UNITED NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.1241
8 June 2007

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Forty-fifth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1241st MEETING*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 30 May 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. LEE

CONTENTS

* No summary records were issued for the 1239th and 1240th meetings.

GE.07-42232 (E) 050607 080607

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 6) (continued)

Second and third periodic reports of Kazakhstan (CRC/C/KAZ/3; CRC/C/KAZ/Q/3 and Add.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Kazakhstan took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. JARBUSSYNOVA (Kazakhstan), introducing the second and third periodic reports of Kazakhstan (CRC/C/KAZ/3), said that major changes had taken place in her country since the consideration of its initial report (CRC/C/41/Add.13). There had been rapid economic growth, as a result of which Kazakhstan had been classified by the World Bank as belonging to the middle-income group of countries. Economic, social and political reforms had improved the quality of life and well-being of citizens and, consequently, the observance of children's rights. The protection of the rights and best interests of children was a key element of national policy.

3. Kazakh legislation was gradually being brought into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Child. Details concerning the laws, decrees and programmes adopted in 2006 and the first half of 2007 were contained in part III of the written replies (CRC/C/KAZ/Q/Add.1). Parliament was currently considering draft legislation with a view to ratifying the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. A working group had been established to draft juvenile legislation. There were plans to reclassify juvenile offences and to provide special training for police officers and the judiciary in juvenile matters.

4. Kazakhstan's economic growth had allowed for an increase in social expenditure, which in 2006 accounted for 11.84 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) and represented 58.32 per cent of the national budget. From 2000 to 2006, State investment in education had increased fourfold. In 2006, expenditure on education had amounted to 3.4 per cent of GDP. Some 59 per cent of the total expenditure on education had been allocated for general secondary education, and 20 per cent on extra-curricular activities, school supplies, computerization and buildings. In order to protect the rights and interests of children, the State programme "Children of Kazakhstan" was being prepared; the programme would define the priorities and tasks of State policy for the period 2007-2011. Some $84 million would be earmarked in the national budget to implement the programme.

5. Every year, the Government increased funding for mother and child health-care programmes. From 2005 to 2006, there had been an increase of approximately $16 million. Funds had been allocated in the 2006 budget to supply pharmaceuticals for children with chronic diseases and HIV/AIDS, and to organize health, rehabilitation and leisure projects for orphans and disadvantaged children. The Government planned to allocate US$ 74 million for the construction of maternity and children's health-care facilities as part of special local budget investment projects.

6. In 2006, $137 million had been allocated for birth and childcare allowances for disadvantaged families. Some 75 per cent of children entitled to such allowances lived in rural areas. More than $2 million had been provided from local budgets to support families with disabled children. The birth allowance would be increased twofold as of 1 January 2008; childcare allowances would also be increased.

7. In accordance with the Committee's recommendations, the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights had been established under the Ministry of Education and Science in January 2006. Its main task was to coordinate activities and to promote the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children. The Government was considering the establishment of regional branches of the Committee in order to ensure effective cooperation between the central and local authorities on the protection of children's rights. Currently, nine government ministries and departments and 275 NGOs dealt with children's matters in Kazakhstan. Cooperation with international organizations had been stepped up. In December 2006, the First Child Protection Forum of Central Asian Countries had been organized with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). In January 2007, a new cooperation agreement had been signed with UNICEF with a view to monitoring implementation of children's rights, establishing services to support families and increasing public awareness of the Committee's concluding observations on Kazakhstan's initial report (CRC/C/15/Add.213).

8. Progress had been made in the legal and social protection of children. According to the results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science, most institutions for orphans and children deprived of parental care met the requisite conditions for the education and upbringing of children. There were currently more than 51,000 orphans and children deprived of parental care in Kazakhstan, of whom 18,000 were in institutions; only 17.4 per cent of those children were orphans. More than 31,000 children were cared for by relatives and 1,791 were in foster care.

9. Over the past eight years, 20,000 children had been adopted by Kazakh citizens and more than 6,000 children by foreigners. The Government attached importance to the development of alternative forms of care. Positive developments in that area included "Hope" groups, which discouraged single parents from leaving their children in care, and the SOS-Children's Villages initiative, which had led to the establishment of nine children's villages, with two more planned for 2008. In March 2007, the Government had decided to allocate approximately $50 million to support guardians and foster parents with a view to reducing the number of children in institutions by 30 per cent. For 2007, approximately $27 million had been allocated to support disadvantaged persons in Kazakhstan, more than 60 per cent of whom were children. Appropriate funds were also being allocated to provide assistance and equipment for children with special needs, including deaf and blind children.

10. A national coordination council to combat the worst forms of child labour had been established to protect children from exploitation. Awareness-raising activities on the worst forms of child labour and research to assess the scale of the problem were being carried out.

11. In 2006, 569 young persons had undergone rehabilitation treatment in 10 special educational establishments. Some 165 adults who had involved young persons in drunkenness or other forms of antisocial behaviour had been liable to administrative proceedings. Over the past three years, there had been a steady decline in cases of ill-treatment of minors; a total of 67 cases

had been investigated in 2006. Kazakhstan planned to amend its criminal legislation in order to make it more humane towards minors. Following the implementation of a pilot project in two provinces to protect minors in conflict with the law, the number of minors arrested had decreased significantly. Alternative forms of punishment, such as placing offenders under the supervision of parents or guardians or under house arrest, were being more widely applied.

12. Efforts to improve child health care had lowered the infant mortality rate from 28 per 1,000 live births in 1993 to 14.1 per 1,000 live births in 2006. Vaccination coverage had reached 95 per cent and had considerably lowered the incidence of major communicable diseases. However, there was still room for improvement. Approximately one quarter of children in Kazakhstan suffered from various diseases, including disorders of the respiratory, digestive, nervous and endocrine systems. In addition, 4,885 adolescents had been registered as drug users in 2006. The HIV-infection rate for children under the age of 14 was 3.4 per cent; in South Kazakhstan it was as high as 12.6 per cent, and in Qaraghandy (Karaganda) province it stood at 8.5 per cent.

13. Under the Constitution and national legislation, secondary education was free of charge. Kazakhstan had achieved one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, universal access to primary education. One challenge that remained in the area of education was to expand the network of preschool institutions.

14. Political stability and sustainable economic development had enabled the Government to pay greater attention and allocate more resources to social needs, especially those of children. Cooperation between the Government and international and non-governmental organizations was becoming increasingly important in implementing policies in the best interests of children. The Government was committed to improving the quality of life of children in Kazakhstan and to protecting their rights. She was confident that Kazakhstan's dialogue with the Committee and the Committee's concluding observations on the second and third periodic reports would help to attain those objectives.

15. Mr. KRAPPMANN (Country Rapporteur) welcomed the fact that the second and third periodic reports had been submitted in good time. The information contained in the reports, the written replies and the delegation's opening statement provided a good basis for the current dialogue. In particular, the numerous references to the initial report and the Committee's concluding observations on that report demonstrated the continuous and productive nature of the dialogue.

16. Only two and a half years had elapsed since the Committee had issued its concluding observations on Kazakhstan's initial report, and he commended Kazakhstan for having established so many programmes, activities and bodies for the promotion and protection of children's rights in such a short period of time. Kazakhstan's economic growth in recent years had been outstanding and, according to the State party's report, had already had a positive impact on a number of problem areas.

17. While Kazakhstan's population was growing, mainly owing to increased longevity, the country's birth rate was declining: between 2000 and 2006, by 11 per cent in absolute terms and by 5 per cent in terms of their relative portion in society. Those were his calculations because

Kazakhstan had not provided figures for children defined as human beings below the age of 18, in accordance with the Convention. He asked whether the statistical data contained in the report and written replies referred to children up to the age of 15, or also included 18- and 19-year-olds.

18. With regard to the status of the Convention, he said that, according to the initial report, the provisions of international law were directly applicable by Kazakh courts and could be invoked in the settlement of disputes between individuals and State bodies. However, legislation relating to international agreements adopted in 2005 stated that, in the event of conflict, international treaties would be subject to amendments, suspension or termination. Kazakhstan had assumed an obligation to bring its legislation into line with the Convention, which was a necessary step in the process of implementing children's rights. That process would be furthered if children and their legal representatives could invoke the Convention in legal disputes.

19. While he welcomed the establishment of the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights, he wondered whether its affiliation with the Ministry of Education and Science restricted its mandate. The Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights should have the necessary financial resources to coordinate activities with regard to all the rights contained in the Convention.

20. He asked whether the State programme "Children of Kazakhstan" (2006-2011) had been approved. If so, he would be interested in knowing whether the State party would consider upgrading the programme to a comprehensive national plan of action for the implementation of children's rights, as such a step would ensure compliance with the Convention and the document "A World Fit for Children" adopted at the special session of the General Assembly on children. He also wished to know whether the State programme had adequate resources, a schedule of work and a monitoring mechanism.

21. With regard to the budget for education, culture, health and social security, he said that, while allocations had more than doubled in the period 2003-2006, the increase was relatively small when compared with the overall growth of GDP, which had nearly doubled. The improvement was a modest one, particularly when the Government had pledged to prioritize children's rights. He requested further information about future budget plans.

22. Mr. PARFITT said that the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner in Kazakhstan did not have an independent complaints mechanism and did not comply with the Paris Principles. The Ombudsman's Office did not have the authority to investigate prisons or other State institutions and lacked an independent budget. He wished to know whether Kazakhstan intended to establish a fully independent monitoring and complaints mechanism to implement the Convention and its optional protocols. He wished to know how the regional children's advice centres functioned, how many complaints they received and how many staff they had.

23. Mr. ZERMATTEN asked whether the right of children to express their opinion was guaranteed in Kazakh legislation. As children's opinions had to be taken into consideration only after they reached the age of 10, many children were excluded from decisions that affected them under civil or criminal law. He wished to know whether there were any mechanisms to ensure children's participation in public life and the education system.

24. He was pleased to note that a high percentage of births were registered. He asked whether it was more difficult to register the births of refugee children and children living in remote areas. It was unclear whether Kazakh citizens born outside Kazakhstan found it more difficult to confirm their nationality and that of their children on their return.

25. He asked whether the television and radio channels and other sources of information were privately owned or owned by the State. He wished to know whether it would be possible to provide Internet access for all children, particularly schoolchildren.

26. Ms. SMITH asked whether there was any legislation that expressly prohibited discrimination in the exercise of human and civil rights and freedoms on the basis of sex, race, nationality, language or other grounds. She asked when the bill on equal rights and equal opportunities would be adopted, and whether it covered all types of discrimination. She wished to know whether the Strategy for Gender Equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006-2016 had been implemented, and whether it contained special provisions for girls. She requested additional information about what was being done to prevent discrimination against children with HIV. The Committee had received information that only a third of Kazakh children with disabilities had access to appropriate support services. Given the high number of disabled children in Kazakhstan, it was important to protect all of them from discrimination.

27. Mr. SIDDIQUI said that there was a lack of disaggregated data on child labour, street children, neglected children, and the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. It would be useful to know who was responsible for collecting data on children in Kazakhstan, and whether quantitative data was collected through independent, in-depth studies.

28. It was difficult to understand why a significant proportion of the population had such a low standard of living when the country had a high GDP. He requested more information on the extent of poverty in Kazakhstan and policies to address that problem. It would be useful to know whether children's organizations were consulted in the policymaking process.

29. Mr. CITARELLA (Alternate Country Rapporteur) asked whether the high proportion of Russians living in Kazakhstan and the use of two official languages led to discrimination in schools and the judicial system.

30. With respect to data collection, he said it was difficult to compare the situation of Kazakhstan with that of other countries because the data contained in the State party's report covered several different age groups, while other countries restricted their statistics to the 0-18 age group, as stipulated by the Convention. He wondered whether Kazakhstan had encountered difficulties in the direct application of the Convention, and requested specific examples of sentences handed down by judges in which the provisions of the Convention had been applied.

31. Mr. FILALI asked whether international treaties took precedence over domestic law in cases of conflict. He wished to know whether Kazakhstan intended to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which would help to protect children's rights.

32. Mr. KOTRANE said that Kazakh legislation to protect children was deficient and the legislative process was slow. The fact that the Convention had not been directly invoked in the domestic courts was indicative of its place in domestic law. He expressed his concern that no new legislation had been introduced to protect children's rights since the Committee had considered Kazakhstan's initial report.

33. Mr. PURAS asked whether there was cooperation between the Kazakh authorities and civil society. He wished to know whether there were organizations that brought together parents of children with mental disabilities and, if so, how the Government supported such organizations to ensure that such children received appropriate care.

34. Ms. AIDOO asked whether NGOs and civil society had been involved only in collecting data for the State party's report, or whether they had contributed to other aspects of the report.

35. Ms. KHATTAB asked when the draft legislation on children's rights mentioned in the State party's report and written replies would be adopted by Parliament. She enquired to what extent the Committee's observations and recommendations had been taken into account in the drafting of child-related legislation and in the implementation of the Convention. She asked whether civil society and children had been involved in either process. She wished to know what financial assistance the State offered families with a view to preventing the violation of children's rights.

36. Ms. ALUOCH asked whether the Criminal Code contained any provisions that defined torture or punished torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

37. Mr. POLLAR wished to know the status of the State programme "Children of Kazakhstan" and enquired whether it had been publicly discussed. He requested information on the institutional framework for coordinating implementation of the programme and the human and financial resources that had been allocated to it. He wished to know what proportion of local budgets was earmarked for children and families. The delegation should explain the extent of the problems of child refugees and child abuse in Kazakhstan. He asked whether the Convention was systematically taught at schools in Kazakhstan and whether all professionals concerned, particularly professionals in rural areas, were made aware of the provisions of the Convention. He requested information on the incidence of discrimination against single-parent families, children living in institutions, children belonging to minorities and children living in rural areas and areas affected by environmental disasters. He wondered whether the principle of the best interests of the child was implemented in all domains and was applied to children in detention and to asylum-seekers. Lastly, he asked whether traditional practices and cultural attitudes had an effect on children's right to express their views in family decisions that affected their interests, or to be heard in judicial proceedings.

38. Ms. ORTIZ expressed concern at the reference made in the State party's report to the fact that most of the children adopted in Kazakhstan had been rejected by their biological parents because they were sick or disabled. She asked what measures, if any, had been taken by the Government to address that form of discrimination.

39. Ms. HERCZOG objected to the State party's use of the terms "illegitimate" and "social orphanhood". She asked whether the Government intended to combat the stigmatization of abandoned children and children born out of wedlock.

40. The CHAIRPERSON urged the Government to stop using the offensive term "illegitimate" in its publications.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.

41. Ms. JARBUSSYNOVA (Kazakhstan) said that, in compiling statistics for its reports to the Committee, Kazakhstan had been assisted by UNICEF and the European Commission. The Government had launched a project to harmonize the collection of official statistics in order to comply with international standards.

42. Mr. ABISHEV (Kazakhstan) said that, in accordance with the Constitution, legislation and case law, the provisions of international treaties prevailed over domestic law in cases of conflict. In 2006, the Parliament had discussed a proposal to allow domestic legislation to prevail; however, in the face of widespread opposition, the proposal had been withdrawn. The Supreme Court was expected to issue a decision by the end of 2007 instructing all courts to invoke the provisions of all ratified international human rights treaties in all civil and criminal proceedings.

43. Ms. SHER (Kazakhstan) said that, although the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights was attached to the Ministry of Education and Science, it had a wide-ranging mandate. The number of its members had been increased from 20 to 45, and a regional network of subcommittees, with a total of 350 specialists, was being set up. Following Kazakhstan's two meetings with the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2006, the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights had begun to develop regional projects as part of the State programme "Children of Kazakhstan". The Government had earmarked 10 billion tenge for regional projects.

44. Mr. KALZHANOV (Kazakhstan) said that per capita GDP stood at US$ 5,253, annual inflation was 8.6 per cent, and the unemployment rate was 7.8 per cent. Most of the country's GDP was generated by the private sector and, although there was a State budget surplus of 0.8 per cent of GDP, the Government had been unable to increase social expenditure on children and families. With the assistance of international institutions, the Government hoped to improve its budgetary situation and increase social expenditure.

45. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether all government departments, civil society and children had taken part in a debate on the State programme "Children of Kazakhstan". She wondered why reference was still being made to a 2006-2011 time frame.

46. Ms. SHER (Kazakhstan) said that preparations for the State programme had begun three years earlier and the programme was expected to become operational by the end of 2007. Society as a whole, especially children and NGOs, had been kept informed of all developments. Parliamentary committees had held meetings to discuss the programme, and a brochure had been published to inform the public of its current status.

47. Mr. ABISHEV (Kazakhstan) said that the independently financed Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman), whose permanent staff numbered 15, had been established by presidential decree in 2002. The Government intended to create a special structure, a children's rights ombudsman, in every region of Kazakhstan. It also intended to introduce legislative proposals to transform the Office into a strong and independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles.

48. The Commission on Human Rights had been set up by presidential decree in 2004 to complement the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. As an advisory body, the Commission guaranteed the protection of human rights under the Constitution and helped to frame Kazakhstan's human rights policy. Its composition partly complied with the Paris Principles: of its 22 members, 14 were representatives of civil society, including human rights activists, religious leaders, teachers, scientists and members of the media. The Commission referred any complaints to the Prosecutor's Office and the courts. During her visit to Kazakhstan in April 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had met the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights. In response to her recommendations, the Commission had begun drafting a report, in cooperation with national and international human rights NGOs, on the establishment of a strong and independent national human rights institution. The report would be taken into consideration in the preparation of the national human rights action plan (2008-2011).

49. Ms. NURABAYEVA (Kazakhstan) said that, under existing legislation, children over the age of 10 were entitled to be heard in judicial proceedings. In view of the observations made by members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the recommendations of psychologists in Kazakhstan, and the fact that young children were better informed than in the past, the Government intended to lower that age limit.

50. All births in Kazakhstan, including those of refugees, were registered. The legal requirement to register births was guaranteed by the national registration services or by the local authorities. In 2006, over 300,000 children had been born in Kazakh territory and they had all received birth certificates. Children born to Kazakh citizens abroad could be registered at a consulate and received the same documents as children registered in Kazakhstan. Children were entitled to Kazakh nationality provided that at least one of their parents was a Kazakh citizen.

51. Ms. SHER (Kazakhstan) said that in Kazakhstan children had the right to participate in social life, including through the establishment of children's organizations. Some 200 children's organizations had been registered in Kazakhstan. The Government ensured that a wide variety of outlets were available for children's participation in matters that directly concerned them. In December 2006, Kazakhstan had hosted the first Child Protection Forum of Central Asian Countries and, at the initiative of children's organizations, would soon organize a campaign for the prevention of child labour. There was a widespread system of children's parliaments, and efforts were under way to establish a children's rights ombudsman in every region of Kazakhstan. Moreover, a national centre for children had been established under the Office of the President to promote children's participation in policymaking, and a children's magazine, in which children could express their views, had been introduced.

52. Ms. KLEBANOVA (Kazakhstan) said that article 14 of the Constitution expressly prohibited any form of discrimination on any grounds. Legislation on gender equality, which had been modelled after similar legislation in European countries, was currently being considered by Parliament. Children in Kazakhstan had access to the media, and there were several specialized children's magazines and television channels. However, much remained to be done to provide widespread access to the Internet. The Government was currently making efforts to that end.

53. The many Russian-speaking members of the Kazakh population were citizens of Kazakhstan and enjoyed the same rights as all other citizens. Kazakhstan did not recognize dual citizenship. The two official languages of Kazakhstan were Kazakh and Russian. According to law, a person could choose which of the two official languages he or she wished to use, including for communication with government officials.

54. Mr. ISMAILOV (Kazakhstan) said that there were approximately 144 institutions that cared for children with disabilities. All children and adults with disabilities were provided with the medical care they required. There were currently more than 100,000 children with disabilities in Kazakhstan. A rehabilitation programme for children with disabilities for the period from 2006 to 2008 had been set up, and a new rehabilitation centre would be opened on 1 July 2007. Together with various international organizations, including UNICEF, a plan to combat HIV/AIDS had been formulated.

55. Mr. KRAPPMANN (Country Rapporteur) commended the State party on the way in which it had addressed the health and social repercussions of the Semipalatinsk nuclear tests and those of the Aral Sea disaster in its second and third periodic reports. He asked whether the clinical and rehabilitation centres mentioned in the report had begun operation. He enquired whether the population potentially affected by radiation had been screened and, if so, what the results of such screening were. He wished to know whether all adults and children living in the Aral Sea region currently had access to clean drinking water and, if not, when the Government expected that goal to be achieved. He wondered what progress had been made in halting and reversing the deterioration of the Aral Sea environment.

56. He welcomed the emphasis that Kazakhstan had placed on the establishment of a high-quality educational system, and he commended the formulation of the State programme for the development of education for 2005-2010. He asked what percentage of children completed the full course of secondary education and what became of children who did not attend or who dropped out of secondary schools. Although compulsory schooling should be free of charge, it appeared that that was not the case in Kazakhstan. He requested a full account of the costs, both explicit and implicit, of compulsory education at all levels. In particular, he wished to know whether attendance at preschool preparatory facilities was free of charge. The delegation should comment on the marked difference in kindergarten attendance between urban and rural areas. He asked whether vocational training in Kazakhstan was aimed at providing general preparation for employment or specific training for certain occupations. He enquired whether all adolescents who did not wish to pursue an academic career received vocational training. He wished to know whether unemployment among young people was a problem in Kazakhstan. He asked whether plans to introduce new textbooks and to reform teaching methods had been implemented. He requested additional information on the in-service training and further education provided to teachers.

57. Mr. KOTRANE requested information on the extent of child labour in Kazakhstan and on the measures being taken to combat it. He asked for clarification of the statement made in the written replies to the effect that migrant children's right to education was not fully enforced.

58. Ms. KHATTAB asked for detailed information on the measures being taken by the Government to protect children from abuse and neglect. She wished to know what procedure was followed to ensure that corporal punishment was not used in situations in which it was prohibited by law. She enquired whether there were any mechanisms available to children for reporting acts of violence, and she wished to know what services were provided to the victims of such acts. The delegation should indicate what steps the Government was taking to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General's study on violence against children.

59. Ms. HERCZOG requested detailed information on the system to support families in Kazakhstan. In particular, she wished to know what forms of assistance were available and what eligibility criteria were applied to requests for assistance made by families. She asked whether the centres that provided support for parents catered to the needs of parents of older children or parents of children with behavioural problems. The percentage of children enrolled in preschools in Kazakhstan, particularly in rural areas, seemed very low in comparison with other countries in the region. She enquired what eligibility criteria were applied to preschool enrolment and whether priority was given to children from poor families. She wished to know what services were provided by social workers and other professionals to prevent the abandonment of children, to place children in institutions and to assist with family rehabilitation. She was concerned at reports that an increasing number of infants were being placed in institutions. There was no good reason for a child under the age of 6 to be placed in an institution in any circumstances. She wished to know what the Government planned to do to provide better family-based care for infants in order to prevent them from being institutionalized.

60. Mr. FILALI said that the Government did not appear to have followed up on the Committee's previous concluding observations concerning juvenile justice, particularly in terms of addressing the absence of specialized juvenile judges or courts and reducing the length of pretrial detention. He questioned the need for the practice of placing children in centres for temporary isolation. It appeared that custodial measures were preferred in Kazakhstan over rehabilitation measures. The delegation should explain how places of detention for children operated, in particular with regard to staffing, budgeting and programming. He did not agree that two hours of daily exercise for young people being held in custody was sufficient. Although payphones had been installed in all institutions for young offenders, it was unclear how children could use them to communicate with their families if they did not have any money. He suggested that the pilot projects on juvenile justice that had been set up in two districts should be replicated throughout the country. He enquired whether the project for the administration of juvenile justice that had been planned for 2006 had been implemented and, if so, what results it had obtained.

61. Mr. CITARELLA (Alternate Country Rapporteur) asked whether there were any age restrictions pertaining to enrolment in compulsory schooling. He enquired whether compulsory education was free of charge up to a certain grade and, if so, at what grade charges became applicable. He requested information on how teachers decided which of the two official languages to use in schools.

62. It appeared that none of the recommendations made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations had received adequate attention from the Government. He wished to know whether the Government had taken any steps to amend the provision of the Criminal Code that defined disorderly conduct as a serious crime, since that had led to the criminalization of behavioural problems that often affected young people.

63. Ms. ALUOCH requested a full account of the leisure and cultural activities available to children in Kazakhstan. According to information she had received, there was a trend to close down institutions that promoted children's creativity even though there were few facilities in Kazakhstan where children could engage in creative expression. The delegation should comment on reports that schools in rural areas were forced to operate in shifts and some had latrines that were located outside the school building, which could pose a problem in the winter months.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.