



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Maldives*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Maldives¹ at its 2908th and 2909th meetings,² held on 12 and 13 January 2026, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2936th meeting, held on 30 January 2026.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of the State Party, and the written replies to the list of issues,³ which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State Party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level and multisectoral delegation of the State Party.

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State Party

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State Party in various areas, particularly the acceptance of the procedure under article 13 of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, in 2019; the adoption of the Child Rights Protection Act (Act No. 19/2019), the Juvenile Justice Act (Act No. 18/2019) and regulations aimed at reinforcing that legislation, such as the General Regulation on Child Rights Protection (2020); the implementation of the national programmes Ijthimaaee Badhahi Madhahuverin and Haalu Kihineh; and the adoption of the Juvenile Justice Act implementation road map (2024–2027).

III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. The Committee reminds the State Party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State Party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: non-discrimination (para. 17); birth registration and nationality (para. 21); abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (para. 25); mental and adolescent health (para. 37); and administration of child justice (para. 49).

* Adopted by the Committee at its 100th session (12–30 January 2026).

¹ [CRC/C/MDV/6-7](#).

² See [CRC/C/SR.2908](#) and [CRC/C/SR.2909](#).

³ [CRC/C/MDV/RQ/6-7](#).



5. The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State Party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))

Reservations

6. The Committee, in line with its previous recommendations,⁴ encourages the State Party to consider withdrawing its reservations regarding article 14 (1) and 21 of the Convention.

Legislation

7. The Committee notes that the State Party has initiated a review of the Child Rights Protection Act and recommends that it fully align the Act and all related legislation with the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto, particularly with regard to discrepancies concerning child justice, family law and labour regulations.

Comprehensive policy and strategy

8. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Develop a comprehensive policy on children that encompasses all areas covered by the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and, on the basis of the policy, develop a strategy with the elements necessary for its application and that is supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources;

(b) Take measures to guarantee children's consultations in the development of the national development plan and ensure that the plan is aligned with the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto.

Coordination

9. The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that all official agencies in charge of protecting child rights work in a coordinated manner and are provided with the human, technical and financial resources necessary for their effective operation.

Allocation of resources

10. Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee notes the increased allocation for the social sector and the adoption of a programme performance-based budgeting approach and recommends that the State Party:

(a) Apply an efficient and coordinated child-rights-based approach in the elaboration of the State budget, by implementing a tracking system for the allocation and use of resources for children throughout the budget;

(b) Use the above-mentioned tracking system for impact assessments on how investments in any sector may serve the best interests of the child, ensuring that the different impacts of such investment on children are measured.

⁴ CRC/C/MDV/CO/3, para. 10; and CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5, para. 7.

Data collection

11. The Committee notes the progress made in aligning various data collection mechanisms. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Continue revising its data collection and data-sharing guidelines, with a view to improving the methods used, strengthening confidentiality and ensuring national coverage and disaggregated collection to reduce the fragmentation of data;
- (b) Ensure that statistical data and indicators on children's rights are shared among the relevant ministries and used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects for the effective implementation of the Convention.

Access to justice and remedy

12. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Ensure that all children have access to: (i) confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms in schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and places of detention for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights; and (ii) legal support and age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation;
- (b) Raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under existing mechanisms;
- (c) Ensure systematic and mandatory training for all relevant professionals working with children on children's rights and the Convention, and child-friendly procedures and remedies.

Independent monitoring

13. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Children's Ombudsperson and recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Improve the funding for, and the expertise of the staff of, the Human Rights Commission so as to ensure its full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and to support its work on children's rights;
- (b) Strengthen the Office of the Children's Ombudsperson;
- (c) Seek technical cooperation from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme, among other entities.

Dissemination of the Convention and awareness-raising

14. The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations,⁵ recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Promote the active involvement of children in public outreach activities, including in measures targeting parents and caregivers, social workers, teachers and law enforcement officials, and encourage the media to ensure sensitivity to children's rights;
- (b) Raise awareness of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure and provide capacity-building activities aimed at training relevant actors, including children, on the Optional Protocol.

⁵ CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5.

Children's rights and the business sector

15. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Undertake awareness-raising campaigns with the tourism industry and the public at large on the prevention of sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism and widely disseminate the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, adopted by the World Tourism Organization, among travel agents and in the tourism industry;

(b) Strengthen its international cooperation against sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism through multilateral, regional and bilateral arrangements for the prevention and elimination of such exploitation.

B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

16. The Committee notes the adoption of the National Gender Equality Action Plan (2022–2026) and the protection against discrimination afforded by the Child Rights Protection Act. It however remains concerned about discrimination against girls, children with disabilities, children of unmarried parents, children of non-Muslim parents and children in State care; discrimination based on religion and gender orientation; and discrimination against children, particularly children with disabilities and children on outer islands, with regard to access to services.

17. The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations,⁶ recommends that the State Party:

(a) Strengthen the implementation of the existing legislation, policies, strategies and action plans related to non-discrimination, in particular those protecting children against discrimination, and take further measures to remove religious discrimination from nationality legislation;

(b) Increase its efforts to end discrimination against children in disadvantaged situations, including girls, children with disabilities, children of unmarried parents, children of non-Muslim parents and children in State care; discrimination based on gender orientation; and discrimination against children on outer islands;

(c) Conduct media campaigns to change social norms and behaviours that contribute to discrimination; raise public awareness regarding the prohibition of discrimination; and promote tolerance and respect for diversity.

Best interests of the child

18. Recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration and its previous concluding observations,⁷ the Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions as well as in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to and have an impact on children; and ensure that cultural interpretations and practices comply with the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto when the best interests of the child are invoked.

⁶ Ibid., para. 27.

⁷ Ibid., para. 29.

Respect for the views of the child

19. Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, the Committee recommends that the State Party promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, communities and schools and include children in decision-making in all matters related to them, including environmental matters.

C. Civil and political rights (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)

Birth registration and nationality

20. The Committee notes the enactment of the Birth and Death Registration Act (Act No. 23/2022). It remains seriously concerned about:

(a) Delays in birth registration and obstacles in obtaining birth certification and national identification cards for children;

(b) Statelessness among children, particularly when a child is born abroad or to a foreign mother.

21. Taking note of target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State Party:

(a) To remove existing barriers to birth registration, including by ensuring that all children are able to have their birth registered regardless of the citizenship or marriage status of their parents and by amending the Birth and Death Registration Act to remove fines for late birth registration;

(b) To ensure that children born to foreign mothers and Maldivian fathers, children of unmarried parents and children born to interfaith marriages can easily have paternity attributed and access their right to citizenship under article 9 (a) of the Constitution;

(c) To amend article 54 of the Family Act and the regulations established thereunder to ensure that women and children are able to apply to the court to confirm the paternity of children;

(d) To provide access to citizenship for children born stateless on the territory of Maldives, for abandoned children and for children in institutional care whose parents are unknown;

(e) To consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;

(f) To seek technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF, among others, for the implementation of these recommendations.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

22. The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations,⁸ recommends that the State Party respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion by taking effective measures, including legislative measures, to prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. It also recommends that the State Party promote religious tolerance and dialogue in society, including by facilitating an open public debate on religious issues.

Access to appropriate information

23. The Committee welcomes the State Party's efforts to address children's digital literacy and to raise awareness about online child safety. Recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment and the 2026

⁸ CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5.

joint statement of the Committee and other signing parties on artificial intelligence and the rights of the child, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) **Continue to enhance the digital literacy and skills of children, teachers and families, and protect children from information and material harmful to their well-being, including in the context of artificial intelligence;**

(b) **Ensure the availability of and access to adequate and age-appropriate information on matters related to children's rights and the environment;**

(c) **Promote the integration of information related to environmental and social determinants of children's health and development throughout time, while ensuring data protection.**

D. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention, and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)

Abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation

24. The Committee welcomes several positive developments, such as the amendments to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, the adoption of the National Action Plan on Prevention and Response to Violence against Children (2024–2028), the updated procedure manual on responding to, and the referral pathway for, cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence (2025), the development of minimum standards for service delivery in cases of domestic violence (2024) and the publicly accessible database listing child sex offenders (2023). It is however seriously concerned about:

(a) The pervasiveness of violence against children, including domestic violence, sexual and gender-based violence, abuse, neglect and online abuse;

(b) The fact that the exploitation of children is not classified in the Code of Criminal Procedure as a major crime and, as such, the investigation and prosecution of adults who exploit children for criminal activities must be completed within 30 days, leading to the impunity of perpetrators;

(c) Societal factors, including cultural taboos, stigma and insufficient legislative protections, that hinder effective prevention, timely reporting and response efforts.

25. **In the light of its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee recalls its previous observations⁹ and recommends that the State Party:**

(a) **Continue to effectively implement the National Action Plan for Prevention and Response to Violence against Children, and to that end ensure the provision of adequate financing, capacity-building and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework;**

(b) **Prioritize the investigation and prosecution of adults who exploit children for criminal activities and consider amending the Code of Criminal Procedure to either classify the exploitation of children as a major crime or extend the timeline for investigation;**

(c) **Strengthen capacity of law enforcement and social workers to effectively handle cases of online child sexual exploitation, abuse and grooming;**

(d) **Ensure that all cases of abuse of children, including sexual abuse, are promptly reported and investigated, applying a child-friendly and multisectoral approach with the aim of avoiding the revictimization of the child, that perpetrators are prosecuted and duly sanctioned and that reparations are provided to victims, as appropriate;**

⁹ [CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5](#), paras. 43, 45 and 49.

(e) Ensure mandatory reporting of all forms of violence against children, disseminate information about the reporting mechanisms and associated focal points that should receive such reports and promote awareness among parents, caregivers, professionals and children themselves on the importance of reporting and on early intervention in cases of child abuse and violence;

(f) Further strengthen awareness-raising and education programmes – including campaigns – with the involvement of children, in order to raise public awareness, reduce stigmatization, encourage reporting and challenge cultural taboos surrounding sexual and gender-based violence; and include community and island leaders, religious figures and the media in the advocacy efforts.

Corporal punishment

26. Recalling its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State Party:

(a) To, in accordance with the Child Rights Protection Act, strictly and effectively implement the prohibition of corporal punishment, including flogging, in all settings, including in the home, in schools, childcare institutions and alternative care settings and in the administration of child justice;

(b) To expand positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and parenting initiatives, such as the Joint Positive Parenting Programme;

(c) To continue conducting awareness-raising campaigns for parents and professionals working with and for children to promote attitudinal change within the family and the community with regard to corporal punishment.

Gang violence

27. Noting the adverse impact that gang violence has on children's rights, in particular that children under the age of 15 are exploited by gangs for drug trafficking and other crimes because they cannot be held criminally liable, the Committee welcomes the adoption of the Prevention of Gang and Other Serious Offences Act (Act No. 7/2025) and urges the State Party:

(a) To evaluate the effectiveness of the Prevention of Gang and Other Serious Offences Act;

(b) To adopt comprehensive strategies to effectively address the impact that gang violence and related drug trafficking have on children; such strategies should not be aimed at lowering the age of criminal responsibility, but rather should primarily address the root causes of exploitation of children in gangs and drug crime and the social factors that lead children into gangs, and include policies for the social integration of children and adolescents in marginalized situations;

(c) To intensify efforts to combat gangs and other criminal elements in society who exploit children in their criminal activities; investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible with appropriate penalties; and provide compensation to children who are victims;

(d) To establish mechanisms to rehabilitate children under the age of 15 without the requirement of criminal responsibility and ensure the involvement of the social services system in the provision of holistic interventions;

(e) To adopt programmes that provide children who are exploited by gangs with assistance and protection to enable them to leave gangs and be reintegrated into society.

Harmful practices

28. The Committee welcomes the prohibition of child marriage in the Child Rights Protection Act but is concerned that unregulated and undocumented child marriages

still occur. Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, and taking note of target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage and female genital mutilation on the physical and mental health and well-being of girls, targeting households, local authorities, religious leaders and judges and prosecutors;
- (b) Establish protection schemes for victims of child marriage and female genital mutilation who file a complaint.

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

29. Recalling its previous concluding observations on the report of the State Party submitted under article 12 (1) of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,¹⁰ and its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol,¹¹ the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Effectively implement the existing legislation that protects children from the offences covered by the Optional Protocol;
- (b) Amend the national protocol for victim identification, referral and protection;
- (c) Collect disaggregated data on all the offences covered by the Optional Protocol, and provide adequate training to investigators on the legal aspects and different offences covered by the Optional Protocol;
- (d) Prosecute, without exception, the perpetrators of all offences covered by the Optional Protocol and, where they are found guilty, punish the perpetrators without possibility for clemency.

Recovery and reintegration of child victims

30. While taking into consideration the efforts of the State Party, the Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that laws and practices take fully into account the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime. In particular, when dealing with child victims and witnesses, the State Party should make the option to use closed-circuit television widely available, ensure that child testimonies are given in child-friendly settings and only once to avoid traumatization, ensure that children are informed in age-appropriate language of the consequences of the information being disclosed, ensure that defence lawyers have received specialized training and explicitly specify children as victims in the Anti-Torture Act.

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

Family environment

31. The Committee draws the State Party's attention to its statement on article 5 of the Convention,¹² recalls its previous concluding observations¹³ and recommends that the State Party:

¹⁰ CRC/C/OPSC/MDV/CO/1.

¹¹ CRC/C/156.

¹² See <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/crc/statements/CRC-Article-5-statement.pdf>.

¹³ CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5, para. 51

- (a) Ensure that, in the case of parental separation, the mother and father share the parental responsibilities, unless it is not in the best interests of the child, and ensure that children's views are taken into consideration and that the best interests of the child are always given primary consideration, and, to that end, build the capacity of the judiciary to undertake this assessment;
- (b) Ensure that women do not lose custody of their children if they remarry;
- (c) Work towards the elimination of polygamy in law and practice, while taking measures to prevent its possible harmful effects on children;
- (d) Improve the monitoring of the Single Parent Allowance so that it reaches the eligible families;
- (e) Improve the accessibility, affordability and availability of the day-care system.

Children deprived of a family environment

32. Drawing the State Party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, and emphasizing that financial and material poverty – or conditions directly and uniquely attributable to such poverty – should never be the sole justification for removing a child from parental care, for placing a child into alternative care or for preventing a child's social reintegration, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Phase out institutionalization and adopt, without delay, a strategy and action plan for deinstitutionalization, ensuring adequate human, technical and financial resources for its implementation and that it includes systemic transformation of the childcare, welfare and protection systems;
- (b) Ensure sufficient alternative family-based and community-based care options for children who cannot stay with their families, including by allocating sufficient financial resources for foster care, regularly reviewing placement measures and facilitating the reunification of children with their families when it is in their best interests;
- (c) Continue strengthening the fostering system by implementing and providing adequate resources for the foster care regulation (2024) and the functioning of the Foster Care Panel, by paying the monetary allowance to foster families and by enhanced monitoring of foster families;
- (d) Establish quality standards for all alternative care settings, ensure periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and institutions and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting and monitoring and by providing remedies in cases of maltreatment of children;
- (e) Strengthen the capacity of professionals working with families and children, in particular family judges, law enforcement personnel, social workers and service providers, to ensure family-based alternative care responses and to enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of children deprived of a family environment;
- (f) Continue raising awareness about *kafalah* and its benefits.

Children of incarcerated parents

33. The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that children of incarcerated parents enjoy all the rights in the Convention.

F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)

34. Recalling its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee notes the amendments to the Disability Act and the adoption of the National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion and urges the State Party to adopt a

human rights-based approach to disability, to set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities and:

- (a) To continue strengthening the programmes, entities and mechanisms that support children with disabilities, such as the Ijthimaaee Badhahi Madhahuverin mechanism, the growth monitoring and promotion programme, the Early Identification Committee, the National Registry of Persons with Disabilities, the Disability Allowance, the National Social Protection Agency and the National Action Plan on Disability Inclusion, particularly on the outer islands;
- (b) To establish a streamlined systematic referral pathway to ensure that children with possible developmental delays are promptly referred for disability assessment, assessed, and connected to appropriate support services;
- (c) To expand specialist healthcare services for children with disabilities through the incorporation of trained child psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and physiotherapists, particularly in regional hospitals;
- (d) To expand sign language training across all front-line services, including for health professionals, teachers and members of law enforcement, and establish a national pool of professional interpreters to be available in hospitals, schools and courts;
- (e) To provide simplified access to specialized medical services and assistive devices through the Aasandha State health insurance scheme, particularly for children living on outer islands;
- (f) To protect children with disabilities, particularly girls with disabilities, from violence, including sexual abuse and bullying in schools, and to provide details on the steps taken to strengthen the investigation, prosecution and support mechanisms for such cases;
- (g) To raise awareness among caretakers of children with disabilities on the availability and benefits of the disability identification card issued by the National Social Protection Agency;
- (h) To undertake awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the public and families to combat the stigmatization of, and prejudice against, children with disabilities and to promote a positive image of children with disabilities as rights holders;
- (i) To continue strengthening coordination to fully support children with all forms of disability.

G. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)

Health and health services

35. Recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Continue strengthening access to basic maternal health, child health, mental health and adolescent health for children on remote islands;
- (b) Reduce the increase in non-communicable diseases, respiratory diseases and influenza, and address malnutrition and rising obesity resulting from unhealthy diets and inactivity;
- (c) Expand the availability of safe blood supply, including infrastructure for collection, storage and processing on outer islands;
- (d) Increase the number of trained health workers and implement targeted community awareness campaigns to counter vaccine hesitancy and misinformation;
- (e) Improve infrastructure and emergency obstetric care capacity at atoll-level health facilities;

(f) **Promote healthy lifestyles and behaviour from a young age and reduce obesity by encouraging healthy eating habits and physical activity, prioritizing efforts in schools and communities;**

(g) **Promote, protect and support breastfeeding in all policy areas where breastfeeding has an impact on child health, including obesity, certain non-communicable diseases and mental health, and fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.**

Mental and adolescent health

36. The Committee notes efforts to improve mental health services in regional and atoll-level facilities through the implementation of the Central and Regional Mental Health Services Development Plan (2022–2025), the integration of sexual and reproductive education into the national curriculum, the extension of the Aasandha scheme to private providers of mental health services, and the amendment of the Tobacco Control Act banning e-cigarettes, vapes and related products, but remains seriously concerned about:

(a) The rising mental health challenges among children;

(b) Barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health services, including contraceptives;

(c) Increasing substance abuse, and the limited awareness, and limitations, of treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

37. **Recalling its general comments No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention and No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, and its previous concluding observations,¹⁴ the Committee urges the State Party:**

(a) **To adopt the mental health bill, develop a comprehensive mental health strategy for children and continue decentralizing mental health services and integrating them into primary healthcare, particularly on remote islands, including through tele-mental health support, for example through the National Mental Health Helpline;**

(b) **To adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and continue ensuring that age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and aimed at adolescents, with special attention placed on preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;**

(c) **To ensure that all adolescents, including those who are out of school and those on remote islands, receive confidential and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;**

(d) **To decriminalize abortion in all circumstances and ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services for adolescent girls, ensuring that their views are always heard and given due consideration as part of the decision-making process;**

(e) **To address the prevalence of drug use by children and adolescents by, inter alia, providing children and adolescents with accurate and objective information and life skills education on preventing substance abuse – including with regard to tobacco, vaping and alcohol – and develop accessible and child-friendly drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation programmes.**

H. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))

38. The Committee notes the *Komme Kujjakah Aailaach (A Family for Every Child)* programme and the increase in the single-parent allowance, and recommends that the State Party:

¹⁴ CRC/C/MDV/CO/4-5, para. 57.

(a) Take targeted measures to reduce child poverty, particularly among children from single-parent households, children with disabilities and children from remote islands;

(b) Ensure that support from the National Social Protection Agency reaches the children who are in the most disadvantaged situations, especially those outside the capital and children belonging to minority groups;

(c) Raise awareness among children and families about available social protection programmes and ensure that children in remote communities have access to those programmes.

I. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24 and 26–31)

39. Taking note of the environmental protection legislation of the State Party, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Conduct an assessment of the effects of air and marine pollution and the degradation of marine ecosystems on children's health as a basis for designing a well-resourced strategy to remedy the situation, and regulate the maximum concentrations of pollutants in the air and in food;

(b) Stop the incineration and open burning of waste and strengthen safe and environmentally friendly waste management;

(c) Ensure that health professionals receive training in the diagnosis and treatment of health impacts related to environmental harm.

Impact of climate change on the rights of the child

40. The Committee notes the Climate Emergency Act of 2021 and the launch of the National Climate Action Plan towards Resilience and Low-Carbon Development. Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Ensure that children's special vulnerabilities, needs and views are taken into account in developing policies and programmes to address climate change and disaster risk management;

(b) Increase children's awareness of and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters by incorporating the topic in the school curriculum and teacher training programmes;

(c) Develop strategies for uninterrupted access to education and health services in view of frequent extreme weather events, especially in smaller island communities;

(d) Seek bilateral, multilateral, regional and international cooperation in implementing these recommendations.

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

Aims and coverage of education

41. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Improve the rates of transition into upper secondary education through initiatives such as flexible learning pathways, modernized vocational training programmes and deployment of digitally enabled learning environments connecting children on remote islands;

(b) Continue strengthening the accessibility and quality of education, including through satellite and hybrid schools, and provide quality training for teachers, with a particular emphasis on rural areas and remote islands;

(c) Provide more tailored support in the early grades to address the challenges that occur for students whose mother tongue is not English;

(d) Update curricula to be responsive to the rapidly changing environment and encourage the direct participation of children in environmental protection as a component of their learning process;

(e) Allocate sufficient financial resources for the expansion of the compulsory and free early childhood education, on the basis of a comprehensive and holistic policy of early childhood care and development;

(f) Address contents in the curriculum that might contribute to negative attitudes towards girls, including in respect to their capacities, job choices and future contributions within the labour force;

(g) Take measures to ensure gender parity in school completions, especially at the secondary school level.

Inclusive education

42. The Committee notes the introduction of the inclusive education data management system, which allows for the monitoring of inclusive education through a centralized portal. The Committee recommends that the State Party:

(a) Take measures to increase the availability of inclusive education on the remote islands;

(b) Increase funding for and effectively implement inclusive education policies, and ensure that inclusive education is given priority over the placement of children in specialized classes;

(c) Ensure that all children with disabilities, children in rural areas and on remote islands and girls have access to mainstream schools, and also ensure that schools are staffed by trained teachers and equipped with assistive technologies, accessible infrastructure and appropriate teaching materials to better support these children.

Vocational training and guidance

43. The Committee recommends that the State Party develop and promote quality vocational and technical training programmes that align with labour market needs and address socioeconomic barriers, the limited access to such training on remote islands, and the inadequate provision of career guidance to children.

Rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts

44. Recalling its general comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, the Committee recommends that the State Party develop safe and inclusive parks and playgrounds and ensure access to landscaped green areas and open spaces, particularly in Male'.

K. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40 of the Convention, and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)

Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children

45. Recalling joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) on the human rights of

children in the context of international migration, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Develop an asylum system with a robust identification mechanism and identify how many children are in need of international protection;
- (b) Develop comprehensive referral and case management frameworks for services for children, including physical and mental health services, education services and services in the police and justice sectors, including the provision of free legal aid, particularly for unaccompanied and separated children;
- (c) Consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol thereto.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

46. Taking note of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Amend the regulatory framework to set 18 years as the minimum age for all hazardous work, adopt a comprehensive definition of hazardous work consistent with the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) of the International Labour Organization, and strengthen the labour inspection system to ensure effective monitoring, accountability and the protection of children from all forms of economic exploitation;
- (b) Publish the mandated guidelines on employer conduct and maximum work duration to operationalize protections against child labour, and strengthen oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability;
- (c) Ensure that no child engages in hazardous work and raise public awareness of child labour, its exploitative character and its consequences.

Trafficking

47. The Committee notes the adoption of the Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan, in 2025, and recommends that the State Party:

- (a) Continue strengthening its anti-trafficking initiatives and the key measures set out in the Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan of 2025, such as coordinated referral systems and support, and put in place a mechanism to identify children in need of protection;
- (b) Investigate all cases of child trafficking and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- (c) Conduct activities in order to raise awareness, among both parents and children, of the dangers of trafficking.

Administration of child justice

48. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Juvenile Justice Act, in which the age of criminal responsibility is set at 15 years. It also notes the adoption of the Juvenile Justice Act implementation road map (2024–2027) and the establishment of the Juvenile Halfway House and a temporary juvenile residential treatment centre, as well as the visits of the national preventive mechanism to detention centres. However, it is seriously concerned about:

- (a) The challenges in the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act, and the lack of trained staff, infrastructure, resources and rehabilitation programmes to effectively administer child justice;
- (b) The lack of programmes and measures for children below 15 years of age who are accused of infringing criminal law;

(c) Delays in obtaining essential psychological reports, gender assessments and risk evaluations, primarily due to a shortage of qualified professionals, resulting in prolonged delays throughout the judicial process;

(d) The concerning conditions in children's detention centres as assessed through the child rights audit conducted by the Office of the Children's Ombudsperson;

(e) The rehabilitation approach adopted by the State Party with the creation of the long-term residential care facilities for juvenile offenders known as "Hope Island", as it will remove child offenders from society and place them under the supervision of law enforcement officers;

(f) The limited use of diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration services.

49. Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, also recalling the concluding observations on the second periodic report submitted by the State Party to the Human Rights Committee,¹⁵ and with reference to the global study on children deprived of liberty, the Committee urges the State Party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State Party:

(a) To fully implement the Juvenile Justice Act implementation road map (2024–2027), including by improving inter-agency coordination and communication to ensure fulfilment of the rights of children in the child justice system;

(b) To maintain the minimum age of criminal responsibility at 15, in order to uphold child-rights standards, and develop intensive child-friendly and multidisciplinary psychosocial programmes and measures for children under 15 years of age who are alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law;

(c) To strengthen early identification and family-support interventions to address risks before children enter the justice system by also addressing the underlying factors, including, but not limited to, poverty, family violence and substance use;

(d) To consider, for the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, the recommendations made by the Office of the Children's Ombudsperson in its child rights audit regarding conditions in juvenile detention centres; and ensure that there is an adequate number of qualified professionals, that urgent infrastructure improvements are undertaken, that there is a clear categorization system for children considered as offenders, that separate facilities for girls are established and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services;

(e) To review the "Hope Island" programmes to ensure their compatibility with the Convention; and to ensure, rather than institutionalization, the provision of diversion and mediation for children alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed criminal law and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences for children, such as probation or community service, and ensure that health and psychosocial services are provided to such children.

Children in armed conflict, including the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict

50. Noting the amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Committee recalls its previous concluding observations on the report of the State Party submitted under article 8 of the Optional Protocol¹⁶ and urges the State Party:

(a) To explicitly criminalize the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 years by the armed forces and non-State armed groups;

¹⁵ CCPR/C/MDV/CO/2, para. 52 (b).

¹⁶ CRC/C/OPAC/MDV/CO/1.

(b) To consider extending extraterritorial jurisdiction for crimes concerning the recruitment and use of children in hostilities;

(c) To ensure that the children of Maldivian males who joined Da'esh and who are now deceased are able to quickly and easily confirm their Maldivian nationality and be repatriated from the Syrian Arab Republic; and to find durable solutions, maintaining family unity whenever it is in the best interests of the child, for those children whose mothers are not being repatriated;

(d) To cease administrative detention of children in the National Reintegration Centre based on their return from conflict zones, and instead prioritize individual assessments and alternatives to detention and explicitly state that children under the age of 15 should be exempt from appearing in court to be questioned;

(e) To address the root causes of radicalization and launch a public awareness campaign to inform communities about the risks involved and the measures they can take to safeguard their children from radicalization, including offering positive alternatives for youth;

(f) To establish mechanisms for the early identification of children who may have been recruited or used in armed conflicts abroad upon their return to the State Party, collect disaggregated data on such children and provide support for their physical and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and integration into society.

L. Ratification of international human rights instruments

51. The Committee recommends that the State Party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the following core human rights instruments:

(a) Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

(b) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;

(c) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

M. Cooperation with regional bodies

52. The Committee recommends that the State Party cooperate with, among others, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

IV. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

53. The Committee recommends that the State Party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

B. National mechanism for reporting and follow-up

54. The Committee recommends that the State Party strengthen the national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up and ensure that it has the mandate and the adequate human, technical and financial resources to coordinate and engage with, and prepare reports to, international and regional human rights mechanisms and to coordinate and track national follow-up to, and implementation of, treaty obligations and the recommendations and decisions emanating from such mechanisms effectively. The Committee emphasizes that the national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up should be adequately and continuously supported by dedicated staff and should have the capacity to consult systematically with the Human Rights Commission and civil society.

C. Next report

55. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the State Party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State Party. The reports should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines¹⁷ and should not exceed 21,200 words.¹⁸ In the event that reports exceeding the established word limit are submitted, the State Party will be asked to shorten the reports. If the State Party is not in a position to review and resubmit the reports, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

¹⁷ [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

¹⁸ General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.