

## SOLOMON ISLANDS

### **CRC CRC/C/132 (2003)**

284. The Committee considered the initial report of Solomon Islands (CRC/C/51/Add.6) at its 873rd and 874th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.873 and 874), held on 26 May 2003, and adopted, at the 889th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.889), held on 6 June 2003, the following concluding observations.

#### A. Introduction

285. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's frank and informative initial report and the very informative written replies to its list of issues (CRC/C/Q/SOL/1). The Committee also welcomes the high-level delegation and the constructive dialogue that took place.

#### B. Positive aspects

286. The Committee notes with appreciation the State party's efforts to implement the Convention, especially with regard to:

- (a) Progress made in reducing infant mortality and expanding immunization coverage;
- (b) The establishment of the National Advisory Committee on Children (NACC) and the recent appointment of a child desk officer;
- (c) The increase in access to primary education, which has been growing at a steady pace;
- (d) Technical cooperation undertaken with international NGOs and United Nations agencies and bodies, including UNICEF and OHCHR.

#### C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

287. The Committee recognizes the serious difficulties facing the State party, namely, the recent civil strife, severe economic constraints, including poverty and unemployment, vulnerability to natural disasters, and the fact that the country is made up of many islands, some very remote, and that its people speak at least 87 local languages and dialects.

#### D. Principal subjects of concern, suggestions and recommendations

##### 1. General measures of implementation

##### Legislation

288. The Committee notes that a child rights bill is being drafted in order to bring legislation into line with the provisions and principles of the Convention, as well as a bill for the protection of

children, but is concerned that these bills and other draft laws concerning child rights have long been awaiting enactment.

289. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The State party strengthen the mechanisms required to harmonize its constitutional provisions and its domestic and customary legislation with the provisions and principles of the Convention as soon as possible;

(b) The child rights bill and the child protection bill be made compatible with the provisions and principles of the Convention and adopted by Parliament as a matter of priority.

#### Coordination

290. The Committee is encouraged by the establishment in 1993 of NACC and the Child Desk in 2003, but remains concerned about its effectiveness in coordinating the implementation process of the Convention, also between the central and local levels.

291. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen and support NACC with sufficient human and financial resources and empower it to carry out its coordinating and implementing duties.

#### Independent monitoring structures

292. The Committee notes the existence of an ombudsman but is concerned that this entity has neither the expertise nor the mandate, nor the human and financial resources, to receive, investigate and respond to individual complaints about violations of children's rights either within the Ombudsman's Office or separately.

293. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Establish an independent and effective mechanism, within an institution for the promotion and protection of human rights, established according to the Paris Principles (General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex) and taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 2 on the role of national human rights institutions, making sure that it is provided with adequate human and financial resources and that it is easily accessible to children, with the mandate:

- i) To monitor the implementation of the Convention;
- ii) To deal with complaints from children in a child-sensitive and expeditious manner;
- iii) To provide remedies for violations of their rights under the Convention;

(b) Consider seeking further technical assistance in this regard from, among others, UNICEF, OHCHR and other competent bodies.

### National plan of action

294. The Committee is concerned that the State party does not have a national plan of action for the implementation of the Convention and that the State party does not have a clear and comprehensive child rights policy.

295. The Committee recommends that the State party take action to develop a national policy on the implementation of the Convention, incorporating the outcome document of the General Assembly special session on children, held in May 2002, “A world fit for children”, and seek assistance from, among others, UNICEF.

### Resources for children

296. The Committee notes that at the time the State party report was written (2000), education and health services were receiving the largest and second-largest allocations from the national budget, but that since then funds have been diverted from these sectors to the point where some schools and hospitals have had to shut down. The Committee is also concerned that, in light of article 4 of the Convention, not enough attention has been paid to allocating budgetary resources “to the maximum extent of ... available resources” for the implementation of the Convention.

297. The Committee recommends that the State party pay particular attention to the full implementation of article 4 of the Convention by prioritizing budgetary allocations so as to ensure implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children, in particular children belonging to economically and geographically disadvantaged groups, to the maximum extent of available resources at both the national and local levels and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.

### Data collection

298. The Committee is concerned at the severe lack of an adequate data collection mechanism within the State party to facilitate the systematic and comprehensive collection of disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data for all areas covered by the Convention in relation to all groups of children in order to monitor and evaluate progress achieved and assess the impact of policies adopted with respect to children.

299. The Committee recommends that the State party should, as a priority, systematically collect disaggregated data incorporating all the areas covered by the Convention and covering all children below the age of 18 years, with specific emphasis on those who are in need of special protection. The State party should also develop indicators to effectively monitor and evaluate progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention and assess the impact of policies and programmes that affect children. In this context, the Committee recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from, among others, UNFPA, UNDP, and UNICEF.

### Training and dissemination

300. The Committee, noting that at least 87 languages and dialects are spoken in the country, welcomes the initiatives taken by the State party to disseminate the Convention and recommends further cooperation with UNICEF and OHCHR in disseminating international human rights treaties and in providing training programmes to raise awareness of the Convention. The Committee is concerned that due to the civil strife the dissemination and training on the rights set forth in the Convention effectively came to a halt.

301. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen its awareness-raising efforts and encourages it to undertake systematic education and training on the rights contained in the Convention for all professional groups working for and with children, in particular parliamentarians, judges/magistrates, lawyers, law enforcement officials, civil servants, personnel working in institutions and places of detention for children, teachers, health personnel, social workers and local leaders, as well as children and their parents;

(b) Develop creative methods to promote the Convention, including through audio-visual aids such as picture books and posters, in particular at local level, and through the mass media, with technical assistance from, for example, OHCHR and UNICEF.

## 2. Definition of the child

302. The Committee is concerned at the many inconsistencies in the minimum ages used in various areas of the law, and notes in particular that:

(a) The minimum age of criminal responsibility is too low (8 years);

(b) The age of marriage is too low (15 years), especially since no birth certificate or any other official document is required for marriage and marriage can take place upon visual presumption of the applicant's age;

(c) The minimum age for employment is too low (12 years);

(d) As education is not compulsory, ages for admission to and completion of primary education have not been set.

303. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Raise the minimum age for criminal responsibility to internationally accepted standards and ensure that juvenile justice protection is accorded to all children up to the age of 18;

(b) Raise the age of marriage and require official documentation to be presented for official matters, e.g. marriage and employment;

(c) Raise the minimum age for employment;

(d) Set ages for admission to and completion of compulsory primary education.

### Non-discrimination

304. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There continues to be widespread discrimination against women and girls and that girls are underrepresented in schools;

(b) The principle of non-discrimination is not adequately implemented for children of some ethnic minorities and of economically disadvantaged households, children living in remote islands, children born out of wedlock and children with disabilities, especially with regard to their access to adequate health care and educational facilities.

305. The Committee recommends that the State party monitor the situation of children, in particular those belonging to the above-mentioned vulnerable groups, who are exposed to discrimination and develop, on the basis of the results of this monitoring, comprehensive strategies containing specific and well-targeted actions aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination.

306. The Committee requests that specific information be included in the next periodic report on the measures and programmes relevant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child undertaken by the State party to follow up on the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and taking account of the Committee's general comment No. 1 on article 29 (1) of the Convention (aims of education).

### Best interests of the child

307. The Committee is concerned that although it is contained in some statutes relating to children's issues, the principle of the best interests of the child is not defined in legislation and not implemented by the State party or reflected in policy, programmes or activities.

308. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take action to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child is included in all relevant legislative instruments and in all policy-making processes and programmes of relevance to children and the Convention's implementation;

(b) Ensure that administrative, judicial, legislative and other relevant officials are given training on the meaning and implementation of the best interests principle, with a view to ensuring its consistent application at central and local government levels.

### Respect for the views of the child

309. The Committee is concerned that the principle of respect for the views of the child is not

expressly provided for in the State party's legislation and that, in practice, children's views are not systematically sought and taken into consideration with regard to decisions that may affect them.

310. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Promote and facilitate, within the family, the school, the courts and administrative bodies, respect for the views of children and their participation in all matters affecting them, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention;

(b) Provide educational information to, among others, parents, teachers, government officials, the judiciary, traditional leaders and society at large on children's right to participate and to have their views taken into account;

(c) Implement measures, including through the use of information campaigns, and train professionals working for and with children, with a view to ensuring that children's views are respected, including in the family, at school and in institutions, making use of international cooperation if required.

### 3. Civil rights and freedoms

#### Birth registration

311. The Committee is concerned that society at large is not aware of the importance of birth registration and that registration is not integrally linked with the health system, and that as a result many children, particularly those born in remote islands, are not registered at birth.

312. In the light of article 7 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take measures to ensure that all children are registered at birth and make every effort to register older children who were not registered at birth;

(b) Ensure that registration is free and explore the use of mobile registration facilities for remote islands;

(c) Conduct information campaigns for the general population explaining the importance and purposes of birth registration, including through international cooperation.

#### Ill-treatment

313. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Corporal punishment is widely practised in the family, schools and other institutions such as prisons and in alternative care contexts;

(b) There is insufficient knowledge about ill-treatment of children, including on the part of State

agents;

(c) Acts of violence against the mother and/or other members of the family frequently take place in the presence of children.

314. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take all legislative and other measures to prohibit all forms of physical and mental violence, including corporal punishment, against children in the family, schools, and in all other contexts;

(b) Conduct a study to assess the nature and extent of ill-treatment of children, and design policies and programmes to address it, including with international cooperation;

(c) Carry out public education campaigns about the negative consequences of ill-treatment of children and promote positive, non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment;

(d) Establish effective procedures and multidisciplinary mechanisms to receive, monitor and investigate complaints, including instances of ill-treatment, and to prosecute alleged perpetrators, ensuring that the child is not revictimized in legal proceedings and that his/her privacy is protected;

(e) Provide care and recovery and rehabilitation assistance for victims;

(f) Train teachers, law enforcement officials, care workers, judges and health professionals in the identification, reporting and management of cases of ill-treatment;

(g) Take into consideration the recommendations of the Committee adopted at its days of general discussion on violence against children (CRC/C/100, para. 688 and CRC/C/111, paras. 701-745).

#### 4. Family environment and alternative care

##### Parental responsibilities

315. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Increasing weakness in family structures due to growing poverty leads to greater vulnerability of children;

(b) Single mothers can only file a request for maintenance in the first three years after the birth of their children;

(c) The rights and responsibilities of unmarried fathers are very limited.

316. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take steps to ensure that parents and families understand and fulfil their obligations towards children and give consideration to means of providing families with adequate support, including through community structures;
- (b) Amend or adopt legislation that does not discriminate against either parent or parents who are not married and provide equal protection to children born out of wedlock, including by abolishing time limits for filing maintenance requests and ensuring the inheritance rights of those children.

#### Children deprived of a family environment

317. The Committee welcomes the State party's preference for family-type forms of alternative care but is concerned that there remains a large number of children in need of alternative care. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at the incidence of informal adoption, which may lead to girls being employed as domestic workers.

318. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Establish standards and procedures, guaranteed in legislation, for alternative care, including in the domains of health, education, safety and overall respect for the Convention;
- (b) Encourage and monitor the current practice of placement within the extended family, ensuring that the rights of children are respected in this context;
- (c) Provide training, including in children's rights, for social and welfare workers;
- (d) Ensure that children's views are heard and taken into consideration in alternative care decisions, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention;
- (e) Ensure that both legal parents are required to give consent to adoption;
- (f) Ensure that placements in institutions, if made, are periodically reviewed, in accordance with article 25 of the Convention;
- (g) Take all necessary measures to end the practice of informal adoption and consider ratifying the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption of 1993.

#### Abuse and neglect

319. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) The problem of abuse, including sexual abuse, within the family and in institutions appears to be significant;
- (b) Very few cases of physical and sexual abuse are effectively pursued by the police or brought



to court;

(c) Reporting is not mandatory and there are no reporting procedures or facilities for protecting abused children or meeting their needs.

320. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Strengthen and expand current efforts to address the problem of child abuse, including sexual abuse, and ensure that there is an effective system for receiving, monitoring and investigating complaints and, when necessary, prosecuting cases, in a manner which is child-sensitive and which ensures the victim's privacy;

(b) Ensure that all victims of violence have access to counselling and assistance with their recovery and rehabilitation, and that children who have been removed from their homes because of allegations of abuse are provided with alternative protection and care;

(c) Launch a comprehensive study on the prevalence of abuse, including sexual abuse, aimed at informing both policy makers and lawmakers, including through cooperation with international NGOs.

## 5. Basic health and welfare

### Children with disabilities

321. The Committee is encouraged by the introduction of the Community-based Rehabilitation Programme. However, it is concerned that:

(a) Children with disabilities living on remote islands may not have access to rehabilitation services, as these are based in the capital;

(b) Children with disabilities have no access to education;

(c) There is no specific governmental policy for children with disabilities;

(d) The terminology used by the State party to describe individuals with disabilities is inappropriate.

322. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Undertake studies to determine the causes of, and ways to prevent, disabilities in children;

(b) In light of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96) and the Committee's recommendations adopted at its day of general discussion on the issue of "The rights of children with disabilities" (CRC/C/69, paras. 310-339), further encourage their integration into the regular educational system

and inclusion into society, including by providing special training to teachers and by making schools more accessible;

- (c) Undertake an awareness-raising campaign to sensitize the public about the rights and special needs of children with disabilities and introduce the appropriate terminology when addressing this issue, and include churches and local leaders in this activity;
- (d) Develop rehabilitation services in remote island areas;
- (e) Seek technical assistance for the training of professional staff working with and for children with disabilities from WHO, among others.

#### Basic health and health services

323. The Committee is deeply concerned:

- (a) At the current breakdown of health services amounting to a national emergency, leaving the country's clinics, health centres and hospitals without necessary medicine, equipment or food;
- (b) At the closure of a number of hospitals due to a lack of financial resources;
- (c) That medical staff have not received their salaries for extended periods, which has led many doctors to seek employment overseas;
- (d) At the unavailability of accurate and updated health indicators due to poor birth and death registrations;
- (e) At the high incidence of malnutrition/undernutrition.

324. The Committee urgently recommends that the State party:

- (a) Allocate funds to hospitals and health-care services on a priority basis in order to restore the health services to an operational level;
- (b) Ensure that doctors, nurses and other medical personnel are able to resume work as soon as possible;
- (c) Establish appropriate mechanisms to assess important health indicators, inter alia, the infant mortality rate;
- (d) Take measures to address malnutrition and undernutrition in children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers;
- (e) Seek technical assistance from WHO and other organizations.

## Adolescent health

325. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) Adolescents do not have appropriate access to information and/or services relating to adolescent health in general and reproductive health in particular;
- (b) Adolescents remain extremely vulnerable to STIs and that girls are not protected from the risk of pregnancy;
- (c) There are no comprehensive strategies and policies to address adolescent health issues, including mental health;
- (d) Tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse are widespread among young people.

326. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Take steps to ensure that all adolescents have access to information and health-care facilities;
- (b) Address the needs of adolescent mothers and those who have contracted STIs;
- (c) Formulate concrete strategies to address adolescent health issues, including mental health;
- (d) Strengthen its efforts to end tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse by children;
- (e) Seek technical assistance from United Nations agencies, including WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA.

## Social security and standard of living

327. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) Only a limited number of families are eligible for health insurance coverage plans and other social insurance policies;
- (b) Only a very small proportion of the population have access to electricity, sanitation and clean running water in their homes;
- (c) Levels of poverty are rising and affect a very high proportion of children.

328. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Strengthen its efforts to address poverty, including through a poverty reduction strategy and international cooperation;

(b) Develop and implement measures through which children and their families may benefit from a minimum of social security protection;

(c) Continue its efforts to improve housing and sanitary conditions in both remote and urban areas.

## 6. Education, leisure and cultural activities

329. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Some schools have remained closed for several weeks in the recent past due to non-payment of teachers' salaries;

(b) Primary education is neither free nor compulsory;

(c) At least 20-25 per cent of school-age children are not in primary school and an estimated 30 per cent drop out before completing primary school;

(d) There are wide disparities among the islands in terms of the quality of education and its coverage;

(e) Enrolment of girls remains very low.

330. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Allocate the necessary funds to schools in order to avoid disruption of schooling;

(b) Ensure, as a priority, that primary education is made compulsory and free to all;

(c) Undertake a study on school dropout and find appropriate measures to address this problem;

(d) Develop strategies to make education accessible to girls and to address their low enrolment rates;

(e) Ensure that education is oriented towards the aims mentioned in article 29 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general comment No. 1 on the aims of education and that human rights education, including children's rights, is included in the school curricula, with technical assistance from international organizations, notably UNESCO;

(f) Implement its intention to establish vocational schools and develop more programmes to facilitate the transition to the labour market, in accordance with international standards.

## 7. Special protection measures

### Refugee and internally displaced children

331. The Committee is concerned that a large number of children have been displaced during the recent armed conflict.

332. The Committee urges the State party to make every effort to protect the civilian population from displacement, giving particular attention to the situation of unaccompanied children and the need for effective family tracing and reunification. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that all displaced children and their families have access to essential health and education services and to consider the need for continued access to such services during the often slow process of return to communities of origin. The Committee further urges the State party to provide returning children and their families with assistance in re-establishing themselves in their homes. In addition, the Committee urges the State party to continue to work closely with UNHCR towards establishing conditions conducive to the return of refugees in safety and in the context of a durable solution.

#### Children in armed conflict

333. The Committee is deeply concerned that:

- (a) The recruitment of children under the age of 18 by militias occurred during the recent armed conflict in the State party and that other cases of alleged war crimes affecting children have not been duly investigated;
- (b) There are no reports of the measures taken to rehabilitate child soldiers.

334. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure with immediate effect that there is no further recruitment of children by militias;
- (b) Take immediate measures to rehabilitate child soldiers and other child victims of armed conflicts and provide them with access to educational opportunities and health care;
- (c) Take all necessary measures to investigate, prosecute and punish alleged perpetrators of war crimes, especially those affecting children;
- (d) Seek technical assistance from international NGOs, OHCHR and UNICEF.

#### Economic exploitation

335. The Committee is concerned that:

- (a) Many children under 15 are working, often in very poor conditions and for long hours;
- (b) In order to overcome extreme poverty, many parents and families require children to work, as illustrated by the prevalence of young girls working as domestics, sometimes within the extended family;

(c) The prevalence of child labour prevents many children from attending school.

336. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the implementation and enforcement of all domestic and international legal protection for children in this regard, in close collaboration with ILO/IPEC;

(b) Make greater efforts to reduce the number of children working in the formal and informal sectors, with particular emphasis on younger children;

(c) Make every effort, including taking preventive measures, to ensure that those children who do work do so in accordance with international standards, do not work under conditions which are harmful to them, receive appropriate wages and other work-related benefits and continue to have access to formal education;

(d) Ratify ILO Conventions No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

#### Sexual exploitation and trafficking

337. The Committee is very concerned that:

(a) Children of both sexes are exposed to prostitution due to economic difficulties;

(b) There is a lack of guidance on the role of police intervention in this field, as well as an absence of institutions dedicated to the rehabilitation of child victims;

(c) There is very little data on the number of children being exploited.

338. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take action to prevent child prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation of children;

(b) Avoid criminalizing child victims of prostitution;

(c) Develop mechanisms to identify the sexually exploited children and to work with law enforcement agencies to recover children who are being exploited;

(d) Undertake a study on the sexual exploitation of children in order to assess its scope and causes, enable effective monitoring of the problem and develop measures and programmes, including social reintegration programmes, to prevent, combat and eliminate it;

(e) Develop and adopt a national plan of action against sexual exploitation of children, taking into account the Declaration and Agenda for Action and the Global Commitment adopted at the 1996 and 2001

World Congresses against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children;

- (f) In this regard, seek international cooperation from, among others, UNICEF, ILO and WHO.

### Street children

339. The Committee is concerned that there are children forced to live on the streets and that they are vulnerable to, inter alia, sexual abuse, violence, including from the police, exploitation, lack of access to education, substance abuse, STIs and malnutrition.

340. The Committee recommends that the State party undertake a study to assess the scope and causes of the problem and establish a comprehensive strategy to address the increasing number of street children, with the aim of preventing and reducing this phenomenon.

### Administration of juvenile justice

341. The Committee notes that a number of juvenile offenders were provided with counselling or pardoned and not brought to court and that in those cases the principle of the best interests of the child was taken into consideration. The Committee is further encouraged that between 1991 and 1995 the number of cases involving juvenile offenders decreased by 47 per cent and would like to receive updated data on this issue. The Committee is, however, concerned that:

- (a) The minimum age of criminal responsibility is too low (8 years);
- (b) There exists no separate facility for juvenile offenders and that they may be detained along with adult criminals, as demonstrated by the police practice of transferring children or young persons who have not yet been formally charged to a remand cell at Central Prison in Rove where convicted criminals are also detained.

342. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40 of the Convention, and other United Nations standards in the field of juvenile justice, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, and in the light of the Committee's 1995 day of general discussion on the administration of juvenile justice (CRC/C/46, chap. III, sect. C);
- (b) Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to an internationally acceptable age;
- (c) Consider deprivation of liberty only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time;
- (d) Guarantee that all children have right to legal and other appropriate assistance;

- (e) Set up a system of juvenile courts;
- (f) Review legislation to ensure that children cannot be sentenced to life imprisonment;
- (g) Ensure that children in detention are separated from adults;
- (h) Ensure that children remain in regular contact with their families while in the juvenile justice system;
- (i) Review the powers of the police in criminal proceedings;
- (j) Seek assistance from, among others, OHCHR, the Centre for International Crime Prevention and UNICEF.

#### 8. Optional Protocols

343. The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

#### 9. Dissemination of documentation

344. Finally, in light of article 44, paragraph 6, of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the initial report and written replies submitted by the State party be made widely available to the public at large and that the publication of the report be considered, along with the relevant summary records and the concluding observations adopted by the Committee. Such a document should be widely distributed in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention and its implementation and monitoring within all levels of administration of the State party and the general public, including concerned NGOs.

#### 10. Next Report

345. The Committee, aware of the considerable delay in the State party's reporting, wishes to underline the importance of a reporting practice which is in full compliance with the rules set out in article 44 of the Convention. Children have the right for the Committee in charge of regularly examining the progress made in the implementation of their rights to have the opportunity to do so. In this regard, regular and timely reporting by States parties is crucial. Moreover, the Committee understands that the State party had difficulties in initiating timely and regular reporting. In order to help the State party achieve full compliance with its obligations under the Convention, the Committee invites the State party, by way of exception, to submit a consolidated second and third periodic report before 9 May 2007, date on which its third report is due. Such a report should not exceed 120 pages (see CRC/C/118). The Committee expects the State party to report thereafter every five years, as foreseen by the Convention.