



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child Forty-fifth session

Summary Record of the 1242nd Meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 30 May 2007, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lee

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (item 6 of the agenda) (continued)

Second and third periodic reports of Kazakhstan [(CRC/C/KAZ/3); list of issues to be taken up (CRC/C/KAZ/Q/3); written replies by the State party concerning the list of issues (CRC/C/KAZ/Q/3/Add.1)] (continued)

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

2. **Ms. Aidoo** requested further information on housing conditions for poor children and on measures intended to protect their privacy and provide them with an adequate standard of living, as provided for in article 27 of the Convention. Many large families lived in very small spaces, hotels or places where sanitation facilities were inadequate, sometimes forcing children to live in the street.

3. The delegation was asked to outline the results of executing the Inter-ministerial Action Plan formulated for the period 2005-2007, the aim of which was to implement International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 in Kazakhstan. The delegation might also indicate what supervisory mechanisms had been established to prevent the exploitation of children and what penalties were provided for in respect of adults employing children.

4. The delegation might also explain why efforts to combat trafficking in children were so ineffective in Kazakhstan and the extent to which the Suppression of Human Trafficking (Amendments) Act No.131 of 2 March 2006 was enforced. Finally, it was asked to indicate what measures were taken to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice.

5. The Committee noted with concern that a high number of children were the subject of sexual exploitation or rape and that only a small number of cases was brought before the courts. The Committee asked whether that meant that the perpetrators acted with impunity even though Kazakhstan had a gamut of legislation to protect children and women; the Committee also wondered about the effectiveness of awareness campaigns conducted on those matters.

6. Finally, the speaker asked whether child victims of sexual exploitation were subject to discrimination and whether they were regarded as criminals in the eyes of the law. She asked whether rehabilitation and social integration programmes had been developed for child victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation.

7. **Ms. Smith** observed that discrimination still existed and asked whether awareness campaigns were conducted in the country.

8. She recalled that the Refugee Acts dated from 1951 and 1967 respectively and should be reviewed; she enquired whether Kazakhstan intended to formulate a new bill in that regard. She asked whether there were any asylum seekers in Kazakhstan and, if so, whether the delegation could supply some information on their situation.

9. The delegation might also indicate the number of child traffic accident victims and supply information on Kazakh law on road safety, stating in particular whether use of a seatbelt was compulsory.

10. **Mr. Polar** asked what measures were taken by the State party with regard to child refugees who were victims of armed conflict, especially for children from Afghanistan. He enquired whether anyone knew how many such children there were, whether care was provided to them as a group and whether assistance, including psychological assistance, was provided for them.

11. **Mr. Puras**, noting that terminology was very important as it was a reflection of one's attitude, was of the view that a term other than "invalids" should be used in Russian to describe children with disabilities. He asked how the rights provided for in the Convention were implemented for children with disabilities and, in particular, whether such children were enrolled in school and whether they could, for example, attend day centres near their places of residence. He also asked what happened to children with disabilities when they became adults and whether there were alternative solutions available for them or whether they were placed in psychiatric asylums. The delegation might set out the measures taken to institute a new scheme of assistance for children with disabilities given that placing such children in large institutions was incompatible with the rights of the child and extremely expensive for the State.

12. The delegation might also indicate the measures taken to provide assistance to adolescents with difficulties such as drug addiction, suicidal tendencies or behavioural problems and state whether services had been established to help at-risk families which had problems with alcohol, for example, especially in rural areas.

13. **Mr. Parfitt** noted that although corporal punishment was prohibited by law, it was commonplace in schools, care homes and detention centres. He asked what the State party was doing to promote non-violent methods of discipline.

14. He enquired about the training given to the leaders of children's care homes, whether the homes were regularly inspected and, where appropriate, whether the inspections were carried out by independent bodies. He asked whether there were any rules which applied to the care homes and, if not, whether the State party intended to formulate any.

15. **Ms. Ortiz** asked whether the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights within the Ministry of Education and Science ascertained, prior to giving its consent to the adoption of a child, that the family in the broad sense agreed to the adoption, that there had been no corruption, and whether the resources necessary to achieve that purpose were available to that Committee. She would like additional information on the texts governing the procedure for in-country and intercountry adoption. Finally she asked whether Kazakhstan intended to ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, and what difficulties might prevent it from doing so.

16. **The Chairperson** asked for details on the care provided to children with disabilities age 16 to 18 and noted that the system of residential schools for children with disabilities was unsuitable.

17. The delegation might indicate what specific measures had been taken to reduce pregnancy and abortion rates among adolescent girls and provide details of maternal and child mortality.

18. **Mr. Ismailov** (Kazakhstan) said that to combat the consequences of the disasters that had struck the Aral Sea and the Semipalatinsk regions programmes to monitor food and water quality and to assess morbidity due to infectious and non-infectious diseases had been

conducted with the help of international organizations. Measures had been taken as a result and women of child-bearing age and children up to age 18 underwent a medical examination each year. Water pipes had been repaired and there was now a supply of potable water to about 35,000 locations in the Aral Sea region. Thanks to equipment purchased by the Scientific Research Institute for Radiation Medicine in Semipalatinsk using subsidies from the Japanese Government, it had been possible to detect diseases at an early stage in their development. There were plans to construct a perinatal medicine centre and a paediatric hospital in the Aral Sea region. The National Centre for Maternal and Infant Health was due to open in Astana on 1 July 2007.

19. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) said that 87 per cent of children completed the general secondary education cycle. The other children undertook vocational training and a minority entered work. School textbooks were supplied free of charge to orphans, children placed in residential schools and children from large, low-income families. Education was not yet available to everyone free of all charges.

20. Nineteen textbooks for preschool children had been drafted by the National Textbook Centre. New textbooks and study plans which complied with international standards had also been prepared.

21. There were just over one million preschool children in Kazakhstan. Only 27.2 per cent of them were enrolled in education centres (12.4 per cent in rural areas). Over 600 preschool education centres had been opened in 2006. In May 2007, under a Government Decree, 20 billion tenge had been allocated to the construction of early childhood centres. The Government was constantly asking the local authorities about progress with these plans which will allow 35 per cent of preschool children to be enrolled in an education establishment. Seventy-five per cent of children age 5 were already enrolled in school and received education free of charge. From 2004 to 2007 about 300,000 teachers took professional development courses

22. **Ms. Klebanova** (Kazakhstan) said that at the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, Kazakhstan had legalized the status of a very large number of illegal migrant workers and their families. Kazakhstan intended to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and to that end was undertaking a review of its legislation in that regard.

23. Children were able to work from age 16 and from age 15 if they had finished their secondary education and had the written agreement of their parents or guardian. A labour contract could be signed with children age 13, with the agreement of one parent or guardian, for certain work to be undertaken in the child's free time, provided that the work in question was not harmful to the child's health or disruptive to his or her studies. The Labour Act prohibited the recruitment of persons under age 18 for extremely difficult or heavy physical tasks and activities and laid down criminal or administrative penalties for persons who contravened the Act. The Labour Inspectorate from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection therefore had a number of measures available to them by which to punish any abuses.

24. **Mr. Kotrane** asked for information on the enforcement in practice of legislation and the strategy followed by the State party to put a permanent stop to the economic exploitation of children given that there were reports that about 2.5 per cent of children between the ages of 4 and 15 probably worked as servants or in the cotton and tobacco industries, particularly in Almaty and the south of the country.

25. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) said that children did indeed work on farms and agricultural small-holdings and that it was difficult to monitor work done by them in a domestic setting. However, in April 2007 the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights had held consultations with representatives from international organizations, including the ILO, to study the measures that could be put in place. As a result a decision was taken to launch a nationwide campaign involving children on 1 June to raise awareness among the population as a whole to the issue of the economic exploitation of children. In particular, households would be sent a questionnaire. Subsequently, representatives of the ILO planned to implement a monitoring project in Almaty region and the south of the country from August to September to bring Kazakhstan into compliance with the international norms, study the causes of child exploitation and strive to eradicate them. In November, in cooperation with ILO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kazakhstan intended to organize an international conference on the matter to formulate recommendations with a view to finding specific solutions to the issue.

26. **Mr. Izgutiev** (Kazakhstan) said that the State party took a very close interest in protecting the rights of child victims of violence. Since 2006, 67 prosecutions had been brought for violent treatment or acts against children; the cases in question had been tried by the courts and sentences handed down. Moreover, Kazakhstan was currently running a major prevention and awareness-raising campaign with the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The aim was to work specifically with disadvantaged families experiencing problems with alcohol or drug addiction.

27. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) added that in 2000, as part of the various measures taken to prevent violence to children, Parliament had adopted a regulation providing for teams of psychologists and pedagogues to be formed within educational establishments and residential schools. The issue of in-service training for these specialists was still unresolved, however.

28. Monitoring work to inspect the enforcement and observance of the rights of children in educational establishments and residential schools was also conducted with ILO help... That exercise would come to an end in August.

29. **Ms. Herczog** welcomed the efforts made but wondered whether social workers or psychologists were able to help families to respond to the emotional needs of the child, especially where the child lived in a residential school. Where preschool education was concerned, she also encouraged the State party to place emphasis on setting up well-equipped crèches or nurseries.

30. **Mr. Citarella** asked whether there were any upper and lower age limits for compulsory school attendance.

31. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) explained that preschool education for children age 5 and 6 was delivered in care establishments by duly trained professionals. New methods of teaching had been introduced in residential schools and the circumstances of the children living in them were a Government priority.

32. Furthermore, compulsory schooling, which usually began at age 6, lasted for 12 years. It was however possible for various reasons for a child to start school at a slightly older age.

33. **The Chairperson** pointed out that regardless of the terminology, the Committee wanted to dissuade the State party from continuing to establish further "youth centres" or "residential schools" where children spent the night away from their families.

34. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) said that that type of care placement was the exception and that for two years Kazakhstan had been making great strides towards family reunification and keeping children with their families. UNICEF, the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights and local authorities had among other things helped establish a data bank on children who had been orphaned or abandoned. Moreover, 2,500 of those children had already been placed with foster families. NGOs were also helping to carry out preventive work with disadvantaged families.

35. **Mr. Krappmann** asked whether against a background where care institutions were being eradicated, foster families received any assistance for taking care of children in addition to their own biological children.

36. **Mr. Parfitt** also enquired whether extended families caring for a child also received assistance, given the precarious nature of the financial circumstances experienced by many of them.

37. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) indicated that a Government Decree resolved the issue of compensation for the foster families who had agreed to take care of children who had previously been living in orphanages. By contrast, the extended family did not currently receive any help. On 27 March 2007 this matter had been put to the Government by the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights and the Prime Minister had decided to allocate 6 billion tenge to formulating a project to compensate the families concerned, starting in 2008. The project was currently being studied by all the relevant ministries and departments. Finally, Kazakhstan intended to pursue that route with plans to compensate adoptive families as well.

38. **Mr. Kalzhanov** (Kazakhstan) explained that in Kazakhstan generally there was a family assistance system which included family allowances and parental leave. As of 2008, all families would receive a set allowance for their children up to age 1, regardless of their incomes. Disadvantaged families would enjoy that right for all children under age 18. The State also paid allowances to large families and it had recently been decided that social assistance would be means-tested. As a result, a mother of five children would be able to claim an allowance and retire at age 53.

39. Social assistance in the field of health took the form of supplying medication to children. In all the instances described, the allowances were paid by the local authorities in charge of managing the budgets and dealing with the issues which were directly within their remit. For example, the amount of housing benefit was determined at regional level.

40. **Ms. Herczog** asked whether social or even psychological assistance was supplied to families to resolve conflict or crisis situations, whether training was provided to foster families and adoptive parents, whether there were many failed care placements and whether children's development was monitored.

41. On the matter of children's villages, it would be interesting to know whether couples, and not just women as had previously been the case, were now able to be appointed as heads of families.

42. **The Chairperson** asked whether mothers of young children also received an allowance and whether the State party intended to ratify ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection. Any further information on breastfeeding would also be welcome.

43. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) was of the view that all conventions which aimed to improve children's quality of life were worthy of ratification. Recommendations to that end would

therefore be made to the Government as soon as possible. The Convention in question would be a matter for study by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Health.

44. The possibility of care placements in foster families had only emerged in 2004 and had had a difficult start. Women had often accepted the responsibility with no other preparation than their own personal experience. The procedure had changed since then: there were foster houses for parents in each region which, following an initiative by local authorities, social organizations and NGOs, provided education and training for foster families. International experts were regular guests and representatives from the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights went on visits abroad to try and identify better practices.

45. In relation to inspections, the Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights comprised 45 people and had about 350 sub-units in the regions. With the help of UNICEF, it intended to train duly qualified individuals and specialists such as teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc., to try and ensure that mistakes were not made in introducing the foster home system into the country.

46. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) said that Kazakhstan took all possible measures to ensure that more children deprived of parental care lived in family-type conditions in residential schools. Communities such as "SOS Children's Villages", which were based on the ones established in Austria, allowed children to live in houses with "Mums", who were in fact women who had no children of their own. Today, the manager of one of the villages could just as easily be a man living on-site with his family.

47. Where violence toward children was concerned, Parliament was currently scrutinizing a bill on the prevention of violence in daily life which should have completed its passage through Parliament within the year.

48. **Ms. Nurabayeva** (Kazakhstan) noted that Kazakh legislation had continued to develop since the submission of the initial report. The President of the Republic had recently proposed amending the Constitution with a view to establishing juvenile courts throughout the country. By the end of the year, two juvenile courts should have been opened. The judges assigned to work in these courts would receive special training.

49. The Ministry of Justice was due to submit a draft Marriage and Family Code by the end of 2007. A large chapter would be devoted to the right to property and especially the guarantee of a right to housing for children.

50. At the same time, Kazakhstan was trying to develop its terminology to comply with international texts in the matter. As a result, mistakes made in the past would be corrected under the draft code which no longer referred to "invalids" but to "children with limited possibilities", not to "illegitimate" children, but to "children born out of wedlock", who would have the same rights as other children.

51. Moreover, Kazakhstan was currently making efforts to accede to the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. Parliament was scrutinizing a bill which should enable the Convention to be ratified in the near future.

52. **Ms. Aluoch** wondered whether, in the new legal order, a Procurator-General would be given the task of monitoring compliance with legislation relating to minors.

53. **Ms. Aidoo** asked whether the State party intended to construct new housing to help provide more space for large families.

54. **Ms. Nurabayeva** (Kazakhstan) indicated that the Procurator-General was independent and was not part of the Ministry of Justice. He oversaw matters of State to ensure that the law was complied with scrupulously. He reported directly to the President of the Republic only.

55. In 2006, Kazakhstan had launched a major programme to construct social housing to provide access to affordable housing to families with young children or adolescents. A programme of community dwellings to accommodate families in crisis had also been established two years previously. Furthermore, housing legislation was subject to health regulations which laid down a minimum number of square metres per person per home.

56. **Mr. Izgutiev** (Kazakhstan) indicated that there was one pretrial detention centre for juveniles with no parental protection who had committed an offence. The juveniles were given special social and psychological help with a view to rehabilitation.

57. **Mr. Krappmann** pointed out that about 90 per cent of children in pretrial detention centres were in fact abandoned children who had spent some time on the streets. Such children needed social help and making them social outcasts could only be prejudicial.

58. **Mr. Filali** asked what measures were taken by the State party to tackle the many cases of child abandonment, especially to trace and punish the parents responsible. Was it the case that these particularly vulnerable, abandoned children were separated from juvenile delinquents in the institutions where they were accommodated?

59. **Ms. Ortiz** asked how many children lived or worked in the street and if there were any programmes aimed at them.

60. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) said that there were not as many abandoned children as the Committee seemed to think. There were about 50,000 children deprived of parental protection. Of those, 18,000 had been placed in social or medical protection centres; the others had been placed in tutorship or guardianship or under State protection.

61. Street children spent only 45 days in rehabilitation and pretrial detention centres. Their stay had to be notified to the authorities. They were then returned to their families or placed in institutional or foster care.

62. Street children from neighbouring countries were placed in special holding centres under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior before being removed to their country of origin. Agreements had been signed in that regard with the various Ministries of the Interior of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Admittedly in some of these centres the rights of the child were perhaps not always observed. Measures would have to be taken to rectify that. Nonetheless, the children in the centres received support from specialist psychologists.

63. The Government intended to convert the pretrial detention centres into social reintegration centres. Based on the experience of Sweden, the Ministry of the Interior had drawn up projects to encourage social reintegration of children through art therapy or work therapy. The Government was also trying, with the help of an NGO, to hold training seminars for the centres' staff.

64. Kazakhstan had established a special committee with the task of tracing the parents of abandoned children. It was also in the process of developing a programme to reintegrate families experiencing special difficulties by supporting them financially and helping parents who had lost their jobs to train in a new trade. In order to tackle the problem of parents who neglected their children it intended to follow the example of Germany and prohibit children from entering restaurants and cafés after 10 p.m. unless accompanied by their parents.

65. **Mr. Parfitt** asked whether abandoned children were placed in pretrial detention centres not because they had committed an offence but because there were no other accommodation facilities for them. He also enquired whether vagrancy was prohibited by law.

66. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) said that the centres accommodated street children for as long as it took to establish their identity and ascertain whether they had committed any offences or had an infectious disease. The maximum duration of the stay in the centres was set by the law at 45 days. In the event that the parents had not been traced by the end of that time, the child was then placed in a children's home, residential school, or foster family.

67. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) stated that there were private schools that ran in parallel to free State schools; the cost of registration at the private schools was set by common agreement between the school authorities and parents. School fees could not exceed a certain amount as determined by the Ministry of Education.

68. **Ms. Ortíz** was of the view that placing children in pretrial detention centres was incompatible with the Convention and contrary to the Committee's recommendations.

69. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) replied that it was a temporary measure and was not incompatible with the Convention.

70. About 120 ethnic groups lived in Kazakhstan and children were entitled to receive instruction in their mother tongue. Subsidies had been awarded to schools based on the number of people from ethnic communities living in the region. It was therefore possible to learn another language in addition to Russian and Kazakh, which were the two official languages. Finally, in Russian schools, children were required to receive Kazakh language lessons, and vice-versa.

71. **Mr. Abishev** (Kazakhstan) explained that in 1998 Kazakhstan had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Any contravention of the right of non-discrimination enshrined in the Constitution was punishable under the Penal Code. The Commission on Human Rights at the Office of the President of the Republic intended to draw up a Discrimination Prevention Act.

72. According to the official data available on 1 January 2007, 279 families, or about 600 people, had obtained refugee status pursuant to the provisions of the 1997 Immigration Act. In 2001 a bill on refugees in Kazakhstan was drafted, but was voted out by Parliament because at that time Kazakhstan had not yet ratified fundamental instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. They were ratified in 2005 and entered into force on 28 April 2006. Currently, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was supporting the drafting of a new bill on refugees which was due to be presented at the end of 2007.

73. **Ms. Smith** asked whether Kazakhstan had planned any educational campaigns to help change people's attitudes in relation to discrimination.

74. **Mr. Abishev** (Kazakhstan) stated that various bodies such as the national ombudsman and NGOs were active in the field of education to combat discrimination. With financial support from the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Office in Almaty, and thanks to the cooperation of the Community of Independent States, a library specializing in human rights in the Kazakh and Russian languages had been made available to parents and children.

75. He also drew the attention of the Committee to activities to combat discrimination which were organized through a partnership between the Government and NGOs specializing in human rights.

76. **The Chairperson** asked whether there was a 24-hour freephone number for child victims of discrimination.

77. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) indicated that a free telephone line set up with help from UNICEF was available at any time of day or night. There were also other helplines for which a charge was made.

78. **Mr. Izgutiev** (Kazakhstan) stated that the Government was taking all measures necessary to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. For example, four cases of trafficking in children had been tried in 2006, and the perpetrators had been convicted. Increasingly firm action was being taken on crimes of this kind.

79. Prevention had also been emphasized. Information campaigns had been organized for the public in cooperation with NGOs and civil society organizations. The year 2006 was the first time in Kazakhstan that 12 days had been devoted to promoting the prohibition on the worst forms of child labour. The campaign was to be re-run this year in all strata of the population.

80. As regards sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings and the worst forms of child labour, the Ministry of the Interior was trying to implement the ILO Conventions in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. A National Coordinating Council had been set up to examine this matter and launch a joint programme with the ILO and the IOM to clamp down on trafficking in human beings.

81. Furthermore, as part of the Conference on Security in Europe which would take place in June 2007 there were plans to hold a training session on the law on the suppression of sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings for staff working in judicial bodies and in law enforcement.

82. **Ms. Aidoo** asked whether the Government received financial support from UNICEF and other organizations or private businesses to conduct detailed studies in urban and rural environments on the extent of sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings, and child labour, which were all closely linked issues, and also to analyze the strategies established in that regard and assess the results. She had the impression that the country had the necessary legislative weaponry, but that given the increase in the problem, it had to be the case that either the laws were not adequately implemented or citizens were not adequately informed about the laws' existence.

83. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) added that the Ministry of the Interior cooperated closely with NGOs which administered centres combating trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation in all regions of the country. With the cooperation of NGOs, the Ministry of the Interior, working in partnership with other ministries, held workshops for children in difficulty.

84. **Mr. Ismailov** (Kazakhstan) explained that the Ministry of Health had launched a reform programme which prioritized maternal and child health.

85. The birth rate in 2006 had been very high, especially among adolescents. Adolescents accounted for 5 per cent of all abortions. Pursuant to the laws in force, adolescents received antenatal and perinatal care and medication free of charge. In order to reduce the maternal and child mortality rates, the Ministry of Health had established training courses for health staff with the help of the WHO and UNICEF, and had redoubled its efforts to improve obstetric facilities over the last three years.

86. A care programme for road accident victims had been implemented with a view to improving the quality of treatment provided in the event of an accident.

87. **Mr. Izgutiev** (Kazakhstan) recalled that use of a seatbelt was compulsory in all forms of transport. Awareness campaigns had been conducted on the need to fasten children's seatbelts to prevent trauma in the event of an accident. Furthermore, a programme had been launched in 2007 to make it possible to prosecute people who caused road accidents.

88. **The Chairperson** asked for further details on health statistics and asked why the figures for respiratory diseases among children had continued to rise in 2002-2003 despite the reforms in maternal and infant health. She also asked whether the country had adopted the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes

89. **Ms. Aluoch** enquired whether children and adolescents were able to request help or information on reproductive health without the consent of their parents.

90. **Mr. Ismailov** (Kazakhstan) replied that under the health system reform, which was in its third year, the morbidity rate had fallen thanks to preventive work among at-risk groups and women of child-bearing age. Medication, vitamins, iodine and iron were supplied free of charge to pregnant women.

91. Breastfeeding was considered desirable for mother and child and was also a right of the child. The number of children who were breastfed had doubled since 2005 thanks to the maternal and infant health information centres, which provided appointments for expectant mothers.

92. **Mr. Puras** asked about the measures taken in the field of adolescent mental health.

93. **Mr. Ismailov** (Kazakhstan) replied that 45,000 children suffered mental illnesses, including mental retardation. They were cared for by psychiatrists in local specialist institutions.

94. **Ms. Sher** (Kazakhstan) added that suicidal behaviour had recently been reported among many adolescents. The Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights had set up a research group comprising psychologists, professors emeritus and health professionals to study the situation, develop a monitoring programme, establish a psychological follow-up service and identify the measures to take.

95. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) explained that adoption fell within the scope of the current Marriage and Family Act, which provided for adoption proceedings to take place in court. A bill amending the adoption procedure was due to be examined by Parliament. It set out two different procedures depending upon whether the adoption was by Kazakh parents or alien parents. In the best interest of the child, Kazakhstan gave preference to in-country adoption pursuant to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, national law and the Constitution of Kazakhstan, which provided that children had to be brought up in compliance with their religious and ethnic affiliation. It therefore provided for a reduction in the number of conditions to be met for in-country adoption and an increase in the requirements for inter-country adoption, for example by setting a maximum age for parents who wish to adopt. The issue of adoption by persons belonging to sexual minorities was also under consideration.

96. **Mr. Krappmann** said that the members of the delegation had shown that they were well aware of the many problems which continued to exist despite programmes of action having been drawn up. Some of those problems, for example the ones relating to school facilities and technical innovation, would soon be resolved because the country had sufficient resources to make the necessary investments. However, more time would be required before reforms to eradicate violence against children bore fruit because they required a change in behaviour.

97. The Committee encouraged Kazakhstan to work closely with civil society to implement the programmes and strategies it had formulated with a view to improving the situation of children. It urged the Government to pursue its efforts in the field of the rights of the child and to draw on the vast wealth which the country enjoyed.

98. **Ms. Jarbussynova** (Kazakhstan) said that the members of the delegation were aware of the work that was yet to be done to improve the lives of children, especially with regard to education and health, where far-reaching reforms were required.

99. **The Chairperson** warmly appreciated the constructive dialogue that had taken place and hoped that it would prove fruitful. She was convinced that the members of the Kazakh delegation which, she was pleased to note, was multisectoral in nature, had correctly identified the issues and knew what approach to take to resolve them. She hoped their efforts would be crowned with success.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.
