



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**Fifty-first session****CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 8 OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT****Concluding observations: Oman**

The Committee considered the initial report of Oman (CRC/C/OPAC/OMN/1) at its 1419th meeting, held on 9 June 2009 (CRC/C/SR.1419), and adopted at its 1425th meeting, held on 12 June, the following concluding observations.

Introduction

The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report. The Committee further welcomes its written replies (CRC/C/OPAC/OMN/Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues and appreciates the dialogue with a high-level and multisectoral delegation.

The Committee reminds the State party that the present concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its previous concluding observations adopted on the State party's second periodic report on 29 September 2006 (CRC/C/OMN/CO/2) and with the concluding observations adopted on the initial report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 12 June 2009 (CRC/C/OPSC/OMN/CO/1).

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A. Positive aspects

The Committee notes as positive:

The State party's declaration, upon ratification of the Protocol, stating the minimum age of voluntary recruitment to the armed forces as 18 years;

That there is no conscription in the State party, and that the minimum age of voluntary recruitment is 18 years without exception, even in situations of general mobilization.

I. General measures of implementation**Reservations**

The Committee regrets the broad nature of the State party's reservation and that no progress has been made in withdrawing, or limiting, its extent since the consideration of the State party's second periodic report in 2006 (CRC/C/OMN/CO/2, para. 7).

The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party review its reservations with a view to withdrawing them, or limiting their extent, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/23). The Committee further recommends that the State party seek inspiration from other countries which have either withdrawn similar reservations or not entered any reservations to the Convention.

Dissemination and awareness

The Committee is concerned that awareness of the Optional Protocol among the general public is low.

The Committee recommends, in light of article 6, paragraph 2, of the Protocol, that the State party ensure that the

principles and provisions of the Protocol are widely disseminated to the general public and in particular among children.

Training

The Committee notes that members of the Omani armed forces receive training on the provisions of the Protocol, but is concerned, however, that training on human rights standards and the provisions of the Protocol may be inadequate.

The Committee recommends that the State party continue to provide members of the armed forces with training on the provisions of the Protocol. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party develop awareness-raising, education and training programmes on the provisions of the Optional Protocol for relevant professional groups working with children, notably prosecutors, lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers, social workers, medical professionals, teachers, and local and district officials. The State party is invited to provide information in that respect in its next report.

II. Prevention

Peace education

The Committee regrets that human rights education and peace education is not an element of the curricula of all schools on all levels.

The Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen its efforts to provide human rights education and, in particular, peace education for all children in school and train teachers with respect to including these themes in children's education.

III. Prohibition and related matters

Legislation

The Committee notes the provisions in article 14, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law of the State, but regrets the lack of specific provisions covering child recruitment in the Omani Criminal Code and that the term "direct participation in hostilities" is not defined in law. The Committee notes that the State party signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 20 December 2000.

In order to further strengthen international measures for the prevention of the recruitment of children and their use in hostilities, the Committee urges the State party to:

Revise the Penal Code and include a provision which explicitly criminalizes violations of the provisions of the Optional Protocol regarding the recruitment and involvement of children in hostilities, and include a definition of direct participation in hostilities;

Ensure that all military codes, manuals and other military directives are in accordance with the provisions and the spirit of the Optional Protocol;

Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

IV. Protection, recovery and reintegration

Assistance for physical and psychological recovery

The Committee regrets that the State party has no information on children coming from areas affected by armed conflict. The Committee notes there may be unaccompanied migrant children or children migrating with their families who do not seek asylum, but may have been involved in hostilities abroad. In this respect, the Committee is concerned over the lack of an identification mechanism for these children and regrets that, if needed, recovery and reintegration programmes and services would not be available for them.

The Committee encourages the State party to establish an identification mechanism for asylum-seeking and migrant children who may have been recruited or used in hostilities, and regrets the lack of measures for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration. Furthermore, the Committee encourages the State party to accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967).

V. Follow-up and dissemination

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

The Committee recommends that the initial report submitted by the State party and concluding observations adopted by the Committee be made widely available to the public at large and to children in particular in order to generate debate and awareness of the Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.

VI. Next report

In accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol in its consolidated third and fourth periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, due on 7 July 2012.

