for the right of children to express their views on all matters affecting their interests and in the course of any judicial or administrative proceedings, and that their views should be taken into account regardless of their age. It also welcomes the establishment of the youth parliament for persons aged between 14 and 30, youth consultations and the so-called “U-report” that has been used to consult children on new laws and policies. However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Children, especially those below 10 years of age, rarely being heard in judicial proceedings, including on civil law matters and in relation to alternative care;

(b) The abolishment of the children’s parliament and the lack of child-friendly procedures and spaces for children to express their views, including in schools;

(c) Barriers to accessing participatory structures for girls and children in vulnerable situations.

20. Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the enforcement of the legislation and regulations recognizing the right of all children, including those under the age of 10, to be heard, including in judicial and administrative proceedings, especially in those concerning civil and alternative care, and establish systems and/or procedures for social workers and courts to comply with that principle as well as child-friendly processes and procedures and spaces where children feel safe to express their views;

(b) Introduce a child-friendly local governance system, such as a children’s parliament, for the systemic civic engagement of children, in particular girls, children from economically disadvantaged families, children from rural areas, children belonging to minority groups, children with disabilities and children in street situations;

(c) Further promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, in communities and in schools, and include children in decision-making in all matters related to them and ensure that their views are given due weight.

D. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7–8 and 13–17)**Birth registration and nationality**

21. Welcoming the progress made in registering births and reducing and preventing statelessness, the Committee recommends that the State party collect data on the implementation of the Act on citizenship of 2020, including on the number of applications submitted by stateless persons, disaggregated by age and gender; and consider ratifying the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Right to identity

22. While taking note of the information provided by the State party about secrecy relating to adoption, the Committee recommends that it ensure the effective enforcement of the right of adopted children to have access to information about their biological origins.

Freedom of expression and access to appropriate information

23. Taking note of the information provided by the State party indicating that schools were equipped with broadband Internet, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen connectivity for all children, giving particular attention to remote areas and economically disadvantaged families. The Committee also recommends that the State party enhance the digital literacy and skills of children, teachers and families and that it ensure, in law and in practice, that children are able and encouraged to effectively exercise their rights to freedom of expression and to access information without unnecessary restrictions, in accordance with articles 13 and 17 of the Convention.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

24. Noting some positive changes for religious freedoms, the Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to ensure the right of the child and the rights and duties of parents and legal guardians under article 14 of the Convention with a view to attaining a peaceful co-existence of different religions, including those that are not officially recognized, in a manner consistent with this provision.

Right to privacy

25. The Committee recalls its recommendation that the State party safeguard the right of children in alternative care and in child justice facilities to the privacy of their personal belongings and correspondence. It also recommends, recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021), that the State party develop legislation, regulations and safeguarding policies for the media and in the digital environment to protect the privacy of children, as well as standards for ethical reporting on children, and establish mechanisms to prosecute violations.

E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)**Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

26. The Committee, taking note of the legislative measures to combat torture, and recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011), Sustainable Development Goal target 16.2 and its previous recommendations, recommends that the State party:

(a) Align the definition of torture with the definition stipulated in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as recommended by the Committee against Torture in its concluding observations;⁴

(b) Investigate the allegations of torture and ill-treatment of children, including during police interrogation, effectively prosecute and bring to justice the perpetrators with commensurate sanctions, and provide victims with access to justice;

(c) Ensure that children have access to confidential, child-friendly complaint mechanisms for reporting cases, particularly in children's detention centres and alternative care, and that those reporting such cases do not face reprisals;

(d) Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, assess the conditions of detention of children in the child justice system, and

⁴ CAT/C/UZB/CO/5, para. 22.

ensure that monitoring mechanisms, including the national preventive mechanism, have further unhindered access to such institutions for monitoring purposes;

(e) Provide training to judges, law enforcement officers and lawyers on working with children and on child-friendly and child-sensitive methods of investigation.

Violence against children

27. The Committee notes the establishment, in 2019, of the helpline for women and children victims of violence (“1146”), among other measures taken to address domestic violence, and the provision, enshrined in the revised Act on communications from legal entities and individuals, establishing the right of the child to submit a complaint. However, the Committee is seriously concerned about:

(a) The lack of data on the prevalence, forms and causes of violence against children, which remains largely underreported and socially invisible and which does not allow for the accurate assessment of the magnitude of the phenomenon;

(b) The insufficient legislative and institutional frameworks to prevent and combat violence against children;

(c) Near-universal acceptance of corporal punishment, in the absence of a clear legal prohibition;

(d) The lack of capacity to identify victims of violence and of a multidisciplinary and child-sensitive approach to victim protection;

(e) Insufficient victim support services and the absence of a specific hotline for child victims.

28. **Recalling its general comments No. 8 (2006) and No. 13 (2011), the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Conduct a study to assess the prevalence, causes, nature and forms of violence against children, such as corporal punishment, domestic violence, bullying, sexual exploitation and abuse, including online, and, based on the results, formulate and implement, with the participation of children, a comprehensive strategy for preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, with particular attention to girls, children with disabilities, children in alternative care, children left behind by migrant parents and children in the justice system;**

(b) **Enact, implement and monitor legislation to explicitly prohibit all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, in all settings;**

(c) **Ensure in legislation that a protection order is granted to a child in the case of domestic violence, including violence between parents;**

(d) **Promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline and attitudinal change within the family, the community and schools, including through awareness-raising campaigns;**

(e) **Establish mechanisms, procedures and guidelines, including a multi-agency and child-friendly infrastructure, to ensure and promote mandatory reporting and multi-agency intervention in all cases of violence against children, and train teachers, health professionals, social workers and mahalla representatives to identify different forms of violence and refer victims accordingly;**

(f) **Ensure that children have access to confidential, child-friendly complaint mechanisms, and encourage them to make use of them;**

(g) **Ensure that all cases of violence against children, including sexual violence, are promptly investigated, applying a child-friendly and multisectoral approach, and that children’s testimony is recorded audiovisually without delay and allowed as evidence during court proceedings;**

(h) Ensure that perpetrators of crimes involving violence against children, including sexual violence, are prosecuted and duly sanctioned and that reparations are provided to victims, as appropriate;

(i) Establish legislative and institutional frameworks and standardized, gender-sensitive and child-sensitive procedures, and provide regular training and guidelines for judges, law enforcement officials, teachers, health-care and social workers, and other relevant professionals in this regard;

(j) Provide children who are victims of violence with specialized, child-friendly and gender-sensitive services, including psychosocial services, and access to information about remedies to ensure their recovery and reintegration.

Harmful practices

29. Welcoming the prohibition of child marriage, and recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) and Sustainable Development Goal target 5.3, the Committee recommends that the State party effectively enforce this prohibition; strengthen its efforts to promote attitudinal change, including through awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage on the physical and mental health and well-being of children; and establish protection schemes for victims who file a complaint.

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

Family environment

30. The Committee notes with concern the insufficient levels of and access to family support schemes; and the increased migration rates leading to a rise in the number of children left without parental care along with a punitive approach to parents. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Increase social assistance benefits, and develop and scale up parenting programmes;

(b) Strengthen its efforts to prevent child abandonment and family separation and to facilitate family reunification, including by allocating adequate resources to ensure community-based services, giving particular attention to poor families, families with children with disabilities and children left behind by migrant parents, by enlarging the pool of trained social workers and psychologists to provide such services and by raising the awareness of children and families about them;

(c) Promote parenting roles of men and equal sharing of parental responsibilities between mothers and fathers, in accordance with article 18 (1) of the Convention, including by using awareness-raising campaigns and expanding the use of paternity leave and flexible working arrangements for both parents.

Children deprived of a family environment

31. Welcoming presidential resolution No. 4185 of February 2019 to strengthen welfare measures for children deprived of parental care, and also welcoming the establishment of the technical inter-agency working group and the draft deinstitutionalization strategy for the period 2022–2036, the Committee remains nonetheless concerned about:

(a) Delays in the implementation of deinstitutionalization policies in the State party;

(b) The large number of children deprived of a family environment, with an increasing share of children below 3 years of age;

(c) The high institutionalization rates, in particular due to socioeconomic hardship, divorce, abandonment and disability;

- (d) The absence of a formal foster-care system and of a mechanism to select, prepare, support and monitor guardianship or patronage care providers;
- (e) The lack of case management as a mandatory tool for service providers and the insufficient number of professionals;
- (f) The lack of quality standards and monitoring of care, as well as of individual care plans and the review of placements;
- (g) Insufficient efforts made to facilitate contact with parents and to place siblings together;
- (h) Reports of abuse and sexual violence in residential care, where children are vulnerable to trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation;
- (i) The lack of support for children leaving care.

32. The Committee, recalling the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and its previous recommendations, recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure that the reform of the child protection and the social protection systems at the national level brings together the different strands of social work under a single social protection agency working for the welfare of children;**
- (b) Speed up the adoption of the deinstitutionalization strategy and its action plan, adequately secured by human, financial and technical resources, with a view to transforming the child protection and social protection systems, prioritizing family-based options over institutional placements;**
- (c) Introduce case management in care and protection work, including individual care plans, establish quality standards for all alternative care settings as well as regular and substantive reviews of placements in institutional and family-based childcare facilities and monitor the quality of care therein;**
- (d) Ensure that poverty, disability or divorce are never the sole justification for family separation and that children are separated from their family only if it is in their best interests after a comprehensive assessment of their situation;**
- (e) Increase the number and strengthen the capacity of professionals working with families and children, in particular social workers, service providers, guardianship inspectors and mahalla workers, in order to ensure family-based care responses and to enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of children deprived of a family environment;**
- (f) Establish a formal foster-care system, set selection criteria and conduct a national recruitment campaign for foster parents, and provide regular and adequate training for foster parents and for guardianship and patronage care providers before and during the placement of children, especially with regard to fostering children with disabilities;**
- (g) Put an end to the institutionalization of children under 3 years of age and ensure that they are exclusively cared for in a family environment;**
- (h) Ensure sufficient family-based and community-based care options for children who cannot stay with their families, including by allocating sufficient financial resources for foster care and adoption and facilitating the reunification of children with their families when possible;**
- (i) Put in place procedures and facilities to ensure that all children have opportunities to maintain contact with family and that siblings are accommodated together whenever possible, when it is in their best interests;**
- (j) Ensure the availability of accessible and child-friendly channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying violence and/or abuse for children in care, and provide children with information on the risks of trafficking and of economic and sexual exploitation;**

(k) **Ensure adequate support for children leaving care, including housing options and business loans, and develop community-based services to help them to start independent lives.**

Adoption

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the capacity of adoption services to evaluate and ensure the best interests of the child in adoption proceedings; provide pre-adoption and post-adoption services and monitoring; and consider ratifying the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.**

Children of incarcerated parents

34. **With reference the United Nations global study on children deprived of liberty, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all decisions taken, including when sentencing caregivers, and that alternatives to incarceration are considered;**

(b) **Guarantee the visitation rights of the children of incarcerated caregivers in adequate and child-friendly premises;**

(c) **Ensure that, when the incarceration of caregivers is not avoidable, children have access to adequate early childhood education, nutrition and health services, enjoy the right to play and are visited regularly by social workers to guarantee their physical, mental and social development.**

G. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

35. The Committee takes notes of the adoption in 2020 of the Act on the rights of persons with disabilities. It also takes note of the measures taken to improve support to children with disabilities, in particular the provision of community-based services and day-care units in Muruvvat homes for children with disabilities to enable children to live with their families and of the introduction of inclusive education in 2021. However, the Committee remains concerned about:

(a) The medical and charity approach to disability and the lack of a definition of disability in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

(b) The inadequate financial and social support to parents of children with disabilities and the requirement of a disability certificate, hindering access to the child disability benefit for nearly 50 per cent of children with disabilities;

(c) The high institutionalization rates among children with disabilities, with regional disparities in the distribution of Muruvvat homes;

(d) The lack of access to health care, including to specialized professionals, and to early screening and intervention with regard to developmental disabilities;

(e) The overrepresentation of children with disabilities in specialized education and among out-of-school children;

(f) Widespread stigma and discrimination resulting, inter alia, in a lack of participation opportunities.

36. **Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006), its joint statement with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the rights of children with disabilities⁵ and its previous recommendations, the Committee urges the State party to:**

⁵ Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd/statements-declarations-and-observations>.

- (a) **Adopt a child rights-based approach in legislation and policies regarding children with disabilities, including a definition of disability in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;**
- (b) **Harmonize the methodology, tools and criteria for the identification of disabilities;**
- (c) **Strengthen support for the parents of children with disabilities by increasing the availability of community-based services, including early intervention services and home attendance by patronage nurses and social work assistants;**
- (d) **Ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to early childhood development and school readiness opportunities as other children;**
- (e) **Develop alternative family-based care options for children with special needs and disabilities, instead of placing them in Muruvvat homes;**
- (f) **Ensure that the social sector and other professionals who are regularly in contact with children have adequate knowledge and minimum standards of conduct, inclusive of disability;**
- (g) **Strengthen awareness-raising programmes, including campaigns, aimed at government officials, judges and law enforcement officials, lawyers, the public and families, to combat the stigmatization of children with disabilities, and to promote both their positive image as rights-holders and opportunities for them to express their views on matters affecting them, including at school.**

H. Basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 24, 26, 27 (1)–(3) and 33)

Health and health services

37. Welcoming the adoption by the State party in 2014 of the definition of the World Health Organization of “live birth”, as previously recommended, and also welcoming the progress it made in eliminating mother-to-child HIV transmission, the focus on prevention in health-care reform, and the measures taken to improve breastfeeding and access to obstetric and primary health care, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) High neonatal, infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates;
- (b) Irregularities in reporting stillbirths, which are considered as an individual responsibility of health-care personnel rather than a systemic failure;
- (c) The inadequate quality of health-care services, with persisting regional disparities in health-care provision, including overcrowding, shortages of trained and specialized doctors and nurses, as well as of equipment, required medicines, supplies, utilities and hygiene materials;
- (d) The resurgence of tuberculosis, including among children;
- (e) The lack of implementation and monitoring of adopted guidelines and protocols to improve the functioning of the health sector;
- (f) Micronutrient deficiency in children and pregnant women, rising trends in overweightedness and obesity, and the lack of a mechanism to monitor the impact of nutrition programmes and policies.

38. **The Committee, recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013), Sustainable Development Goal targets 2.2, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.8, and its previous recommendations, recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Pursue its efforts to further reduce neonatal, infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates, including by improving the quality of and access to prenatal and postnatal services and facilities, and early identification and intervention and screening programmes;**

(b) Establish a maternal and perinatal death surveillance, analysis and response system, address irregularities in reporting stillbirths in a systemic rather than punitive manner, and publish data on the causes of mortality;

(c) Allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to develop a strategy, with results-based budgeting, to strengthen the quality and affordability of health-care services across the country, focusing on pre-service and in-service training and capacity-building for doctors and nurses, and on their adequate remuneration and incentives for carrier development, reinforcing the supply chain system to ensure sufficient stock of medicines and supplies, improving water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities, infection prevention and control, and modernizing the management of primary health-care facilities;

(d) Strengthen tuberculosis prevention and care, with particular attention to children;

(e) Develop a monitoring system to oversee the implementation of health-care reform, including relevant policies, protocols and guidelines, and to inform further action;

(f) Improve the micronutrient deficiency status of women and children and address child malnutrition and growing trends in overweightedness and obesity, including by providing access to qualified child health professionals, establishing a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the State nutrition programmes across the country, promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity, and promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding and implementing the baby-friendly hospital initiative.

Adolescent health

39. Taking note of a rise in suicidal behaviour and in HIV infection rates among adolescents, the Committee, recalling its general comments No. 3 (2003), No. 4 (2003) and No. 20 (2016), and Sustainable Development Goal targets 3.5, 3.7 and 5.6, recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the compulsory school curriculum and is targeted at all adolescents, girls and boys, with special attention given to preventing sexually transmitted infections;

(b) Ensure that adolescents have access to modern contraception, confidential testing and HIV treatment;

(c) Develop and implement a mental health policy and strategy, with a focus on prevention on developing outpatient services and on addressing emerging mental health issues in children and adolescents, including self-injuries and suicidal behaviour, ensure the availability and accessibility of mental health services and programmes for children and adolescents, increase the availability and accessibility of trained child psychiatrists and child psychologists in all areas and encourage children to seek mental health services, without stigma;

(d) Continue its efforts to prevent substance abuse and provide accessible and youth-friendly substance dependence treatment and support services.

Environmental health

40. Taking note of the measures taken to protect the health of children in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm province, which are the most affected by the climate and environmental harm, the Committee recommends that the State party continue to monitor, mitigate and address the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on children's health and development, with particular attention to food security, water and sanitation and access to health-care and nutrition services and programmes in the above-mentioned areas.

Standard of living

41. **The Committee welcomes the extension of social assistance schemes to cover children between 14 and 18 years of age, but it notes with concern that 24 per cent of children live in poverty, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, and that their vulnerability was further increased by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Committee recalls Sustainable Development Goal targets 1.1–1.3 and recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Establish a multidimensional measure on child poverty to inform the reform of the social protection system to ensure that it adequately protects children in vulnerable situations and their families, including by overcoming institutional fragmentation, enhancing inter-agency coordination and interconnection between social, health-care and legal protection services, strengthening the quality of social protection programmes and establishing a network of professional social workers and community-based social services;**

(b) **Allocate adequate funding to social assistance schemes for all families with children, establish an objective definition of vulnerable families and ensure socioeconomic support for them, giving particular attention to low-income families in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Khorezm province;**

(c) **Collect and analyse data on children in employment, and the root causes and conditions of such employment, with a view to informing its policy action.**

I. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

Education

42. **The Committee takes note of the introduction in 2017–2018 of 11-years' free compulsory education, the measures taken to enhance the quality of education, including the school curriculum reform, and the plan to achieve universal enrolment in preschool education by 2021. However, the Committee remains concerned about:**

(a) **Regional, gender and income disparities in accessing quality education at all levels, resulting in children dropping out of school, especially between primary and secondary levels;**

(b) **The shortage of adequately trained teachers, especially in rural and remote areas and at the preschool level;**

(c) **The lack of understanding and implementation of inclusive education;**

(d) **The reliance on private tutoring to prepare for entry into university, which puts children from low-income families at a disadvantage;**

(e) **The learning environment affected by inadequate infrastructure and bullying;**

(f) **Reported barriers for children belonging to the Tajik minority in receiving education in their language;**

(g) **The lack of coverage and adequately trained teachers and infrastructure needed to achieve universal coverage of preschool education.**

43. **The Committee, recalling Sustainable Development Goal targets 4.1–4.7, 4.a and 4.c and its previous recommendations, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure equal and non-competitive access to quality education for all children, with particular attention to girls, children from poor families, children in rural and remote areas and children with disabilities, and also ensure that all children remain in and finish school, including by supporting their transition to secondary schools;**

(b) **Strengthen pre-service and in-service training for teachers, and ensure an adequate number of trained teachers in preschools;**

(c) Implement the concept of development of inclusive education for the period 2021–2025, and ensure that all children with disabilities have access to inclusive education in mainstream schools, ensuring that schools are equipped with trained teachers, accessible infrastructure and teaching materials adapted to the needs of children with disabilities;

(d) Regulate private tutoring to make it accessible to all, continue to improve the quality of school education and enhance gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching practices;

(e) Allocate adequate financial, human and technical resources to improve safety and the infrastructure in schools, with particular attention to rural schools attended by large groups of children belonging to minority groups, including by providing adequate heating and lighting, water and sewage services, appropriate sanitation facilities and by upgrading laboratories and information and communications technology classrooms;

(f) Continue to provide education in the languages of its minority groups and address the reports of violations of the right to use minority languages, including in education;

(g) Continue to expand the coverage and capacity and improve the infrastructure and monitoring of preschool education, giving particular attention to rural and remote areas, children with disabilities and children from economically disadvantaged families, establish national standards on early childhood care and qualifications of preschool teachers and ensure that they receive systematic and appropriate in-service training.

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

Asylum-seeking and refugee children

44. Taking note of the presidential decree of May 2017 providing a legal avenue to seek asylum and the efforts made concerning refugees from Afghanistan, and recalling joint general comments No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and joint general comments No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Establish a national system for international protection, including for children, with safeguards against arbitrary detention, deportation and refoulement;

(b) Prohibit all detention of children for migration-related reasons, including of unaccompanied children;

(c) Recognize and provide legal status to refugees and asylum-seeking families, including children;

(d) Facilitate access for asylum-seeking and refugee children to education, health care and social services;

(e) Consider ratifying the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

45. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Coordinating Council on Child Labour, the system of annual national surveys, the 1006 helpline and the online help desk, as well as other measures taken that have led to the reduced incidence of child labour during the cotton harvest. Taking note, however, of persisting reports of child labour cases, in particular in the construction and cotton industries, the

Committee recalls Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7 and recommends that the State party pursue its efforts to eliminate the use of child labour, including through the use of regular labour inspections and continuous capacity-building of employers, farmers, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. It also recommends that the State party ensure that the employment of children above the age of 16 is based on genuine free choice and subject to labour safeguards in line with international standards.

Children in street situations

46. Noting with concern the lack of data on children in street situations, the Committee urges the State party to conduct a study to assess the scope and the root causes of this phenomenon and, recalling its general comment No. 21 (2017) and its previous recommendations, recommends that the State party ensure the protection and recovery of, and the provision of assistance to, children in street situations, provide family support and establish mechanisms to prevent them falling victim to trafficking and to economic and sexual exploitation.

Sale, trafficking and abduction

47. The Committee takes note of the efforts made to prevent trafficking and, recalling Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7, recommends that the State party:

(a) Review its legislation to ensure that the definition of trafficking includes the essential elements of the crime in accordance with international law and that the penalties for trafficking, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, are commensurate with the gravity of the crime and that house arrest is never used instead of imprisonment, including for trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation;

(b) Strengthen the capacity of relevant authorities, including law enforcement, border management, judicial and front-line services, to identify and refer child victims of trafficking to assistance and protection services, giving particular attention to foreign families and Uzbek families repatriated from armed conflict zones, and to investigate and prosecute all cases of trafficking of children and to bring perpetrators to justice, while ensuring that prosecutions are victim-centred, child-friendly and gender-sensitive;

(c) Ensure that child victims have access to the necessary support and services, including psychological support and legal assistance;

(d) Establish procedures to protect victims and witness in criminal proceedings, ensure that they are aware of their right to seek compensation and provide training to prosecutors and judges in this respect.

Administration of child justice

48. Taking note of the joint project undertaken by the State party with the United Nations Children's Fund to promote diversion and restorative justice in Tashkent, and also taking note of the closure of two out of four closed facilities for children in conflict with the law and the rise of the minimum age for referrals to such institutions from 11 to 14, the Committee, recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) and its previous recommendations and with reference to the global study on children deprived of liberty, urges the State party to:

(a) Establish a specialized comprehensive child justice system with adequate human, technical and financial resources, designate specialized judges and prosecutors for children and ensure that they receive specialized training, and seek technical assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund to this end;

(b) Ensure that the procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused of crime are respected and that children benefit from free and quality legal aid from the investigation onwards;

(c) Promote non-judicial measures, such as diversion, mediation and counselling, for children accused of criminal offences and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences, such as probation or community service;

(d) Ensure that detention is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time and that its use is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to its withdrawal;

(e) For the few situations where deprivation of liberty is used as a measure of last resort, ensure that children are not detained together with adults and that the conditions of detention and their treatment comply with the Convention and with the United Nations Rules on the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, including with regard to access to education and health services;

(f) End the use of any kind of solitary confinement (*kartcers*) as a punishment and disciplinary measure, and repeal the law allowing such solitary confinement;

(g) Develop community-based rehabilitation and reintegration services, including psychological support, to prevent recidivism.

K. Follow-up to the Committee's previous concluding observations and recommendations concerning the implementation of the Optional Protocols to the Convention

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

49. The Committee, taking note of the lack of information on the implementation of its concluding observations in the report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol, recalls its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and reiterates its previous concluding observations, urging the State party to explicitly define and criminalize all offences under articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol and address the distinction between the sale and trafficking of children.

Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

50. The Committee welcomes the efforts made to repatriate Uzbek children from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and to provide them with support, reintegration and family reunification. It recommends that the State party pursue its efforts in this regard, in close cooperation with civil society and that it take into account the best interests of the child, in particular, when it comes to selecting the most appropriate form of care for children left without parental care. It also recalls its previous recommendations under the Optional Protocol that the State party should:

(a) Strengthen awareness-raising measures regarding the Optional Protocol and children's rights that are aimed at children, their families and all professionals working with or for children;

(b) Prohibit and criminalize the recruitment or use of children in hostilities by non-State armed groups;

(c) Establish extraterritorial jurisdiction over the offences under the Optional Protocol and eliminate the double criminality requirement;

(d) Establish mechanisms for the early identification of asylum-seeking and refugee children from conflict areas, collect disaggregated data on such children and strengthen the physical and psychological support provided to them;

(e) Enact legislation criminalizing the export and/or transit of arms and/or military assistance to countries where children may be involved in armed conflict.

L. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure

51. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.

M. Ratification of international human rights instruments

52. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

53. 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 and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the fifth 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

54. The Committee invites the State party to submit its combined sixth and seventh periodic reports by 28 July 2027 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 guidelines⁶ and should not exceed 21,200 words.⁷ In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report. 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.

55. 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,⁸ and paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/268.

⁶ [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

⁷ General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.

⁸ [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I.