

(Translated from Russian)

**Replies by the Government of Georgia to the list of issues
to be discussed in connection with the consideration of the
second periodic report of Georgia on the implementation
of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
(CRC/C/104/Add.1)**

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Part I

A. Data and statistics

1. According to information from the Georgian State Statistics Office based on the most recent census data (2002), the population of Georgia is 4,731,535, comprising 2,309,782 women and 2,061,753 men.

The total number of persons under 19 (the upper limit of this age group recorded by the State Statistics Office) is 1,273,089, of whom 650,000 are boys (youths) and 622,574 are girls (young women). In the population as a whole, 27 per cent are under 19.

The juvenile age structure of the population is as follows:

Under 4: 243,568 (127,779 boys; 115,789 girls);

Ages 5-9: 302,308 (155,264 boys; 147,044 girls);

Ages 10-14: 370,068 (187,678 boys; 182,390 girls);

Ages 15-19: 357,145 (179,794 boys; 177,351 girls).

Statistics are not kept on the ethnic composition of Georgian children. Information about this will be available after the data gathered in the most recent census have been fully processed in November 2003.

Under this heading it may be useful to cite data about the proportion of children from ethnic minorities enrolled in pre-school education in Georgia.

Thus, according to the State Statistics Office, in 2001 there were eight pre-school institutions in which the medium of communication was Russian, Azerbaijani, Armenian or Ossetian. The total population of these institutions was 293. In 2002 these institutions increased in number to 11, with 454 children attending. Pre-school institutions where two or even three languages are spoken are fairly common in Georgia. The languages in question are Georgian plus one or two minority languages, or two minority languages. In 2001 there were 69 such

institutions, and 66 in 2002. The numbers of children attending were 9,340 and 8,542, respectively. The total number of pre-school institutions nationwide was 1,198 in 2001 (population 73,183) and 1,213 in 2002 (population 73,261).

In general-education day schools, as well as Georgian, the language of instruction may be Russian, Azerbaijani or Armenian. According to data supplied by the Ministry of Education, the number of children taught in a language other than Georgian was more than 101,100 in the school year 2000/01; 98,000 in the school year 2001/02; and 91,600 in the school year 2002/03. It should be noted that the decline in the numbers of children receiving general education in a language other than Georgian reflects the overall trend: the total population of Georgia's schools has also declined over this period, from 595,100 to 572,000.

On the whole, preliminary census data indicates that the proportion of ethnic non-Georgians in the country has declined from 29.9 per cent in 1989 to 16.2 per cent today.

According to information from the Council of Ministers of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic, in late 2002 the number of registered displaced persons from Abkhazia was approximately 254,317, of whom 89,000 were children under 18. The Ministry for Refugee Affairs and Resettlement has just completed its latest registration of displaced persons and is currently processing the data. So at the time of writing it is not possible to provide precise updated statistics about the proportion of children in this group.

Nevertheless it should be noted that, according to information available, the population of the 40 general-education schools in various parts of Georgia for the children of persons displaced from Abkhazia is currently 5,300. More than 600 are studying at specialized secondary schools. Over 700 attend pre-school facilities for children of displaced persons.

2. In response to the request by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, data is cited below on budget allocations in connection with implementation of the Convention in the following fields:

(a) Education

According to data from the State Statistics Office, 212.5 million lari¹ were allocated to the education system in 2000, or 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2001, 248.5 million lari were allocated to the education system (3.7 per cent of GDP).

In 2002, 285.6 million lari were allocated to the education system (3.8 per cent of GDP).

(b) Health care

According to data from the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare, medical services for children are delivered through central and municipal medical programmes within the framework of approved standards and on a scale defined by these standards. In quantitative terms, funding for these programmes is as follows:

2001. Annual programme budget: 10 million lari. Actual allocation: 8,257,900 lari.

2002. Annual programme budget: 10.4 million lari. Actual allocation: 8,166,600 lari.

The centralized State insurance programme for medical assistance to children was implemented in 2002. It consists of the following subprogrammes:

- State medical assistance programme for children under 3 (projected budget: 7.2 million lari);
- Heart surgery assistance programme for children under 14 (projected budget: 2.5 million lari);
- Medical assistance programme for children deprived of parental care and requiring continuous treatment (projected budget: 700,000 lari).

A total of 236 medical facilities were involved in implementing the programme, and they provided medical services worth 10,206 million lari.

¹ 1 lari is worth approximately \$US 0.5.

Only 80 per cent of the programme was funded. Consequently the centralized State social insurance fund contracted debts of more than 2 million lari to medical facilities.

In 2000 the centralized State insurance programme for medical assistance to children covered about 147,000 children, and 150,000 in 2001-2002.

(c) Programmes and services for children with disabilities

Since 2002, children under 16 with special needs (disabled children) have been included in the social assistance programme for needy families. Last year 9,118 children with disabilities were beneficiaries of the programme. In addition to an invalidity pension of 14 lari, each of them drew a monthly benefit of 22 lari. Effective 2003, the social assistance programme for needy families will cover children with disabilities up to age 18. The amount of the pension and the benefit remain unchanged. All children in this category are provided with free medical and social insurance.

According to the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare, the following programmes targeted at children with disabilities were implemented in 2001-2002:

- A medical and social rehabilitation programme for children with special needs, to which 301,000 lari were allocated from the central budget;
- Supplementary medical programme focusing on liver cancer in children, intended to provide sufferers with appropriate medicines. The programme is funded from the State budget, with an allocation of more than 148,000 lari in 2001 and over 58,000 lari in 2002;
- A social integration programme for children with special needs. This programme was the first attempt to bring this category of children into the general-education mainstream. As a pilot project for this programme, three schools in Tbilisi were specially adapted to introduce inclusive teaching principles. An advisory centre was also set up for parents to prepare them for this change and raise their awareness of the programme. The programme is centrally funded, with an allocation of more than 25,000 lari in 2001 and over 146,000 lari in 2002;

- A special programme to find alternatives to institutionalization for disabled children currently in institutional care. This programme includes measures for the social rehabilitation of children in this category and monitoring the prospects for removing them from institutions. The programme is centrally funded, with an allocation of approximately 19,000 lari in 2001 and about 97,000 lari in 2002;
- A social welfare programme for severely disabled persons, providing for two day facilities and two boarding facilities for children with disabilities. The programme is centrally funded, with an allocation of more than 365,000 lari in 2001 and over 396,000 lari in 2002.

In 2002 two additional programmes were added to this list:

- A programme to supply disability aids (wheelchairs and hearing devices) to persons with special needs (including children). The programme is centrally funded and approximately 50,000 lari have been allocated to it;
- A programme for the medical and social rehabilitation of children with special needs, which included the following initiatives: strengthening the health of these children, their rehabilitation and social adaptation; establishing a database to streamline the recording, classification and tracking of individual rehabilitation cases; and introducing modern procedures for assessing children's condition and treating them. The programme is centrally funded and more than 388,000 lari have been allocated to it.

In 2003 an inpatient assistance programme is being put into operation; the “medical rehabilitation of children with special needs” component of this programme is aimed specifically at children and is funded through an allocation of over 158,000 lari. In addition, a programme to promote the social adaptation of people with special needs is being implemented, which has two subprogrammes:

- Institutional care and rehabilitation of children (funding of over 251,000 lari);
- Institutional care of young children deprived of parental care (funding of over 193,000 lari).

(d)-(e) Support programmes for families and support for children living below the poverty line

In 2002 a total of 12 million lari was allocated from the budget to social assistance for needy families. The eligibility requirements for programme beneficiaries were broadened, with special emphasis on families with children. As noted above, the programme was extended to cover children under 16 with special needs (disabilities), and also families with seven or more children aged under 16. In all, more than 15,000 children benefited from the social welfare programme for needy families, or over 20 per cent of all programme beneficiaries. In addition to children with disabilities, special attention was given to orphans. Some 1,529 orphans continue to receive a monthly benefit of 22 lari. All children in this category are also provided with free medical and social insurance.

Families with many children do not have to pay for kindergartens or day nurseries, nor are they billed for certain utilities (water and refuse collection).

Pursuant to a decision of Tbilisi *sakrebulo* (city council), families living in the capital receive a lump sum of 50 lari on the birth of their first and second child.

Tbilisi-resident families with many children receive a lump sum of 200 and 500 lari on the birth of their fourth and fifth child, respectively. Effective this year, the Tbilisi city budget provides for a monthly welfare benefit of five lari per child for families in this category. In addition, Tbilisi-resident families with three or more minor children are entitled to discounts on their electricity bills as part of a special project sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Their consumption of natural gas is also subsidized.

The 2003 State budget allocates 14.4 million lari to the social welfare programme for needy families (which includes displaced and refugee families). The beneficiaries belong to the following categories (amount of monthly benefit indicated):

- Single non-working pensioners (22 lari); families of two or more persons composed of single non-working pensioners (35 lari);
- Orphans, regardless of guardian's fitness for work (22 lari);
- Blind non-working disabled persons (category I) (22 lari);
- Children under 18 with special needs (disabilities) (22 lari);
- Families with seven or more children aged under 18 (35 lari).

Since 1996 medical and social insurance has been provided to the following categories in addition to those listed above:

- Children of displaced persons from Abkhazia aged 3-18;
- Children who have lost their breadwinner;
- Minor children living with and dependent on single pensioners;
- Single mothers with minor children;
- Minor children, schoolchildren and students from families of persons who have been killed, gone missing or died of wounds sustained fighting for the territorial integrity and independence of Georgia;
- Children of persons involved in the clean-up operation after the Chernobyl nuclear accident (since 2000).

The 2003 State budget provides for the inclusion in the State welfare programme of families displaced from Abkhazia (in 2002 these families received welfare assistance on a case-by-case basis, depending on the conditions of their resettlement). This year, as well as receiving the benefits stipulated for displaced persons (cash assistance of between 11 and 14 lari and a payment to cover utility costs in the amount of 13.7-17.2 lari, depending on place of residence and living conditions), families in this category will be able to receive welfare assistance in an amount varying between 22 and 35 lari depending on family composition.

(f) Protection of children in need of alternative care

According to the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare, in the period 2001-July 2003 a total of 1.207 million lari were allocated to care institutions for children run by the Ministry.

(g) Prevention of and protection from child abuse

The Ministry of Internal Affairs reports that, in the period 2001-2003, the Georgian internal affairs agencies recorded no cases of cruelty, sexual exploitation or pornography involving children. At the time of writing (late July 2003), the Imereti Procurator's Office is investigating a criminal case involving the trafficking of children. This case has attracted a lot of attention in Georgia, and inquiries are continuing.

Over the period 2001-2003 the internal affairs agencies have identified 123 minors engaged in prostitution. All of them have been placed on the preventive register. At the same time, the Ministry notes that there is currently no specialized institution in the country for the rehabilitation of children in this category.

According to the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare, there has been no investigation in Georgia of the issue of child labour in the period 2001-2003 owing to lack of funds.

It is therefore not possible to cite data about budgetary expenditures in this area.

It should also be noted that, according to data supplied by the Ministry of Education, in the current school year alone, 511 children in years 7-11 of State general-education day schools have discontinued their studies in order to take up employment.

(h) Programmes and services for street children and abandoned children

The Ministry of Internal Affairs reports that, in the period 2001-2003, a total of 1,672 minor street children were identified and placed on the preventive register. In 2002 a total of 485 minors in this category (358 boys and 127 girls) were referred to the reception, prevention and guidance centre for juveniles administered by Tbilisi Central Department for Internal

Affairs. Staff at the centre undertake to locate the parents or legal representatives of these children and return them to their families. When the parents or legal representatives cannot be found, a decision is made to refer the child to an appropriate institution. The reception, prevention and guidance centre for juveniles is funded from the budget of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

(i) Juvenile justice

Juvenile justice continues to be administered through the ordinary court system. It is therefore not possible to cite data regarding budget expenditures in this area.

3. Children deprived of a family environment and separated from their parents

(a)-(b) According to data provided by the Ministry of Education, the following types of children's institutions currently exist in Georgia:

- Nine children's homes for children aged 7-17 accommodating 728 children (299 boys and 429 girls);
- Two special schools including a juvenile rehabilitation centre for children aged 7-18, accommodating 105 children (16 boys and 89 girls);
- Eight boarding schools for children aged 3-18 accommodating 1,091 children (469 boys and 622 girls);
- Twelve boarding schools for physically handicapped children aged 6-18 accommodating 1,056 children (348 boys and 708 girls);
- Six hospital-type boarding schools for children aged 7-17 accommodating 993 children (501 boys and 492 girls);
- Two boarding schools specializing in music for children aged 7-17 accommodating 524 children (283 boys and 241 girls);
- Two boarding schools specializing in sports for orphans and children deprived of parental care accommodating 220 children (30 boys and 190 girls).

All these institutions are centrally funded.

(c) The Ministry of Education reports that in the period 1999 to July 2003, as part of its programme to provide alternatives to institutionalization, 87 children were returned to their biological families and 57 children were placed with foster families. Additionally, 18 children with disabilities were transferred from children's homes to a paediatric clinic in Tbilisi; 14 of these children were placed with foster families and 4 were returned to their biological families.

(d) According to the Ministry of Education, 43 children were adopted in 2001 (27 girls and 16 boys); 35 in 2002 (18 girls and 17 boys); and 31 as of 31 July 2003 (17 girls and 14 boys). As to intercountry adoption, 56 newborns were adopted in 2001 (27 girls and 29 boys); 117 in 2002 (65 girls and 54 boys); and 79 as of 31 July 2003 (46 girls and 37 boys). The United States of America and Canada were the principal destinations for intercountry adoptions (between 67 and 84 per cent of all adoptions).

4. Children with disabilities

(a)-(b) As noted above in response to question 2, this year the social assistance programme for needy families has been extended to disabled children under 18. According to the most recent figures, 9,425 individuals fall into this category.

As indicated in the reply to question 3, the Ministry of Education states that there are 12 boarding schools for physically handicapped children aged 6-18, which accommodate 1,056 children (348 boys and 708 girls). There are also six hospital-type boarding schools for children aged 7-17, which accommodate 993 children (501 boys and 492 girls). Additionally, there are two specialized kindergartens accommodating 213 children (106 girls and 107 boys).

To this list should be added the two residential homes for children with disabilities (accommodating approximately 150) run by the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare.

Thus, the total number of children with disabilities living in institutions is 2,400.

(c)-(d) At the time of writing, 2,049 children are attending special boarding schools run by the Ministry of Education. The remaining disabled children of school age are gradually being integrated into the educational mainstream. More details are given above under the reply to question 2 (c).

5. Child abuse

(a)-(b) As noted above, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reports that no cases of cruelty to children were recorded in the period 2001-2003.

6. Statistics regarding the education system

(a) According to the State Statistics Office, the number of pre-school institutions in Georgia declined by nearly 50 per cent in the period 1990-2002. These institutions are attended by 30.4 per cent of the total number of children in the corresponding age group (compared to 41.6 per cent in 1990).

The State Statistics Office reports that, based on information received from the Ministry of Education:

- In the school year 2000/01 a total of 58,486 children enrolled in the first year of State general-education day schools, 57,448 children transferred to the second year in 2001/02, and 56,693 transferred to the third year in 2002/03;
- In the school year 2000/01 a total of 76,549 children studied in the fourth year of State general-education day schools, 75,118 transferred to the fifth year in 2001/02 and 73,583 transferred to the sixth year in 2002/03;
- In the school year 2000/01 a total of 66,571 children studied in the seventh year of State general-education day schools, 64,835 transferred to the eighth year in 2001/02 and 62,830 transferred to the ninth year in 2002/03;
- In the school year 2000/01 a total of 44,498 children continued their education into the tenth year of State general-education day schools, with 40,166 pupils completing their education in the eleventh year in 2001/02.

(b) According to the Ministry of Education, the number of children leaving school and discontinuing their studies was 3,646 in the school year 2002/03. The following reasons for leaving school have been recorded:

- Expulsions: 806 pupils (fifth year: 66; sixth year: 70; seventh year: 110; eighth year: 122; ninth year: 161; tenth year: 180; eleventh year: 97);
- Marriage: 547 pupils (sixth year: 4; seventh year: 15; eighth year: 36; ninth year: 110; tenth year: 175; eleventh year: 210);
- Illness: 512 pupils (first year: 120; second year: 44; third year: 42; fourth year: 70; fifth year: 86; sixth year: 5; seventh year: 19; eighth year: 25; ninth year: 32; tenth year: 26; eleventh year: 23);
- Starting work: 511 pupils (seventh year: 8; eighth year: 18; ninth year: 188; tenth year: 197; eleventh year: 100);
- Miscellaneous reasons: 1,270 pupils (first year: 31; second year: 20; third year: 10; fourth year: 19; fifth year: 43; sixth year: 45; seventh year: 49; eighth year: 68; ninth year: 263; tenth year: 444; eleventh year: 287).

In addition, the Children's Rights Centre of the Georgian ombudsman's office reports that another 4,839 children discontinued their schooling in 2002 in connection with leaving Georgia.

There have been no cases of children repeating a school year in Georgia.

(c) The State Statistical Office, using data supplied by the Ministry of Education, gives the following pupil/teacher ratio:

- In 2000/01, 16.1 (primary school) and 7.7 (secondary school);
- In 2001/02, 15.3 (primary school) and 7.9 (secondary school);
- In 2002/03, 14.7 (primary school) and 7.9 (secondary school).

7. The following information is based on data provided by the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare.

In 2001, a total of 204 girls in the under-14 age group became pregnant and one abortion was performed. In the age group 15-18, a total of 3,505 girls became pregnant and 857 abortions were performed. There are no figures for early pregnancies in 2002, but nine abortions were performed on girls under 14 and 789 on girls aged 15-18.

In 2001, a total of 26 boys and 16 girls under 14 received treatment for venereal diseases of various kinds, and in the age range 15-18, a total of 497 boys and 220 girls were treated. The commonest venereal diseases were syphilis (all forms) and gonococcal infections. In the older age group there were chlamydial infections spread by sexual contact. In 2001 a total of 62 teenage boys and 48 teenage girls were diagnosed with these illnesses. In 2002 the figures were 95 and 78, respectively.

In the under-14 age group, 1,710 children were diagnosed with mental disorders in 2001. Of these, 1,056 were suffering from oligophrenia, 257 from psychosis and 397 from mental disorders of a non-psychotic nature, etc. In the age group 15-18, a total of 1,511 children were diagnosed with mental disorders. Of these, 996 were suffering from oligophrenia, 227 from psychosis and 287 from mental disorders of a non-psychotic nature, etc. In 2002, 1,747 children under 14 were diagnosed with mental disorders. Of these, 1,078 were suffering from oligophrenia, 275 from psychosis and 394 from mental disorders of a non-psychotic nature, etc. In the age group 15-18, a total of 1,164 children were diagnosed with mental disorders. Of these, 725 were suffering from oligophrenia, 199 from psychosis and 240 from mental disorders of a non-psychotic nature, etc.

According to records kept by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 15 minors committed suicide in the period 2001-2003. The procuratorial bodies are investigating all these cases.

The Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare recorded only four cases of drug addiction among youngsters aged 15-18 during the period 2001-2002. Meanwhile, the number of cases of disease linked to drug abuse is much higher: in 2001, 16 children under 14 and 53 children in the 15-18 age group; in 2002 there were 15 cases in children under 14 and

68 cases in the 15-18 age group. Eight cases of substance abuse were identified among children and adolescents in the period 2001-2002. In the same period, four minors were diagnosed with chronic alcoholism (both in the 15-18 age group).

The data supplied by the Ministry of Internal Affairs paints a somewhat different picture. In the period 2001 to July 2003 the internal affairs authorities identified and placed on the preventive register 69 juvenile drug addicts and 56 juvenile substance abusers.

As for the general picture in this field, interesting data have been obtained by the Georgian Centre for Research into Human Reproduction (these figures are taken from material provided by the Children's Rights Centre in the ombudsman's office). Thus, the proportion of smokers in the teenage population is very high (more than 60 per cent of girls and more than 90 per cent of boys). On average, 23.9 per cent of teenagers use drugs; most of these are so-called "street children", 23 of whom have been identified in the reporting period. The Ministry's inspectorate for juvenile affairs has placed 94 street children on the preventive register on account of alcohol abuse.

The Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare reports that, in 2001, the early neonatal mortality index (0-6 days) was 11.1; neonatal mortality (0-27 days) was 14.7; post-neonatal mortality (28 days-1 year) was 5.3; and infant mortality was 20.0. In 2002 early neonatal mortality (0-6 days) was 13.5; neonatal mortality (0-27 days) 16.1; post-neonatal mortality (28 days-1 year) was 2.6; and infant mortality was 18.9.

There were 2,096 paediatricians in Georgia in 2001 and 2,067 in 2002.

8. There were no recorded cases of children with HIV/AIDS in Georgia in the period 2001-2003.

9. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has provided the following statistics relating to the period 2001-2003:

(a) Criminal proceedings were brought against 850 minors aged 14-18, including 11 girls. These minors had committed 1,674 criminal offences, including 16 murders, 16 attempted murders, 29 cases of intentional infliction of serious bodily harm, 7 rapes, 4 attempted rapes, 70 robberies, 12 abductions of women with a view to forcing them into marriage, and 21 cases of unlawful possession and carrying of a firearm, etc.

(b) In all, 1,103 minors were convicted by the courts. The following sentences were handed down: deprivation of liberty (192 cases); suspended sentence (828 cases); punitive deduction of earnings (3 cases); other penalty (68 cases). Sentence was deferred in 12 cases.

According to the Ministry of Justice:

(c) The Georgian penitentiary system includes one young offenders' institution with capacity for 300 inmates. Construction work finished in 2002, and inmates were transferred to this institution in April the same year. It should be noted that the amenities and conditions at this institution are aligned as closely as possible with Georgian law and relevant international standards.

The accommodation wings of the institution are properly equipped, and there is a bathhouse with five shower compartments that inmates can use at any time of day. There is a properly fitted-out kitchen and dining area. Food deliveries for the inmates are handled centrally. Proper hygiene standards are observed.

The well-equipped medical unit at the institution has a sickbay with two beds. The unit is fully equipped with all necessary medicines and medical supplies.

The institution has a school where all the young offenders can receive general educational training.

There is a library containing 1,360 volumes, mostly textbooks and fiction in Georgian and Russian. The library is open to anyone who wishes to use it.

Much attention is paid to organizing the inmates' leisure time. The institution has a purpose-built football ground and a gymnasium with a wide range of sports equipment. The inmates can watch television, which is installed in the accommodation wing.

They may also use the telephone which is available for use at any time of day.

(d) In January 2001 there were 34 detainees at the young offenders' institution. In January 2002 there were 20 inmates, and in July 2003 there were 23. There have been no cases of young offenders being detained in penitentiaries for adults.

(e) In January 2001, a total of 13 minors charged with an offence or standing trial were being held in remand prisons in Georgia. The corresponding figure in January 2002 was 41. As of July 2003, a total of 54 minors charged with an offence or standing trial were being held in pre-trial detention.

(f) The Ministry of Internal Affairs reports that there were no cases of abuse of maltreatment of children during arrest or detention in the period 2001-2003.

10. As noted above, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has stated that no cases of cruelty, sexual exploitation or pornography involving children were recorded in the period 2001-2003.

It was also stated that the internal affairs agencies detected 123 minors engaged in prostitution during the same period. All have been placed on the preventive register. At the same time, the Ministry notes that there is still no specialized institution in the country for the rehabilitation of children in this category.

Once again it should be noted that, according to information from the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare, there has been no investigation in Georgia of the issue of child labour in the period 2001-2003 owing to lack of funds.

We repeat that, according to data from the Ministry of Education, 511 children in years 7-11 of State general-education day schools discontinued their studies in order to take up employment.

As to the number of children who have run away from home, the Ministry of Labour, Health Care and Social Welfare reports that the total number of children aged 3-15 deprived of parental care resident in all categories of children's institutions (whether State-run or administered by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - children's homes, residential homes and shelters) is currently over 4,000.

B. General measures of implementation

1. The information on these issues provided in the second periodic report is still valid. The updated factual information provided in section A above more or less fully reflects the efforts that the Government is making to address the issues raised here, and also the trends and developments that have taken place in these fields since the submission of the latest report.

2. Under the draft central national programme of action for the welfare of children in the period 2003-2007 (hereafter referred to as the child welfare programme), the drafting and adoption of a law on the rights of the child is planned for 2003 or 2004. It is thus too early to comment on the contents of this law. The draft child welfare programme stipulates that the relevant bill will be drafted by the State Department for Youth Affairs.

3. According to information to hand, there have been no cases to date in Georgia in which the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been directly invoked by parties to legal proceedings in the ordinary courts. It should be stressed that, in legal practice in Georgia to date, there have been only isolated instances of appeals to international and regional human rights treaties to which Georgia is a party.

4. The lack of proper coordination in the work of the various ministries and departments responsible for implementing the various provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a major problem. Pursuant to Presidential Order No. 189 of 10 March 2001, an ad hoc commission chaired by the head of State was established under the child welfare programme. Following the adoption of the programme, one of the commission's central tasks will be to formulate an integrated policy to ensure the best possible protection for children's rights. In turn, this task presupposes coordinated action on the part of the State structures involved. In addition, the child welfare programme provides for the establishment of a special administrative and oversight office to act as the standing working body of the programme within the structure of the Georgian State Chancellery. Together with other tasks, the office will help the aforementioned commission to achieve the desired level of coordination in implementing the child welfare programme. This programme will have been ratified and made operational before

the submission of the third periodic report of Georgia under the Convention, which will enable us to provide the Committee on the Rights of the Child with comprehensive information on this matter.

5. Work on the draft child welfare programme began in earnest in 2002, when a group of experts was instructed to draw up a concept paper containing the key areas to be addressed by the programme. The first draft of the programme was prepared with help from and in close cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Georgian NGOs and youth organizations. Many of their suggestions and recommendations were reflected in the draft text. It should also be noted that, in drafting the document, the experts were inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among other instruments.

The child welfare programme has six core thematic areas:

- Protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of children;
- Health protection, healthy diet and environmental safety;
- Education and all-round development of children;
- Social welfare, family environment and alternative care;
- Protection of especially vulnerable children;
- Mobilization of financial resources for child welfare.

In terms of its format and the specific and detailed nature of its provisions, the child welfare programme goes far beyond programme documents of the usual type, inaugurating a new departure for Georgia in its comprehensive approach to tackling issues that affect children.

The implementation of this programme calls for very bold economic, financial and legal initiatives. An array of laws and regulations must be drawn up and the necessary sums budgeted for in public expenditure. The advancement and implementation of the key areas of the programme is impossible without major economic reform. This is why the child welfare programme should be seen not just in isolation, but as part of a wider context - that of the national programme for poverty reduction and economic growth.

The child welfare programme is an evolving project. In many cases, the schedule and scale of the various programme actions can be adjusted to suit specific economic circumstances and the financial and budgetary capacities of stakeholders at all levels. In any event, the programme will be implemented in a transparent manner. To see how we intend to achieve this goal, please refer to the reply to question 4 above (regarding the commission and the office overseeing the programme).

If the Committee on the Rights of the Child wishes to receive more detailed information about the child welfare programme, the Georgian delegation will provide the relevant data during the discussion of the report.

6. The Children's Rights Centre was set up and became operational within the Georgian ombudsman's office in June 2001. The Centre's functions are described in some detail in paragraph 26 of the report. It plays a fairly active role in promoting and protecting children's rights both in terms of education (in Tbilisi and the regions) and in terms of examining individual complaints and offering assistance in specific cases.

Thus, in 2002 the Centre organized seminars for educational workers in four districts of Iremeti region and two seminars for law enforcement officers in the regions of Shida Kartli and Kvemo Kartli. The ombudsman's office organized six working meetings with representatives of relevant State structures and NGOs, at which practical steps to provide assistance to the most socially vulnerable categories of children (children with disabilities, orphans, etc.) were discussed.

The Centre operates a telephone hotline. This service was used by more than 200 callers in 2002, mostly children experiencing problems at school or with their parents, etc. All callers receive counselling, and if necessary staff from the Centre explore the problem in more detail in a face-to-face encounter.

As part of the work of the ombudsman's office, the Children's Rights Centre carries out research to identify the most important issues in its sphere of interest and draw general conclusions. Its findings are usually reflected in the regular reports which the ombudsman submits to the Georgian Parliament.

The Centre has made proposals on certain amendments to legislation on protection of the rights of the child.

In July 2002 the ombudsman's office concluded a six-month cooperation agreement with UNICEF. For technical reasons this agreement became operational in October 2002. Pursuant to this agreement, a grant of more than US\$ 5 million has been made available for the following projects:

- Preparation of radio programmes with an educational and advisory focus aimed at children;
- Organization of six thematic symposiums involving representatives of relevant State structures and NGOs;
- Organization of meetings across the country on issues relating to protection of the rights of the child;
- Making and siting of confidential “postboxes” in schools, where pupils can deposit reports of alleged violations of their rights, which are subsequently examined case by case, from sociological, psychological or legal perspective.

To date all the initiatives under the agreement have been launched, except for the radio broadcasts. Negotiations are under way with the donor organization on the possibility of extending the agreement.

In October 2001 representatives of the Children's Rights Centre took part as observers in the annual meeting of the network of European children's ombudsmen in Paris. In November 2001 the Centre became a member of this organization, which brings together the children's ombudsmen of 32 European countries.

As regards the institution of regional delegates of the ombudsman, it should be noted that the law allows the ombudsman to delegate some of his or her powers to local representatives. The work of the representatives is continuously monitored and directed by the ombudsman. The ombudsman's representatives are currently operating in six major regions of Georgia: Imereti,

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The regional ombudsmen work fairly closely with the Children's Rights Centre. Specifically, they were directly involved in organizing the various regional seminars referred to above.

7. To date there have been no substantial changes in the way data is collected as regards the implementation of the Convention. The child welfare programme makes provision for a streamlined system to monitor its implementation, which will indirectly facilitate and rationalize the data collection system needed to assess the extent to which Georgia is meeting its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8. In December 2000, soon after the publication of the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the initial report of Georgia, on the initiative of the Government and with the financial and technical support of the UNICEF office in Georgia, a handbook entitled *Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Georgia* was published in the Georgian language in a print run of 1,000 copies. The handbook comprises the following: the text of the Convention; Georgia's initial report under the Convention; a parallel report prepared by Georgian NGOs; the list of issues prepared by the Committee; Georgia's written replies; the introductory statement made by the head of the Georgian delegation at the time of the consideration of the report; and the concluding observations by the Committee.

Georgia's second periodic report has also been published in Georgian in a large print run with financial and technical support from UNICEF. The published text has been distributed in schools and sent to the State organizations and NGOs that deal directly with issues affecting children's rights.

On the Internet, the web site of the department for the protection of human rights and intellectual and humanitarian security issues of the Georgian National Security Council (www.dhr-nsc.gov.ge) has already posted the (Russian) text of Georgia's second periodic report under the Convention. There are also plans to post the present material on the site shortly.

In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that information about the initial report under the Convention is freely accessible to anyone who wishes to obtain it.

9. The task of raising public awareness of children's rights, especially their participatory rights, is an ongoing process in Georgia. Thus, for example, with the support of UNICEF and the European Union, a course was organized in late 2001 and 2002 to train trainers in the field of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The course was attended by 90 professionals from the law enforcement agencies and educational and health-care workers. Twenty of these specialists were selected to undergo special training with a view to subsequently training their colleagues. This project is continuing at the present time. A total of 60 groups of trainers (1,800 individuals) should be trained up under this programme by the end of 2003. Of these, 34 groups (1,020 individuals) are educational workers; 10 groups (540 individuals) are physicians and 8 groups (240 individuals) are law enforcement officers. At the end of 2002, a total of 1,350 people had been trained in matters relating to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Tbilisi, Batumi, Rustavi, Poti, Borjomi and Telavi. There are plans to hold training sessions in Sagarejo, Mtskheta and Gori.

Since 2001 two Georgian television channels have aired video clips prepared with the support of UNICEF that reflect various provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including children's right to participate. In addition, every Sunday in May and June 2002, also with UNICEF support, Georgian television showed a series of programmes about various aspects of the Convention. The target audiences of this public information project were parents and representatives of bodies that deal directly with issues affecting children. Among the issues discussed were the civil rights of children, particularly the child's right to respect for his or her views and the right to participate.

Paragraphs 76 and 77 of Georgia's second periodic report give a fairly detailed account of the work of the Georgian children's parliament. It should be added that this method of realizing children's right to participate has certainly borne fruit, and consequently the project is being continued and expanded. Elections for a new children's parliament will be held in September 2003, and special quotas will be introduced for institutionalized children, disabled children and other socially vulnerable categories of children. We believe that this will bring about the inclusion of groups of children and youngsters hitherto left out, which must surely be regarded as the chief merit of the project.

10. Please refer to the replies to questions 6 and 9.

11. The child welfare programme gives some idea of what the Georgian Government believes to be the priority issues affecting children. As noted above, the programme has six core thematic areas:

- Protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of children;
- Health protection, healthy diet and environmental safety;
- Education and all-round development of children;
- Social welfare, family environment and alternative care;
- Protection of especially vulnerable children;
- Mobilization of financial resources for child welfare.

Part II

Georgia's second periodic report under the Convention is complemented by the Georgian-language handbook *Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Georgia*, issued in a print run of 1,000 copies, which was referred to above. This includes, among other things, the text of the Convention, in what, we believe is the definitive translation of this instrument into the official language of Georgia.

In addition, there exist a number of translations of the Convention into Georgian made by the ombudsman's office (in a two-volume edition of international human rights instruments) and also by certain NGOs. The Georgian-language text of the Convention has also been included in a compilation of human rights instruments published in the Ajar Autonomous Republic.

We do not have a translation of the Convention into the Abkhaz language (the second official language in the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic).

The text of the Convention in Russian, a language in which most of the Georgian population is reasonably fluent, has been published outside Georgia and is also accessible to anyone who wishes to obtain it.

Part III

In June 2003 substantial amendments were made to Georgian civil, civil-procedural, criminal and criminal-procedural law in respect of juvenile justice. These amendments were intended to strengthen existing and establish additional legal safeguards to give practical effect to the rights of the child in the criminal and civil justice system and make dealings with children in trouble with the law less harsh.

Parliament is currently completing its consideration of other legislative innovations that directly affect the rights of the child.

Since it was not possible to obtain texts of the aforementioned legislative amendments prior to the submission of these replies, and since legislative work in this area is still in progress, the Georgian Government will supply detailed information about the new laws in the introductory statement by the Georgian delegation at the time of the consideration of the second periodic report.

The remaining topics under this section are dealt with in the other replies to the questions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
