



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General  
19 October 2023

Original: English  
English, French and Spanish only

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### Ninety-fifth session

15 January–2 February 2024

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of reports of States parties

## Replies of Israel to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports\*, \*\*

[Date received: 29 September 2023]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## Introduction

1. Hereinafter is the reply to the list of issues in relation to the combined 5th and 6th periodic reports of the Government of the State of Israel, submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with the requirements of Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter – the “Convention” or the “CRC”) and the CRC Treaty-specific Guidelines (CRC/C/58/Rev.3).
2. Since the submission of Israel’s last Periodic Report, many developments relevant to the implementation of the Convention and its protocols have taken place. This Report provides a comprehensive account thereof.
3. This Report was compiled by the Office of the Deputy Attorney General (International Law) at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), in cooperation with other Government Ministries and agencies.

## Part one

### Reply to paragraph 2 (a) of the list of issues (CRC/C/ISR/Q/5-6)

4. The rights protected by the Convention are effectively protected through legislation, judicial decisions and government policy.
5. In 2019, a Deputy Attorney General guideline was issued to all legal advisors in Government Ministries, seeking to emphasize and ensure the implementation of the abovementioned law, and to provide information regarding the impact of legislation on the rights of the child. The guideline regulates relevant required work processes, particularly the manner of examining the impact of legislation on children’s rights. According to the guideline, legislative authorities must examine the extent of impact that a government bill may have on children’s rights at all stages of its preparation, and consult relevant legal bureaus and the new Government Coordinator for the Rights of Children and Youth at the MoJ (“GCRCY”), if necessary. Wherever there is a direct or indirect violation of children’s rights, the legal advisors are asked to involve the relevant lawyers in charge of children and youth rights in the MoJ, and to consult with the GCRCY.

### Reply to paragraph 2 (b) of the list of issues

6. Government Coordinator for the Rights of Children and Youth – The Government highly values coordinated, comprehensive and inclusive policy-making concerning children and youth. To ensure complete and multidisciplinary response to the diverse needs of children and youth, including educational, health, social, physical and emotional needs, and recognizing the importance of hearing the voice of children and youth when formulating policies and decisions that concern them, the Government authorized the Minister of Justice to appoint a GCRCY (Government Resolution (GR) No. 1652 of June 2022). The Coordinator facilitates Inter-Ministerial and external collaborations, assists the Director Generals Committee (see below), coordinates its work and presents it with recommendations as needed; she also coordinates government activity and convenes roundtables or inter-ministerial teams for targeted problem-solving. The Coordinator also oversees data collection and the creation of a common knowledge infrastructure.
7. Moreover, in GR No. 1652, the Government also established a Director Generals Committee (DGC) on the rights of children and youth, to serve as a permanent forum for the coordination of government policy and activity in matters concerning the rights of children (from the 1st grade). The DGC is headed by the Director General (DG) of the MoJ, and its members include the DGs of the Ministries of Education, Welfare and Social Affairs, Health, Public Security, Finance and Immigration and Absorption.
8. The Inter-Ministerial Coordinator (IMC) for the prevention of youth from coming into conflict with the law – was appointed in 2018 within the MoJ, pursuant to GR No. 1840 (11.08.16), and is currently operating as a unit under the office of the GCRCY. For information on the activities of the IMC, please see Israel’s 3rd periodic report of 2019 (Para. 209).

9. During 2022, a government strategic plan for the prevention of risky behaviors among children and youth was formulated, together with all relevant governmental partners and in consultation with representatives of civil society and of the National Pupils and Youth Council (NPAYC). For additional information on this plan, see question 2(b) in the Annex to this Report (hereinafter: “the Annex”).

10. The Children and Youth Complaints Commission for out-of-home placed children (CaYCC) works to increase accessibility to children, by engaging in dialogue and responding to the ideas or requests made by children in out-of-home placement. The children’s rights, the procedure of applying to the CaYCC, the means of accessibility etc., were made available in Hebrew and Arabic following a dialogue with children and youth. In accordance with Article 2 of the CRC and Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – a similar dialogue was held with children with disabilities, with an emphasis on children with intellectual disabilities, subsequently developing unique and accessible tools for these children.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (c) of the list of issues**

11. Please see reply to question 2 (b) above.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (d) of the list of issues**

12. Hereinafter are several positive updates regarding non-discrimination in budgetary allocations and relevant GRs (see additional information in reply to question 15).

13. On October 24, 2021, GR No. 550 established a five-year plan (2022–2026), entitled “Tkadum – Progress”, for the Arab population in Israel, with a total budget of approximately 30 billion NIS (9.5 billion USD). Developed by the Authority for Socio-Economic Development of Minority Population in the Ministry of Social Equality in cooperation with relevant Ministries, local authorities, NGOs, research institutes and the public, this plan addresses new areas not addressed in the previous five-year plan (under GR No. 922), such as additional health and welfare issues, care for older persons, solitude relief etc.

14. For additional information on GR No. 550 in the fields of health, education and welfare, see question 2(d) in the Annex.

15. On October 24, 2021, GR No. 459, entitled “Program for dealing with the phenomenon of crime and violence among the Arab population for the years 2022–2026” was approved. Approximately 2.4 billion NIS (762 million USD) were allocated to ensure its efficient implementation.

**Reply to paragraph 2 (e) of the list of issues**

16. Please see reply to question 2(b) above. In addition, see also Israel’s 3rd Periodic Report of 2019 (para. 80, 106–110).

17. In addition, children and youth may also refer complaints to the National Supervisor for the implementation of the *Pupil’s Rights Law* at the Ministry of Education (MoE).

**Reply to paragraph 2 (f) of the list of issues**

18. It is Israel’s position, in line with basic principles of sovereignty and treaty law, that the CRC is not applicable beyond a State’s sovereign territory. Correspondingly, the Convention does not apply with respect to the West Bank. In addition, the CRC, like other human rights instruments, was not designed to apply in situations of armed conflict, where the Laws of Armed Conflict is the relevant and specifically applicable body of law.

19. That said, the Government maintains an open and direct dialogue with civil society and the Academia, particularly regarding UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies reporting process. The MoJ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Minerva Center for Human Rights at the Hebrew University, regularly convene a joint forum of state authorities, representatives of civil society and the Academia. In this context, draft reports to the Treaty Bodies are circulated among relevant NGOs for their comments prior to submission, and follow-up discussions are held regarding concluding observations. In February 2023, five

joint roundtable sessions took place, including on the following issues: safe use of the internet by children; the rights to dignity, identity and privacy of LGBTIQ+ children; and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.

20. For additional information on the cooperation with NGOs, see the Annex (question 2(f)).

**Reply to paragraph 3 (a) of the list of issues**

21. Regarding the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see Israel's reply to question 2(f) above.

**Reply to paragraph 3 (b) of the list of issues**

22. In this regard, see Israel's 3rd Periodic Report of 2019 (para. 19 and 21).

23. In addition, the case law on this matter reveals that the various courts have consistently adopted the policy presented in Attorney General's Guideline No. 4.1113 of 2018 (see Israel's 3rd Periodic Report of 2019 (para. 21)), and most of the marriage requests before the age of 18 are rejected. Although every case is considered and examined on its own merits, the granting of such a marriage permit is done rigidly, in order to protect the best interests of the child. Very few requests are accepted under special circumstances and according to the courts' discretion.

**Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues**

24. With respect to questions 4(a),(b),(c),(d) and (e) on the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above.

**Reply to paragraph 4 (a) of the list of issues**

25. In regard to prohibiting discrimination and guaranteeing equality in State legislation, see Israel's 3rd periodic report (para. 22).

**Reply to paragraph 4 (b) of the list of issues**

26. Regulation 2(b) of the *Family Matters Court (Legal Procedures) Regulations 5781-2020*, determines the basic principle, according to which, without deviating from the provisions of any law, in proceedings conducted between family members, the Court shall consider the best interests of the child before making a decision. The Court shall thus consider the child's rights, needs and interests, as well as his/her will bearing in mind their age and abilities. In addition, Chapter 2 of the Regulations entitled "Children's Participation" deals, among other things, with the child's right to be heard (Regulation 49), the manner of hearing a child according to their age (Regulation 51), hearing of a child by a Judge (Regulation 53), the confidentiality of the child (Regulation 55) and more, all for the purpose of taking into account the child's best interests and their views and positions.

27. All services provided to children in general and at-risk children in particular, are provided according to the best interest of the child principle, as mentioned in various legislative provisions. The Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs (MoWaSA) is a partner in a multidisciplinary and inter-ministerial team that deals with non-Israeli children and youth who enter Israel, mainly from the Palestinian Authority (PA), in order to provide a tailored response in emergencies.

28. For additional information on steps taken by the MoWaSA in this regard, see the Annex (question 4(b)). Regarding consideration of the best interest of the child, see also reply to questions 2(a) above, 5, 7(f), 8(a) and 11(b) below.

**Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues**

29. Regarding the National Child Representation Unit's (NCRU) promotion of children's right to be heard – Promoting direct, safe and child-tailored participation is one of the guiding principles of the NCRU. Lawyers representing children on behalf of the NCRU are required to facilitate their child-client's right to be heard directly in these proceedings, in accordance

with the child's wishes and their age, maturity and life circumstances. In all cases, the lawyer is required to transmit to the court or other decision-making bodies the express wishes and position of the child, in the most transparent way possible (even in cases where the child does not wish to be heard directly in the proceedings). An independent empirical study conducted recently on the NCRU serviced found that only in 15% of cases, the lawyer held that the child is unable to participate directly in the proceedings due to age or lack of understanding.

30. Admission to mental health facilities – Teenagers over the age of 15 who oppose hospitalization in mental health facilities have a right to be represented by a lawyer from the NCRU (Section 3F of the *Youth (Care and Supervision) Law 5720-1960*). The NCRU represents approximately 250 children and youth in such proceedings annually. Some Court decisions have mandated health authorities to explore alternatives to hospitalization (for example: C.Y.App. A. (*minor*) vs. *Welfare Department* (18.10.21)).

31. Unfortunately, the *Youth (Trial, Punishment and Modes of Treatment) Law 5731-1971*, does not enable children under 15 to be heard directly by courts or be represented in cases of forced hospitalization in mental health facilities proceedings, nor is their consent required.

32. Adoption proceedings – Section 23 of the *Children Adoption Law 5741-1981*, allows Family Matters Courts to appoint a guardian *ad litem* for children in adoption proceedings. However, this discretion is implemented in less than a fifth (19%) of the adoption proceedings each year and in an uneven manner across judicial districts.

33. Proceedings affecting migrant and asylum-seeking children – There are two proceedings in which the NCRU is authorized to provide legal representation to such children: upon a court order appointing a guardian *ad litem*/lawyer for a child (e.g., youth or family proceedings) and when a child or their natural guardian applies to the NCRU for legal assistance for the purpose of regulating their status (citizenship/repatriation).

34. Custody or removal from Israel – The best interest of the child is a substantial consideration in such decisions. Therefore, before a decision regarding the removal of a family that includes children aged 12 and above, the children are heard by a border control officer. The best interest of the child is examined and considered even regarding to children under the age of 12 (where there is no legal obligation to conduct a hearing). The hearing of the child takes place in the presence of a parent and subject to the child's consent, allowing the child to express their own opinion freely. The child's opinion is granted due consideration, albeit not exclusive. The instructions on holding a hearing for children are set in the Population and Immigration Authority (PIA) procedure No. 10.3.0001 regarding the issuance of removal and detention orders according to the *Entry into Israel Law 5712-1952*.

35. For further information on custody for the purpose of removing children and additional information, see the Annex (question 5).

#### **Reply to paragraph 6 (a) of the list of issues**

36. In this regard, see Israel's 3rd periodic report of 2019 (para. 50–45).

37. Any child born in Israel, whether to an Israeli citizen or resident or to a foreign resident, is documented by the hospital. Hospitals provide parents with a document entitled "Notice of Live Birth" which contains the date and place, parents' names and nationalities etc. (in accordance with Section 6 of the *Population Registry Law* and the *Population Registry Regulations (Additional Registration Details in a Birth or Death Notification) 5729-1968*.) According to Israeli law, children born to Israeli citizens are citizens from birth, are registered in the Population Registry and are entitled to a birth certificate. Children born in Israel to permanent residents and holders of an A/5 Visa are registered in the Population Registry, and in accordance with Section 30 of the *Population Registry Law 5725-1965*, may be issued a birth certificate. The details recorded in the birth certificate are detailed in the *Population Registry (The Form of Birth and Death Certificates) Regulations 5733-1972*. Children born to foreigners (and residents of the West Bank) are not entitled to Israeli status, are not registered in the Population Registry and therefore there is no authority to issue them a birth certificate, but rather "Notice of Live Birth". The State of Israel enables foreign parents to authenticate the "Notice of Live Birth" with an Apostille, to later submit that Notice to the

relevant authorities in their country of nationality. Foreign residents may submit the “Notice of Live Birth” to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in order to receive a document of “Affirmation of Birth in Israel – Replication of Notice of Live Birth”. For additional information see the Annex (question 6(a)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 6 (c) of the list of issues**

38. In this regard, see Israel’s 3rd periodic report of 2019 (para. 104–98).

#### **Reply to paragraph 6 (d) of the list of issues**

39. Section 4(9) of the *Communications (Bezeq and Broadcasting) Law 5742-1982* authorized the Minister of Communications to regulate offensive websites and contents on the internet through licenses and regulations. Accordingly, in 2022, certain provisions set previously in licenses to specific providers were incorporated into the *Communications (Bezeq and Broadcasting) (General Permit to Issue Communications Services) Regulations 5783-2022*.

40. In October 2022, comprehensive new regulations entered into force pursuant to Section 4(9) to the *Communications Law* concerning filtering of offensive content.

41. In March 2023, the Minister of Communication established an Inter-Ministerial Team on Protection of Children on the Internet, towards finding innovative solutions for filtering harmful content on mobile devices. The team’s goal is to fight bullying online and offensive publications to which children and youth are exposed.

42. For additional information on the 2022 regulations and the Inter-Ministerial Team, see the Annex (question 6(d)).

43. With regard to criminal offenses defined in the *Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law 5758-1998*, the State Attorney’s Office (SAO), including its Cyber Department, frequently submits indictments pertaining to offenses under this law. Since 2019, the Cyber Department handles and accompanies cases that focus on the dissemination of sexual content without consent on cyber mass-media platforms (offenses according to Amendment No. 10 (2014) to the *Prevention of Sexual Harassment Law*).

44. For relevant case-law, and additional information, including Attorney’s Guidelines, see the Annex (question 6(d)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (a) of the list of issues**

45. The GCRCY led a strategic government plan to prevent risky behaviours among children and youth, with the participation of many relevant bodies and ministries, NGOs and the NPaYC. For additional information on this strategic plan, see paragraph 9 above.

46. Regarding the Unit for the Coordination of the Fight Against Racism, see Israel’s 3rd periodic report of 2019 (para. 25–27). Following cooperation between the Unit and the MoE, as of the 2022 school-year, teachers-training institutions must include training on prevention of racism and promotion of living in partnership in their curriculum. Subsequently, the teachers learn about the Arab and Jewish ultra-Orthodox populations and how to deal with incidents of racism in the education system. The institutions are required to conduct meetings between Jewish and Arab pupils and offer the study of Arabic to those interested.

47. In January 2022, the MoE established a Committee, headed by MoE’s Deputy DG, to promote “living in partnership” in Israel, in cooperation with the Anti-Racism Unit.

48. The Committee’s recommendations include 26 practical recommendations for the education system, which were adopted by a Director-General’s Circular on November 30, 2022. For additional information, see the Annex (question 7(a)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (b) of the list of issues**

49. Youth prisoners under the supervision of the Israel Prisons Service (IPS) are considered an at-risk population, due to their particular characteristics. Their young age, the period of adolescence, the disconnection from educational, professional training and

employment frameworks and a multitude of personal, psychological and family issues, are elements that require consideration at the therapeutic level.

50. The IPS bases its treatment of youth in the “Ofek” (“horizon”) facility on the understanding that the incarceration needs of youth in conflict with the law are different from those of adults. This is reflected in IPS’s commitment to assist children during their incarceration, towards their reintegration into the society. Youth incarcerated in Ofek are entitled to acquire tools, professional skills and normative life skills. The rehabilitative interventions for such youth are carried out from the initial arrest and include individual, group and community meetings. This therapeutic environment surrounding youth prisoners in Ofek provides supportive assistance and therapeutic interventions in situations of crisis or risk, prevents drug and alcohol abuse and addresses the phenomenon of violence and sexual abuse.

51. Solitary confinement is a punitive measure imposed only in restricted circumstances of disciplinary offences stipulated in the *Prison Ordinance [New Version] 5732-1971*, for short and limited periods of time, and following a disciplinary hearing, fully complying with international law standards. The placement of youth in solitary confinement is done only in extreme cases and only as a last resort, while considering the age of the youth prisoner when imposing a punitive measure or determining its duration. Youth placed in solitary confinement will meet with a social worker daily.

52. Separation is not a punitive measure, but rather a preventive procedure, also regulated by the *Prison Ordinance*, intended to prevent a prisoner from harming themselves, other prisoners or the prison’s staff. A prisoner held in separation may be held alone or together with another prisoner, depending on the reasons for separation as well as the prisoner’s characteristics. The youth in separation is ensured access to: medical care, meetings with an attorney, an hour in the prison yard, social worker visits, television, video game consoles, telephone, books and newspapers. This preventive measure is subject to re-examination procedures, judicial review and appeal. It is used only as last resort for accomplishing the aims of a separation, based on professional consideration and subject to the best interest of the child. The authority to impose separation is constantly monitored and requires timely re-evaluation, in order to minimize its duration. When considering holding youth in separation, the decision is reviewed by four professionals of the incarceration facility, including a social worker (in single separation).

53. Youth placed in the Damon facility are generally provided services by the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority (PRA), in coordination with the IPS and the Youth Probation Services (YPS). The relevant youth meet regularly with the social worker at the facility, throughout their incarceration and particularly before their release. The social worker examines rehabilitative options, which include referral to the PRA upon demand and eligibility, in accordance with the professional team’s recommendation, the youth’s motivation for rehabilitation, and after visiting their family to ensure their cooperation. Subsequently, a designated rehabilitation program is tailored for each one according to their particular needs, including adapted group and individual therapy, also available at the “Beit Shushan” Hostel.

54. See additional information in the Annex (question 7(b)). Regarding the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see question 2(f) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (c) of the list of issues**

55. Israel Security Agency (ISA) interrogatees, including youth, are granted full rights in accordance with Israeli law and international law applicable to Israel, including legal representation and visits by the ICRC, when relevant. In this regard, see Israel’s 3rd periodic report of 2019 (para. 79–76).

56. The Inspector for Complaints against ISA Interrogators (the “Inspector”) attaches the utmost importance to the monitoring of interrogations of youth by the ISA, and therefore prioritizes and allocates significant resources to both the supervision of interrogations of youth and the examination of complaints filed by them.

57. A Supervision Mechanism of ISA interrogations has been operating since 2018. The supervisors are instructed to prioritize observation and supervision of interrogations of youth over those of adults. Investigators are instructed to handle complaints regarding youth immediately.

58. Additionally, as part of visiting IPS and ISA facilities as an “official visitor”, the Inspector meets all the detained youth personally without the presence of IPS or ISA staff members, and inquire about their detention conditions.

59. In 2020, an investigator from the Inspector’s office underwent a youth investigation course at the Police to better handle complaints filed by youth.

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (d) of the list of issues**

60. The ISA and its employees operate in accordance with the law, and are subject to internal and external supervision and audit, including by the State Comptroller, the Attorney General, the SAO, the Inspector, the Knesset, as well as the courts in all their instances up to the Supreme Court.

61. The guidelines of the ISA provide youth with special protections, required due to their age, with the aim of ensuring adequate protection of their rights and their physical and psychological well-being.

62. The ISA maintains internal supervision and control mechanisms regarding interrogations in general and interrogations of youth in particular, which take place subject to the approval of the most senior ISA officials and in accordance with special procedures of the Investigations Division adapted to them. Extreme care is taken to ensure that they are conducted by interrogators who have undergone appropriate training and that the interrogation and sleeping hours are suited to the needs of youth.

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (e) of the list of issues**

63. The MoE has developed a new core program for parents concerning parental guidance and the relationship with their children. The Ministry also trained its relevant employees to train parents of pupils studying in technological education schools. For this purpose, a parenting referent was appointed, work and training plans that include joint work with the Consulting Psychological Service Division were developed and training of school managers and consultants were implemented. A training program for regular school attendance officers was built, and relevant lectures and seminars were conducted.

64. The MoWaSA operates parent and child centers, parenting channels, as well as treatment and guidance lectures for parents, for assisting and improving parental functioning, thus reducing the risk level for children and enable their routine development. The goal is to teach therapists basic principles, diagnostic skills and therapeutic intervention, in order to strengthen the parent-child relationship and provide parents with tools to fulfil their parental role in a normative non-violent way.

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (f) of the list of issues**

65. The inter-ministerial program for the release of youth from detention and imprisonment – In March 2018, the Government adopted the recommendations and report of an inter-ministerial team addressing this matter (GR No. 3711). On February 16, 2020, the GCRCY Unit launched an inter-ministerial pilot program for promoting the release of youth from detention and imprisonment, addressing all stages – the arrest, imprisonment, optimal return to the community, and the reduction of recidivism, through continuous care (therapeutic, educational, medical). Today, about 50% of the youth are released with a personalized rehabilitation program of the Prisoner Rehabilitation Authority (PRA) and under its supervision (compared to only about 33% prior to the activation of this program), of which two thirds complete the program successfully (successful completion of a rehabilitation program has been found to reduce recidivism by more than 50%).

66. The inter-ministerial team operates a pilot plan to reduce imprisonment in collaboration with several Government Ministries and agencies, including the MoWaSA,



MoE, the PRA, and the Courts Administration Unit. For additional information on this plan, see the Annex (question 7(f)).

67. The PRA – In 2017, the authority established four unique youth centers in order to provide additional nation-wide response; a full-time counsellor was assigned to the Ofek facility. The Authority invested many resources to enrol youth to rehabilitation programs and to optimize the responses given to them, which include: house visits, education and employment incentives, rehabilitation programs etc., aimed at providing them with stable and supportive framework for their rehabilitation.

68. Mental health and psychosocial support for children and youth who are victims of a crime – The MoWaSA has 13 treatment centers for children and youth who are victims of sexual offenses country-wide, operated by associations selected by tender. All the therapists employed in the centers undergo special training for treating victims of sexual assault, have therapeutic experience in the field and undergo additional training during their employment. The treatment is not time-limited and every child is entitled to full funding regardless of an income test.

69. Lin Houses – Protection centers which offer initial support for children and youth between the ages of 3–18 and their family members, who have been harmed by sexual, physical, psychological abuse or severe neglect by a responsible family member, in a therapeutic educational setting or by someone else. These centers were established by the MoWaSA, in collaboration with the Police, the MoH and the MoJ, and offer various treatment and intervention programs.

70. For data regarding children and youth who were transferred to diversion programs or detention alternatives (2019–2023), trafficked children and youth (TIP) or shelters for battered women and expansion of shelters and institutions, see the Annex (question 7(f)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 7 (g) of the list of issues**

71. Hereinafter are examples of quality and child-sensitive services, including on trained professionals.

72. Legal Aid services – The NCRU provides child-centred legal aid for children victims of severe sexual offences (since August 2017), for approximately 185 children and youth each year, in criminal and civil proceedings against the perpetrator. All NCRU lawyers undergo a one-year mandatory multidisciplinary training, including child development, trauma-informed representation and child-centered communication skills.

73. Legal Aid – “Lawyer of my own” program: Children and youth sometimes find themselves (voluntarily or involuntarily) involved in legal proceedings, such as children who are victims of crime, children in situations of divorce, children at-risk etc. This program was established by the MoJ Legal Aid Administration in accordance with the CRC Committee’s guidelines (GC 7 (para 13(a)), 12, 20 (para 23), 24 (para 44, 96)) as well as the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Friendly Justice. These lawyers receive unique training, supervision and guidance and hold a child-focused expertise in counselling and representing children in civil proceedings, in order to promote and protect their rights.

74. The MoWaSA established eight (8) protection and assistance centers for children by virtue of the *Assistance to Minor Victims of Sexual or Violence Offenses Law 5768-2008*, which provide intervention adapted to children and youth who are victims of crime, with all relevant entities concentrated in one place.

75. The Persons with Disability Administration – The MoWaSA operates an array of treatment centers for counselling, education, training and treatment in the sexual-social field. The service is provided free of charge for children and youth from housing frameworks and the community.

76. For additional information on assistance centers for child and youth victims and treatment centers for persons with disabilities, see the Annex (question 7(g)).

**Reply to paragraph 8 (a) of the list of issues**

77. For examples of responses and solutions for the treatment of parent-child relationship, see the Annex (question 8(a)).

**Reply to paragraph 8 (b) of the list of issues**

78. The summaries of the inquiries received by the CaYCC are circulated to the Supervision Unit and to the relevant policy-makers for monitoring the corrections and lesson-learning. Additionally, meetings are held with policy-makers, discussing recommendations for policy changes required to improve the service for children in out-of-home placement.

79. Starting in 2023, the CaYCC has conducted training on the CRC and its implementation, for social workers in social services departments, foster care supervisors, boarding-school care coordinators, boarding-school education coordinators and team leaders. The relevant personnel is taught about the mechanism for examination of children's complaints and the importance of maximizing children's rights.

**Reply to paragraph 8 (c) of the list of issues**

80. An amended *Citizenship and Entry into Israel (Temporary Provision) Law 5763-2003*, was extended several times and until June 30, 2019. Due to the Knesset's dissolution, the law was extended automatically until January 2020, however it has not been extended since July 7, 2021. A draft bill was published by the MoI for public comments on October 6, 2021. Additionally, the PIA published a temporary procedure for handling family reunification requests, in force since February 1, 2022 (Procedure No. 5.14.0001), and the draft bill was adopted on March 15, 2022. The constitutionality of the new law has been challenged before the Supreme Court and nine petitions are now pending (1777/22 *Adalah et. al. v. The Minister of Interior et. al.*).

81. Regarding the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above. For statistics relating to family reunification requests, see the Annex (question. 8(c)).

**Reply to paragraph 8 (d) of the list of issues**

82. The MoWaSA dedicated efforts to identify and attract quality foster families, and developed a working model with relatives and foster families, including in the Arab population. Moreover, since 2020, a digital system for approval of foster families has been operating, enabling shorter approval procedures, greater transparency and uniformity, as well as supervision and review of the procedures.

83. In 2022, there were 941 requests, 726 in 2021 and 332 in 2020. Currently the system's database includes 1,999 families.

84. Regarding the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank see reply to question 2(f) above.

**Reply to paragraph 9 (a) of the list of issues**

85. The MoE is committed to a leading approach that promotes integration and inclusion of pupils with disabilities in the general education system, as part of the *Special Education Law*. Amendment No. 11 to the *Special Education Law* was enacted in July 2018, as part of a reform in the general education system, expanding the options of integration and inclusion for pupils with disabilities. However, despite efforts made over the years, unfortunately, there is still a gap between this law's original intent and its implementation. Although the amendment gave parents of pupils with disabilities the right to choose the type of educational framework for their child (general education or special education), there has been no increase in the number of parents of pupils with disabilities who choose the general education system. In the current school year, 59.2% of the pupils attend general educational frameworks (compared to 60.9% last year, and 62.3% in 2021), while 40.8% of the pupils attended special education frameworks (compared to 39.1% last year and 37.7% in 2021).

86. On April 25, 2021 a Director-General's Circular No. 0269 was published on the promotion of inclusive education. The Circular, which references the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education of 1994, highlights that the concept of inclusion and sees every individual as part of the community, a person with equal value and rights, and strives to strengthen values of human rights and tolerance for human diversity. Accordingly, all pupils, with their diverse needs and strengths, have the right to be part of the general education system, which must adapt to their diverse needs and strengths. The Circular aims to include all pupils and their full range of differences in the general education system. The Circular also provides guiding principles for inclusion and detailed steps to ensure their optimal implementation.

#### **Reply to paragraph 9 (b) of the list of issues**

87. The measures taken to ensure safe and unconditional access to health services, including urgent medical care, adequate medical supplies and trained personnel for all pregnant women and children and their caregivers include, *inter alia*, the following:

88. Mother and child health care stations – the entire population in Israel is entitled to health services at these stations, which include paediatric services open to all, including persons with no legal civil status. These stations provide follow-up medical treatment for mothers and babies including all routine vaccinations and developmental examinations (MoH funded), also to those without legal status. There is also an option to receive adapted vaccines against tuberculosis after birth, and in the event that tuberculosis is discovered in childhood, treatment is free of charge.

89. For data on medical insurance for foreign children and toddlers to parents with no legal civil status, see Israel's 3rd Periodic Report of 2019 (para. 172(h)).

90. Births, including intensive care for premature babies, are provided to all without pre-condition of payment.

91. Treatment of HIV carriers – The MoH operates a community-based program for monitoring and antiretroviral treatment for HIV-carrying immigrants who lack medical insurance. This is a joint humanitarian and public health project, of governmental entities, AIDS clinics, NGOs, pharmaceutical and other companies. The project's financing combines government budget, donations of antiretroviral medications by pharmaceutical companies and a volunteer pharmacist service. The treatment is also provided to uninsured pregnant women, including follow-up examinations during the pregnancy and six months after birth.

92. Regarding medical treatment in emergency rooms, terminations of pregnancy for under-age mothers, services provided by the "Terem", "Gesher", "Levinsky" clinics and additional related medical services, see Israel's 3rd periodic report of 2019.

93. Regarding questions 9(b),(c) and (d), on the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 9 (d) of the list of issues**

94. With regards to the Bedouin population – There are over 280,000 Bedouins living in the Negev desert area. About 80% of them live in urban and suburban centers, which have been legally planned and constructed. The remaining 20% reside in hundreds of unauthorized and unregulated clusters, mainly within the Al-Qasoum and Neve Midbar regional authorities. The clusters spread over roughly 500 sq/km, obstruct urban expansion in the greater Negev area and the common good of the Bedouin population.

95. The Government's current policy is to provide the Bedouin population with residence alternatives in recognized localities. This is done either by on-the-spot regulation of an existing unauthorized village, expanding the jurisdiction of a recognized village in near vicinity, or by encouraging relocation through substantial financial and/or land incentives. Note that a large majority of those currently residing in unauthorized areas will be able to continue residing there in the future within regularized localities without relocating elsewhere. That being said – an unauthorized village with no acceptable planning prospects cannot be regulated.

96. For additional information on planning for the Bedouin population and public participation, see the Annex (question 9(d)).

*Access of the Bedouin population to water*

97. Water Supply to Authorized Villages and Localities – Residents of authorized Bedouin villages and localities receive regular water supply from the local water supplier and the charge is made in accordance to standard rates for domestic use.

98. For additional information on water supply, water quality and water consumption in unauthorized Bedouin villages, as well as total water consumption in Bedouin localities (2014–2022), see the Annex (question. 9(d)).

**Reply to paragraph 9 (e) of the list of issues**

99. The National Authority for Community Safety – Children and youth are a central and important target group within the activities of the Authority. The Authority, part of the Ministry of National Security, has professional headquarters, six districts responsible for the employees, as well as field operations in 245 localities.

100. Regarding the prevention of alcohol and drug use – the Authority operates over 1,000 safety and protection instructors in schools and public spaces, in order to create a dialogue “at eye level” with teenagers, providing assistance when necessary and referring them to treatment if required.

101. The Authority, together with the MoWaSA, MoJ, MoH and MoE, developed a comprehensive response to the issue of under-age prostitution. This response includes identification, detection and referral to community-based actions for optimal rehabilitation tailored to the person’s specific needs.

102. The Authority also operates targeted summer programs, to offer alternative activities and prevent the use of alcohol and dangerous substances. These include, *inter alia*, procedures on working with parents to promote preventive dialogue regarding the use of drugs and alcohol, as well as tools for parents – such as a podcast on the use of psychoactive substances, an informational video for parents and focused training for parents at the local and national levels.

103. Legislation – according to the *Administrative Offenses (Administrative Fine – Cannabis Possession and Use for Self-Consumption) Regulations 5782-2022*, which also applies to youth, possession of cannabis or its use for self-consumption is an administrative offense punishable by a fine of 500/1000 NIS (140/280 USD), as detailed in the regulations. The manner of full implementation of the administrative offenses arrangement to youth awaits final formulation, and in the interim, as a general rule, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Police refers apprehended youth with cannabis (in quantity for self-use) to the Probation Service, informs their parents, and does not bring them to police questioning at this stage.

104. Assistance services for children at-risk – Relevant contents on suicide prevention of children and youth are provided in training of “gatekeepers” including: physicians, attorneys, parental patrols, youth and welfare employees within local authorities, and more.

105. For addition information on the legislation process, cooperation with youth council movements and on implementation of the suicide prevention program in the local authorities, see the Annex (question 9(e)).

106. The MoH and the MoE are cooperating to expand the “gatekeeper” trainings. In the framework of this cooperation, trainings were held at the district level, in which about 500 youth promotion workers were trained and additional 500 workers will be trained in 2023.

*Psychological services*

107. The MoH provides budget for anonymous psychological support services, 24/7 by phone or online, which also provides services for children and youth, such as “Eran – Emotional First Aid Services” and “Sahar – Listening and Assistance Online”.

108. Care for children and youth who have lost a family member due to suicide is provided by designated assistance centers. These centers operate under the MoWaSA through the association “For Life” and the “Ella” center, and provide a comprehensive professional response.

109. Addictions (drugs and alcohol) – The MoH requires Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) to develop services for prevention and treatment of addictions, including for children and youth, as a condition for providing them with supplementary budgets in this field. Currently, the Maccabi HMO is working to establish a children and youth addiction clinic in the central district.

110. For data concerning suicide attempts among children and youth, Police activities to reduce the sale of alcohol to minors and criminal cases opened according to Section 21 of the *Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (New Version) 5733-1973 (Exposing a Minor to Dangerous Drugs)*, see the Annex (question. 9(e)).

**Reply to paragraph 9 (f) of the list of issues**

111. Measures undertaken to ensure children and families living in poverty are provided with adequate financial support and accessible social services are described herein. The Social Service Departments in the MoWaSA provides services to all those in need. Some services require a small fee (subject to an income test); however, in exceptional situations, the service recipient is exempted. For information on MoWaSA treatment programs for families living in poverty, see the Annex (question. 9(f)).

**Reply to paragraph 10 (a) of the list of issues**

112. Amendment No. 17 to the *National Education Law (prevention of activity in an educational institution by external parties who operate against the goals of education and against the Israeli Defense Force) 5779-2018*, was proposed by several Knesset members and discussed by the Knesset’s Education, Culture and Sports Committee. The amendment included adding a purpose to the section of “the goals of national education”, so that it would include the goal of “educating for significant service in the IDF or for national-civil service”. It would also add a section designed to prevent external activity in an educational institution that contradicts the goals of state education or is carried out by third parties working against IDF soldiers. The main reason for this amendment was to enshrine in legislation the obligation of state-funded schools to encourage recruitment for significant military or national service, and not to allow incitement in schools against conscription for military or national service or against Military or national service themselves.

**Reply to paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues**

113. The “New Road” program began operating at the MoE following GR No. 421 of September 12, 2021. It aims to ensure the integration of persons of Ethiopian descent into Israeli society, with an emphasis on their full integration into educational institutions.

114. The entire population of pupils, regardless of individual differences or difficulties, ethnic or cultural background or socio-economic status, receive equal treatment; however, pupils’ unique needs are taken into account when offering specific responses (such as additional teaching hours for eliminating gaps in education or reducing drop-out rates etc.).

**Reply to paragraph 10 (c) of the list of issues**

115. The MoE is working intensively with the Jerusalem Municipality to reduce the shortage of classrooms in official schools and kindergartens in the eastern neighborhoods of Jerusalem (ENoJ). Thus, every request to assign budget to a project in ENoJ, receives special priority and precedence within the existing budget. In 2018, the Government approved GR No. 3790, regarding a five-year plan (until 2023), in which 67 million NIS (18.3 million USD) were allocated for renting buildings for educational purposes (in both official education and recognized non-official education that teaches the Israeli curriculum). In the past two years, the Special Education Division has opened two additional Technological Education schools in ENoJ and two education centers (elementary education and complementary studies) for disconnected youth.

116. The Jerusalem Municipality aims to reduce the gaps and replace the rented and temporary classrooms with new buildings.

117. The issue of classrooms shortage in ENoJ is the object of a pending case before the Supreme Court (HCJ 6183/16, *The Jerusalem Education System Parent Association et. al. v. Ministry of Education et. al.*)

118. For data on new kindergarten and school classrooms constructed in the ENoJ and related draft Government Resolution, see the Annex (question 10(c)). With respect to the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 11 (a) of the list of issues**

119. The national legal framework to regulate the Israeli asylum procedure is set in Procedure No. 5.2.0012 of the PIA entitled “Treatment of asylum seekers in Israel”.

120. In accordance with this procedure, the processing of asylum applications is carried out in accordance with Israeli law, the Geneva Convention concerning the Status of Refugees (1951) and the Protocol concerning the Status of Refugees (1967). The competent authorities may also use the reference book of the United Nations for refugees.

121. The procedure determines a Refugee Status Determination procedure and states, *inter alia*, that “the handling of the application for asylum submitted by an unaccompanied minor [...] will be done with special attention and sensitivity to their specific circumstances”. The procedure further addresses the possibility of filing an appeal, and more. It clearly states that it does not derogate from the relevant HCJ decision, according to which a person may not be deported to a place where their life may be in danger according to the principle of *non-refoulement*.

122. Regarding the placement of child migrants without a legal status in State custody, see reply to question 5 above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 11 (b) of the list of issues**

123. The principle of the best interest of the child in custody and removal proceedings involving children of migrant workers residing in Israel illegally – As detailed in paragraph 32, above, the best interest of the child is a substantial consideration in such decisions, and as a rule, detaining children in order to ensure their removal must be an option of last resort, in the absence of all other alternatives. In this context, it was further decided that children detained in the “Yahalom” facility located in Ben Gurion Airport (a facility for flight, escort and detention purposes), should meet a social worker, who issues an assessment of the child’s situation and preferences. This assessment ought to be considered during the decision-making process concerning the child’s removal. The PIA has held special training of its Border Control Supervisors on these matters, including social workers from the MoWaSA and the international law department in the MoJ.

124. In this regard, also see replies to questions 5, 6(a) and 4(b) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 11 (c) of the list of issues**

125. Youth in detention or imprisonment, as well as adults, may file complaints regarding their investigation by the Police to the Department of Investigation of Police Officers (DIPO), which is a department in the MoJ, independent and external body to the Police. Complaints can be filed directly to the DIPO by the complainants or persons on their behalf (lawyers, parents, representatives of NGOs), or following their claims against police officers that were raised indirectly – in court hearings or during their investigations.

126. The complaint mechanism to the DIPO is very accessible and can be made through an online form, in Hebrew and Arabic. Priority is given to handling complaints submitted by youth or in their regard, and are treated with the required sensitivity.

127. Prisoners in IPS custody have access to various complaint mechanisms concerning grievances against staff or wardens and claims of wrongful use of force. Among these mechanisms are the filing of a complaint to the Prison Director; a prisoner’s petition to the

relevant District Court; filing a complaint to the Warden's Investigation Unit (WIU), and approaching an official visitor appointed according to the *Prisons Ordinance 5732-1971*.

128. In this regard, please see also reply to question 7(c) above. Regarding the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues**

129. Regarding Amendment No. 2 of the *Agreements for Carrying of Embryos (Approval of the Agreement and Status of the Infant) Law 5756-1996*, that took into account the concluding observations of the CRC from June 2015, and regarding the *Authorities for Prevention of Internet Use for the Commission of Offenses Law 5777-2017*, see Israel's 3rd periodic report of 2019 (para. 99 and 73(h) respectively).

130. The Ministry of National Security (MoNS) – The Child Online Protection Bureau Hotline (105) – is a national program for the prevention of violence and crime against children and youth online. The program includes a hotline, which is a part of Unit 105 and provides toll-free calls from every phone country-wide. The Hotline addresses all offensive and abusive behaviours against children, committed online, including sexual abuse and prostitution. The calls are answered by Police officers who received specific training, with the support of an inter-ministerial “Partnership Desk”, which is able to intervene and ensure that every call receives an appropriate and comprehensive response. The “Partnership Desk” includes representatives of the relevant ministries, including the MoNS, the Police and Ministries of Justice, Education, Welfare and Social Affairs and Health. Its activity constitutes a therapeutic, educational and holistic approach. The desk's professionals advise those who contact the Hotline, support them and accompany them in dealing with the situation. Also, they formulate a response that is personally tailored to each inquiry. Police officers work alongside their colleagues from other ministries at the desk – experts in the protection of children and youth online – in responding to inquiries and providing a holistic and unique approach at the national and international levels. The “Partnership Desk” also promotes continued treatment of the victim (and sometimes also the offender, as needed), within the community. The hotline responds to criminal incidents as well as to injuries and incidents that do not amount to criminal offenses, and which until the establishment of the Hotline were not given this type of response.

131. 105 Police Unit (operating in the Child Online Protection Bureau Hotline), combines both intelligence and investigation desks that are tasked with investigating and enforcing the law in regard to online offences against children and adolescents. The Unit handles serious crimes at the national and international levels, employing technological and other means of enforcement to expose, investigate and bring criminals operating in cyberspace to justice. The Unit uses alternate enforcement means to reduce prohibited online activity. Staffed with skilled professionals specializing in law enforcement in the field of cybercrime, it cooperates with international law enforcement and Police agencies to confront the global nature of cybercrime.

132. The program was established as part of GR No. 1006 (2016) and GR No. 1972 (2016), and began its operations in February 2018. This national program was especially significant in 2021, when online time increased for many children and youth as schools closed for prolonged periods due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and lockdowns meant children spent more time at home.

133. As stated above, addressing online child prostitution is one of the objectives of Unit 105 due to its severity, scope and implications for children, especially in the LGBTQ+ community. Due to the importance of eradicating this phenomenon and creating deterrence, during 2022, many efforts were made to locate suspects and identify prostitution networks. The investigation of some suspects has already yielded major indictments for serious sexual offenses against children, although the investigation has not always matured into indictments of child prostitution.

134. The SAO places special emphasis on cases in which the victims of the offense are children and youth, while operating under the assumption that these cases are particularly serious. On January 25, 2023, State Attorney Guideline No. 14.7 dealing with crime victims was published. Chapter 17 deals with children and youth who are crime victims and contains

special instructions for state attorneys in this context. Also, an Annex to Guideline No. 14.8, dealing with the delivery of investigation materials concerning children and youth (crime victims and suspects) is being prepared.

135. For information on to Amendment No. 143 (Temporary Provision) to the *Penal Law 5782-2022*, State Attorney's Guidelines, roundtables led by the MoWaSA for the prevention of prostitution of children and youth, New Financial Enforcement Team on TIP, GR No, 1889 entitled "Promoting the rights of crime victims in legal proceedings and improving Government's response", Supreme Court's President's procedure entitled "Working arrangements concerning the testimony of minors who are victims of a crime" and more, see the Annex (question 12).

136. For data regarding indictments filed for prostitution offenses committed against children and youth, trafficking in persons, slavery and relevant case law, see the Annex (question 12).

137. For information on requests submitted by the Cyber Department according to the above-mentioned law (2018–2021), see the Annex (question 12).

#### **Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues**

138. Please see reply to question 2(f) above.

## **Part two**

#### **Reply to paragraph 14 (a) of the list of issues**

##### *Legislation*

139. On June 30, 2022, the Knesset approved the *Evidence Privilege Law (Mental Treatment in Criminal Proceedings Concerning Sexual Offenses or Severe Domestic Violence Offenses) (Legislative Amendments) 5782-2022*, which entered into force in April 2023. According to this law, before an investigator asks a victim of a crime to waive their privilege regarding testimonies of professionals in the field of mental health and related documents, or request a court to do so, they will have to meet certain conditions, including that the evidence is necessary for the discovery of truth and that the scope of the requested disclosure is reasonable under the circumstances of the case. This amendment also determines the victim's right to express their position on the matter before the Court, prior to the Court's decision, as well as the right to legal aid regarding this matter. It also prescribes detailed arrangements regarding the manner in which these rights can be exercised by children and youth.

140. In June 2022, the Knesset enacted the *Social Services for Persons with Disabilities Law 5782-2022*, which makes explicit reference to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Law was drafted by the MoWaSA and the MoJ, including the Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with other relevant Ministries, and in consultation with the Academia, OPDs and other relevant NGOs. This important law will enter into force in January 2024, and includes a specific budget for its implementation.

141. In July 2020, the Knesset passed a law establishing the *Prohibition of Consumption of Prostitution Services Law (Temporary Provision) 5779-2018*, for a period of five years. The law prohibits the consumption of sexual services and integrates Israel's ongoing efforts to reduce prostitution and provide assistance and rehabilitation to persons involved in prostitution. This law amended the *Penal Law* and increased the sentence of a person who pays for the prostitution services of a child from three to five years.

142. With regards to the *Authorities for Prevention of Internet Use for the Commission of Offenses Law 5777-2017*, see reply to question 12 above.

143. Concerning the *Installation of Cameras for the Protection of Toddlers in Day Care Centers Law 5768-2018*, the *Blocking of Telephone Numbers for the Prevention of Crimes*



Law 5768-2018, Amendment No. 20 to the *Legal Aid Law* 5732-1972 and Amendment No. 137 to the *Penal Law* 5737-1977, see Israel's 3rd periodic report of 2019.

144. For several notable amendments in the field of criminal law, see the Annex (question 14(a)).

**Reply to paragraph 14 (b) of the list of issues**

145. For information about the GCRCY and the IMC, see reply to question 2(b) above.

146. For information about the Children and Youth Complaints Commission and the Early Childhood Council, see Israel's 3rd periodic report filed in 2019.

147. On January 9, 2022, GR No. 951 was approved, determining that the authority over the field of toddlers' day care centers be transferred from the Ministry of Economy to the MoE. This resolution is part of the steps taken by the Government to improve the quality of early childhood education, while maintaining the official policy to create an employment-encouraging environment for the parents (as noted in GR No. 198 (August 2021)). The implementation of this resolution began in 2022, and is still ongoing.

148. In 2021, a public committee was appointed by the Minister of WaSA to examine the *Youth (Care and Supervision) Law* 5720-1960, which serves as a basis for the protection and treatment of children and youth in need of legal and state protection, as well as the work of social workers under the *Youth Law* and the possibility of adaptation of the principles of the CRC in legislation.

**Reply to paragraph 14 (c) of the list of issues**

149. Notable examples of recently introduced policies, programs and action plans are described herein:

150. The MoE – "Nitzanim" (Buds) program for subsidizing after-school programs: As of 2019, and in accordance with the provisions of MoE DG's Circular 0236, the MoE subsidizes the cost of public after-school programs in kindergartens and 1st–2nd grades, according to the socio-economic indicators. After-school program prices are supervised and regulated by the MoE, and are subject to maximum prices.

151. GR No. 226 (August 1, 2021), established a plan for school administrative flexibility. This plan authorizes the delegation of certain authorities from the MoE to school principals regarding three issues: budgetary authority – by allocating a flexible budget at the principal's disposal, the scope of which is determined, *inter alia*, by the number of pupils in the institution and their socio-economic status; educational authority – the ability to make changes and adjustments to the curriculum according to the needs of pupils; and the authority to organize the format of studies in accordance with the institution's needs.

152. The MoWaSA – the Ministry has introduced a policy on the right of every child to a permanent home, for which working principles have been defined. A High Steering Committee accompanies the implementation process. The policy's implementation will be reviewed during 2024.

153. In addition, a broad reform was enacted to reflect the State's commitment and full responsibility for children placed in boarding-schools, and respond to their various needs. The reform includes structural changes and size reduction of the boarding-school and the number of children placed in each group. Changes were introduced to the learning system, combining formal and informal learning and structuring the vocational training system. Many resources have been invested in this reform; the human resources system in boarding-schools has been significantly expanded while adding many positions, thus increasing the care for each and every child and youth.

154. Regarding the Youth Custody Authority within the MoWaSA and MoWaSA's programs, see the Annex (question 14(c)).

155. The MoJ – regarding the inter-ministerial pilot program for the release of youth from detention and imprisonment led by the GCRCY Unit, see reply to question 7(f) above.

156. Regarding the government's strategic plan for the prevention of risky behaviors among children and youth, see question 2(b) above and in the annex. Regarding the Child Online Protection Bureau Hotline (105), see reply to question 12 above.

157. For Additional information and statistics, see the Annex (question 14(c)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 14 (d) of the list of issues**

158. In 2021, Israel joined the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings – making Israel the first country outside of Europe which is not a member of the Council of Europe to do so. Israel's accession to this convention solidifies its strong commitment to fighting this abhorrent phenomenon, and the convention provides important tools to that end.

159. In addition, in 2018, Israel ratified the 2014 Protocol to the International Labor Organization Forced Labor Convention of 1930. This ratification is a part of Israel's continuous commitment to the international efforts to combat and eradicate all forms of modern slavery. The Protocol entered into force for Israel in October 2019.

160. In March 2016, Israel ratified the World Intellectual Property Organization Marrakesh Treaty, to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

### **Part three**

#### **Reply to paragraph 15 of the list of issues**

161. In this regard, see also the reply to question 2(d) above.

162. On December 19, 2021, the Government adopted GR No. 826, entitled "Social leisure programs for the integration of children and youth with and without disabilities", increasing the support for associations that work to integrate children and youth in leisure activities. The Government allocated 46 million NIS (12.6 million USD) for a period of three years for the implementation of this Resolution. About 45,000 children with disabilities and 7,000 children without disabilities benefit from the activities of 17 associations that operate in this field.

163. Savings account for each child – as part of the program of the Ministry of Finance and National Insurance Institute, a savings program was opened in January 2017 for each child entitled to a child allowance. In the program, 55 NIS (15 USD) per child is deposited every month until they reach the age of 18, in addition to the child allowance paid for them. The funds are transferred to a savings account in the child's name in a provident fund or a bank, according to the parents' choice. Parents can increase this amount by an additional sum of NIS 55 (15 USD). Thus, after 18 years, the child will have a significant amount of money at their disposal that may amount to approximately NIS 22,000 (6,100 USD) or more, depending on the investment channel chosen by the parents.

#### **Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues**

164. For statistical and additional information relating to questions 16(a), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i) and (k), see the Annex (question 16)).

#### **Reply to paragraph 16 (b) of the list of issues**

165. With regards to the applicability of the Convention to the West Bank, see reply to question 2(f) above.

#### **Reply to paragraph 16 (h) of the list of issues**

166. Regarding kindergarten for children of migrant parents without a legal status, in 2015, GR No. 2487, entitled "Enhancement of support and care services for infants and toddlers of foreigners without civil status in Israel", provided assistance to infants and toddlers of migrant parents with no legal civil status in Israel.

**Reply to paragraph 16 (j) of the list of issues**

167. According to the MoWaSA policy, children in street situations are immediately transferred to emergency shelters.

168. Child Labor and Children in Street Situations – The employment of children is regulated by specific laws, such as the *Youth Work Law 5713-1953*, aimed at preventing child labor and protecting children's labor rights.

169. In recent years there have been isolated cases in which children were employed in dangerous occupations, such as the poultry industry, bakeries and factories, where employment conditions violated labor law, and the perpetrators were handled severely by the courts.

170. For relevant case law on this matter see the Annex (question 12). (*The State of Israel v. Jabor, S.Cr.C 31894-07-19 Be'er-Sheva District Court and Cr.C 523-03-19 Be'er-Sheva District Court*).

171. For information on treatment of child beggars and street vendors, see the Annex (question 16(j)).

**Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues**

172. For statistical information relating to questions 17(a),(c) and (f), see the Annex (question 17)).

**Reply to paragraph 17 (d) of the list of issues**

173. There are children who grow up in families of close relatives who are known to welfare services and who receive a special benefit for the child, but have not yet been recognized as foster families and are waiting for such approval.

**Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues**

174. For statistical information relating to questions 18(a),(b),(c),(d), and (e), see the Annex to this report (question 18)).

**Reply to paragraph 18 (g) of the list of issues**

175. Prevention of abandonment, neglect or segregation – When indications of abandonment or neglect of children and adolescents, including those with disabilities, are received by social services, the social worker is authorized to take action, in accordance with the *Youth (Care and Supervision) Law*.

176. According to the MoWaSA data, there are no known cases of hiding and separating children with disabilities; there are only a few rare cases of new-borns abandoned in hospitals by their parents (the new-borns were placed in foster care or adopted).

**Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues**

177. For statistical information relating to questions 19(a),(c),(d),(e),(f), and (g), see the Annex (question 19)).

**Reply to paragraph 19 (b) of the list of issues**

178. In this regard, see paragraphs 59, 77, 80–81.

**Reply to paragraph 19 (c) of the list of issues**

179. For additional information on representation of children, see the Annex (question 19(c)).

**Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues**

180. The Knesset's Special Committee on the Rights of the Child regularly invites the NPaYC to any discussion, and when they choose to participate, their representatives are given

the right to speak. In discussions on sensitive topics attended by children and youth who tell their personal stories, the Committee ensures that their privacy and safety are protected, in accordance with the law, and sometimes, even by adopting measures of its own initiative.

181. In 2022, an Advisory Children's Committee was established for the CaYCC. The establishment of this Advisory Committee helps the Commission to expand its point of view and give room to the perspective of children in out-of-home placement, thus complementing the perspective needed by the Commission to decide on various issues related to these children and formulate recommendations in their benefit. The Children's Committee includes a gender-balanced group of 14 children and youth between the ages of 9 and 18.

182. The Commission established a mini-site for the Children's Applications, making information about the Commission more accessible for children.<sup>1</sup>

183. For information on the development of indicators regarding the well-being of children by the CBS, see the Annex (question 20).

**Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues**

184. For updated data, see the Annex.

**Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues**

185. The three issues of key priority are the protection of children on the internet, mental health services, and psychological services to children from the Arab and Bedouin population.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://govextra.gov.il/molasa/child-inquiries-commission/home/>.