



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 1672nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 January 2012, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Zermatten

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

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Azerbaijan (continued)
(CRC/C/AZE/3-4; CRC/C/AZE/Q/3-4 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Azerbaijan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Herczog** requested additional information concerning plans to increase access to social services for families and children at the local level and enquired about the involvement of NGOs in the provision of such services. She asked whether the State party planned to provide additional vocational training facilities in order to increase the number of social workers. With regard to the standards applicable to such professions and efforts to ensure harmonization, the Committee would appreciate any documentation concerning assessment procedures that the State party could provide.
3. As the sums appropriated for foster care were currently inadequate, she asked whether there was any structural plan aimed at supporting deinstitutionalization, foster care and kinship care. She gathered that the reunification of institutionalized children in the State party was very rare and that divorce was one of the main factors leading to institutionalization. She asked whether the couples concerned had access to conflict resolution or mediation programmes and to advice on child-rearing practices.
4. **Mr. Gastaud**, noting that the State party had been developing a draft law on juvenile justice for a number of years, asked what kinds of difficulties were delaying the administrative and legislative process. He wished to know whether action was being taken in detention centres to promote the reintegration of juvenile delinquents, for instance in the form of general or vocational education programmes.
5. **Mr. Kotrane** asked whether the law on prevention of domestic violence enacted in 2010 provided for compulsory reporting to the authorities of cases of ill-treatment of children and abandonment by their parents.
6. According to the delegation, there were some 300,000 refugee and internally displaced children in Azerbaijan. He enquired about the rights of such children, especially Chechen children, to health care and education, noting that Chechen children were apparently unable to benefit from protective measures.
7. **The Chairperson** noted that there were very few cases of adoption in the State party because of administrative obstacles and the relatively cumbersome procedure. The manner in which the principle of the best interests of the child was interpreted was also quite restrictive. He further noted that adoptive children were frequently denied access to information concerning their origins. He asked whether the State party intended to ratify the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption.
8. **Mr. Mammadov** (Azerbaijan), replying to questions from Committee members about children with disabilities, said that Azerbaijan had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on 2 October 2010. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection had drawn up a State programme for the period 2012–2015 on social protection for children and persons with health limitations. In addition, a programme on social protection for persons with disabilities was adopted each year by the Cabinet of Ministers. It provided for social and medical assistance both within and outside Azerbaijan. The programme also sought to identify talented children and to determine their occupational skills. Over 1,000 children with disabilities attended special

schools, some 2,000 attended boarding schools, about 7,000 received their education at home and the remainder attended ordinary schools.

9. Children with disabilities or health problems accounted for 2.2 per cent of the child population, a ratio that was quite low in terms of World Health Organization (WHO) statistics. There were 14 health and social rehabilitation centres for children. Children under the age of 18 with health problems received a social benefit of 55 manats (about \$70) each month. As some 60,000 children qualified for the benefit, the budgetary appropriation was quite substantial. Children under one year of age received an additional monthly social benefit of 30 manats (about \$42). In addition, since 2006 Azerbaijan had been implementing a programme of targeted social assistance for low-income families. In 2011 some 103,000 families had received roughly 160 million Azerbaijani manats, which was equivalent to about \$180 million.

10. **The Chairperson** said that the ratio of children with disabilities was far lower than the international average. He wondered whether the low figure might be partly due to the reluctance of parents to register them owing to the stigma attached to disability and complex administrative procedures.

11. **Mr. Mammadov** (Azerbaijan) said that the ratio of persons with disabilities to the population as a whole was 4.6 per cent. The programme of State assistance was designed to prevent and relieve disability, and rehabilitation rates now exceeded 5 per cent.

12. **Ms. Lee** said that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities encouraged States parties to focus on a social rather than a medical approach to disability, since many such conditions could not be cured. The categories included in the definition of children with disabilities could also account for the low ratio in Azerbaijan. She wondered, for instance, whether learning disabilities and behavioural disorders had been included.

13. **Mr. Mammadov** (Azerbaijan) said that children with health problems who received social benefits were not included in the figures for children with disabilities.

14. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked whether responsibility for registering a child as disabled lay solely with the parents. Was a child screened at birth to detect disabilities? Noting that a high percentage of children with disabilities were educated at home even though education was compulsory for all, he asked whether parents were entitled to decide against enrolment of their children in school.

15. **Ms. Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that the medical establishment in which a child was born determined whether the child had any health limitations or abnormalities. If the parents then refused to take the child home, he or she would be transferred to a special State-run establishment. If children diagnosed with autism or Down's syndrome remained with their family, special assistance would be provided.

16. It was true that many parents worried about stereotyping and stigmatization. However, social attitudes were changing. For instance, children with Down's syndrome had performed at theatrical events and at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). A special programme had been developed for children with diabetes, who were encouraged to see themselves as fully fledged members of society. Training courses were also being organized for social workers and child psychologists. She conceded, however, that a great deal remained to be done. For instance, the lack of qualified specialists in autism was a major problem.

17. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether any advice or assistance was provided to parents who were unwilling to take their child home. What action was taken in support of the child's interest in having a family of its own?

18. **Ms. Herczog** asked whether the State party had considered adopting an integrated approach to children with special needs in day-care centres, kindergartens and schools. It might be an effective way of helping families to understand their children's educational needs.

19. **Ms. Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that action was taken by hospital psychologists and social workers to assist parents who felt that they would be unable to cope, for social, financial and psychological reasons, with a child who had been diagnosed with a disability. Parents were encouraged to assume responsibility for their children's welfare.

20. In general, Azerbaijan was drawing on the experience of international experts, especially those attached to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). When the country had been part of the Soviet Union, no provision had been made in regular schools and kindergartens for children with disabilities. Nowadays all new establishments, including sports and cultural centres, were designed to cater for people with disabilities. There were also several pilot projects for children with disabilities, some based on an inclusive educational approach. Many children with Down's syndrome or other disabilities were already studying in regular schools. Children with major physical impediments in separate institutions were also offered high-calibre education based on the same curriculum. Moreover, they were all free to attend higher education establishments.

21. **Ms. Aidoo** asked whether there were professional social workers in Azerbaijan who were qualified to assist families in meeting their responsibilities and who could also be assigned to schools and the juvenile justice system.

22. **Ms. Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that Baku University had opened a faculty that specialized in the training of social workers. Highly qualified social workers were now available to work in all kinds of centres run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education. All schools and preschool establishments were also required to secure the services of a psychologist. For instance, when problems such as domestic violence arose in a family, the first warning signs might be detected by a psychologist in the local school, who could make appropriate recommendations. Moreover, steps had been taken to establish a children's social council in every school. The children themselves were regularly invited to attend and encouraged to help their peers and make recommendations when problems came to light.

23. **Mr. Mammadov** (Azerbaijan) said that over the previous three years more than one hundred social workers had attended professional training courses in Germany, Italy and Turkey in order to update their skills. The courses had been provided under the framework of a World Bank social protection project in which the Government was participating.

24. Replying to a question asked at the previous meeting, he said that the official data at his disposal did not tally with the figure of 156,000 minors engaged in child labour, working up to 12 hours a day. Government statistics showed that from 2010 to 2011, a total of 25,000 children nationwide had been engaged in paid work, some 11,000 in urban settings and 14,000 in rural areas. The Government submitted annual reports to the International Labour Organization (ILO), and domestic legislation provided that children aged 15 and over could work only if they had their parents' permission. Children could work a maximum of eight hours a day; that limit was reduced to four and a half hours for children who attended school.

25. **Ms. Lee** said that the sources of the statistics she had quoted were the reports of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the 2005 report entitled "Working children in Azerbaijan – The analysis of child labour and labouring children survey".

26. **Mr. Kotrane** asked what measures the State party was implementing to ensure that the authorities took a comprehensive approach to caring for street children. It would be useful to know whether there were specialist teams and, if so, whether they took preventive measures. He also wondered if street children were involved in decisions concerning the alternatives available to them for their social reintegration. The Committee would welcome details of measures taken to ensure that street children and those with behavioural difficulties were not stigmatized, particularly by sending them to special schools where they had no opportunity to interact with the rest of society.

27. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan) said that the legal guardians of street children were criminally responsible for having neglected the education, upbringing and care of the children for whom they were responsible. Between 2007 and 2011, some 340 children had been identified as homeless and unsupervised, according to police statistics. Entities including district and regional children's commissions, guardianship commissions and educational organizations had received applications for care on behalf of some 300 such children, 83 of whom had been placed in orphanages. A further 74 had received preventive care and their parents had been sanctioned, and another 73 had been sent back to school and steps taken to ensure their social reintegration.

28. **Ms. Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that, while the number of street children was small relative to the size of the population, the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs attached great importance to resolving that problem. The law enforcement agencies and relevant district authorities were striving to ensure that parents and schools took responsibility for the children in their care. A mechanism to ensure their accountability had been developed and, once operational, it should avoid the current situation in which some street children were found by the authorities and sent back to school, but promptly returned to the streets to beg.

29. **Mr. Rzayev** (Azerbaijan), responding to a question asked at the previous meeting, said that, between 2006 and 2012, Government spending on education had increased from 2.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to 6 per cent and health expenditure had risen from 1.1 per cent to 1.6 per cent of GDP.

30. **Mr. Kotrane** asked what measures the State party had taken to ensure that all children who worked, including those who worked in the informal sector and had no written contract, were protected under labour legislation. As recommended in the 2011 ILO Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, measures should be taken to bring all the relevant domestic legislation into line with the provisions of the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182). He requested an update on steps taken to implement that recommendation.

31. **Ms. Aidoo** asked how the police raids intended to identify street children were carried out and how they guaranteed that street children's rights were protected.

32. **Ms. Huseynova** (Azerbaijan) said that many staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had been given specialist training in how to deal with street children, who were extremely vulnerable and needed particular protection. Most of the raids were conducted by small groups of police officers, who directed the children to shelters set up by NGOs or establishments provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Steps were being taken to encourage all municipal authorities to establish shelters for street children and develop mechanisms that ensured that street children were assigned a social worker who was in contact with the child's family and school. The best interest of the child was always the top priority.

33. **Ms. Hasanova** (Azerbaijan) said that, thanks to oil revenue, GDP had tripled over the previous eight years. The Government was using that revenue to develop the non-oil

sector and the country's human capital and to ensure funds were available for future generations. The State Oil Fund currently amounted to about US\$ 40 billion. It fed into the State budget, which was approved by the *Milli Majlis* (parliament) annually. Her country had joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in 2006 and had been the first country to comply with all the transparency requirements. Living standards had improved and the goal of halving poverty between 2008 and 2015 had been reached well ahead of time. The Government was working to diversify the economy, particularly focusing on agriculture and industry, in order to improve employment opportunities and ensure sustainable development.

34. Responding to the question on child poverty, she said that half of those eligible for targeted social assistance were children. The poverty line had been set in accordance with United Nations standards and data were collected using household surveys.

35. A significant percentage of the State budget that did not come from oil revenue was allocated to health and education. Currently, just over 14 per cent of non-oil revenue was spent on health and over 32 per cent on education.

36. **Ms. Lee** asked what proportion of the health budget was spent on primary health care. She also wished to know how much of the education budget was spent on early childhood, primary and secondary education.

37. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked for information on the budget allocated to non-formal education, such as literacy and numeracy courses for street children and former child workers.

38. **Mr. Rzayev** (Azerbaijan) said that 10 per cent of the education budget was allocated to higher education. Some 70 per cent was allocated to general middle schools and the remaining 20 per cent was spent on preschools, technical schools and colleges. The health sector was currently undergoing budgetary restructuring in order to improve primary health care.

39. **Mr. Aghayev** (Azerbaijan), responding to questions asked at the previous meeting, said that the proportion of GDP spent on health care in his country had increased from 1 per cent in 2006 to 1.6 per cent in 2012. Some 25 per cent of health funding was spent on children. The health expenses of children with haemophilia, diabetes and kidney problems were fully covered by State programmes. His country was planning to bring its criteria for live births into line with those of WHO. In recent years a number of medical establishments for children had been built or completely refurbished. Child mortality had fallen to 10.8 per 1,000 live births even as the birth rate had risen. The situation had also improved with regard to breastfeeding: since the adoption of the Infants and Young Children (Nutrition) Act of 2003 and the initiation of a breastfeeding programme, the proportion of infants breastfed for the first six months of life had risen from 28.5 per cent in 2006 to 43.3 per cent in 2010. A breastfeeding campaign had been launched as a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Health, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development and UNICEF. The breastfeeding campaign of 2011 had had a positive impact on how breastfeeding was perceived by mothers and society in general. His ministry was working with UNICEF on a project to prevent anaemia in children. A programme to protect maternal and child health (2006–2010) had led to the creation of perinatal centres. Finally, public medical care, including for refugees and internally displaced persons, had been free of charge since 2008.

40. **The Chairperson** asked what provision had been made to ensure that all children had access to health care, given the country's size and its dispersed population. He also requested information about programmes for adolescents, especially those relating to suicide prevention, reproductive and sexual health, and mitigation of violence.

41. **Mr. Aghayev** (Azerbaijan) said that in addition to the perinatal centres, including the one recently opened in Baku, there were health centres for families around the country.

42. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan) said that the Ministry of Internal Affairs kept statistics on adolescent suicides. In 2005 there had been 57 cases; by 2011 the figure had dropped to 30. In each case a criminal investigation had been initiated, and only 11 of the cases in 2011 had been confirmed as suicides. Awareness, education and prevention campaigns were being conducted among the population, including through the mass media. Regional family health centres also contributed to suicide prevention by helping to defuse tension and conflict affecting families, including young people. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the relevant State committees had all introduced measures to help families in that area. Early identification of symptoms that might predict suicide was important. However, child psychology as a separate field was new in Azerbaijan and more expertise in the area was needed.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.55 p.m.

43. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan) said, referring to the issue of adoption, that his country had acceded to the Hague Convention in 2005. The problem concerning domestic adoption was that parents who placed their children in institutions often did not give up their parental rights and thus the children could not be adopted. The Government was working to resolve problems related to international adoptions and to prevent illegal adoptions.

44. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that the procedures for permitting children to leave the country were complex; for example, parental agreement was required. Like other countries, Azerbaijan had mechanisms for protecting and tracing children. It worked with Interpol, was a party to various relevant conventions, and had a number of bilateral agreements with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

45. Regarding the question of whether children should have to confront the perpetrators of offences against them, while children did sometimes need to testify, they also needed to be protected from excessive contact with perpetrators. Mechanisms such as one-way screens were widely used in such situations.

46. Regarding the criminal responsibility of children aged 14 or older, while the age of criminal responsibility in Azerbaijan was 16, there were exceptions for 13 offences considered especially serious. In practice there was usually a preliminary investigation and if adults were found to be involved together with a minor, consideration was given to opening a separate case against the minor. In the first half of 2011 convictions had been handed down for 121 children, or 1.9 per cent of all persons convicted. Only 20 of the 121 had been imprisoned; others had been given lighter sentences. In 2008 the Supreme Court had issued a recommendation that children should be sentenced to punishments other than imprisonment.

47. The adoption of a children's code was under consideration and it was now essential to train judges to handle cases involving children.

48. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked whether Azerbaijan had judges specializing in trying children between the ages of 10 and 14. He also asked what type of pretrial detention was used for suspects aged 14 to 16, given that they were considered to have criminal responsibility.

49. **Ms. Sandberg** asked whether the children's code would be part of the system of criminal justice or a more general code pertaining to young people and their rights.

50. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that his country did not have special youth judges but was taking steps to establish special courts or judges to try children. Juvenile cases were currently handled by judges with relevant experience. As the percentage of cases involving

children was low, appointing special judges was deemed more cost-effective than establishing special courts.

51. His Government was working together with the UNICEF country office to develop a children's code, which would, while incorporating some existing domestic legislation, be based on international practice and experience. A draft had been submitted to Parliament.

52. The mechanisms for detaining children differed somewhat from those applied to adults. Young people were detained only when they had committed 1 of the 13 serious offences mentioned earlier.

53. **The Chairperson**, referring to a pilot project involving a centre for legal assistance, asked whether such centres would be established nationwide under the new children's code.

54. **Mr. Zalov** (Azerbaijan) said that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was working with UNICEF and NGOs on juvenile justice issues. Three juvenile units had been created and procedures for operating them were being developed. The units would make it possible to detain juvenile offenders without arresting them, the detention itself serving as punishment.

55. Regarding corporal punishment, Parliament was considering draft legislation to combat domestic violence. The adoption of such legislation would permit a more holistic approach to certain social issues. He saw no serious obstacles to the adoption of the legislation.

56. **Mr. Gurbanov** (Azerbaijan) said that a bill on domestic violence currently before Parliament constituted the first step on the road to dealing with the issue of corporal punishment. Recommendations from the international community had had a considerable influence on the drafting of the bill, which Parliament was expected to pass shortly.

57. **Mr. Novruzov** (Azerbaijan) said that a free telephone helpline for children, staffed by psychologists and social workers, had been set up with a view to providing young people with psychological support and combating youth suicide. With regard to ethnic minorities and education, he said that Russian and Georgian were taught at all secondary schools. Nine other languages were taught in primary schools, especially in the north of the country. Training on local traditions was also being provided in projects run in conjunction with NGOs and international agencies like the International Committee of the Red Cross.

58. The decision taken in 2011 to introduce school uniforms, which did not make provision for the hijab, did not constitute a prohibition of that garment. Reports to the contrary were probably the result of misleading media coverage. Parents had been consulted beforehand and the decision had not led to any problems in the State party.

59. Turning to the issue of human rights education, he said that the rights of the child were addressed in special courses for journalism students in three universities and in the framework of human rights programmes directed at law students. Programmes designed to prevent early marriage and raise awareness of the issue were conducted in secondary schools, particularly in the south of the country. The Council of Europe had been helping the State party to implement the Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights project, which included the provision of the corresponding textbooks for secondary schools. The National Action Plan on the Protection of Human Rights was designed to broaden human rights education in secondary and tertiary institutions, develop and disseminate books and other related materials on human rights and foster training on the rights of specific groups including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced persons and persons held in detention. Broadly speaking, the action plan was designed to heighten awareness in society of human rights issues.

60. A pilot project to promote the participation of children in school management would be rolled out with the support of UNICEF in 100 schools across the country. The involvement of parents in school management had also been encouraged in the previous five years. Refugees and internally displaced persons lived in around 60 administrative regions of the country and had access to more than 600 schools, which in no way differed from regular schools in terms of the quality of education. It was true that certain teaching equipment was in short supply but that needed to be seen in the light of the fact that around 2,000 schools, almost half the current total, had been built in Azerbaijan in the previous six years. More than 100 kindergartens had been built under a special strategy for the years 2007–2010. Preschool methodology manuals had also been developed. In addition, around 40 private kindergartens had opened in the same period. A national education strategy for the years 2012–2020, which would be approved shortly, contained a comprehensive approach to preschool education.

61. Suggestions that 16 per cent of school-age children did not attend school were inflated; the real figure was 6 per cent. There was no problem with absenteeism up to the ninth grade, which was the final year of compulsory education, but some parents took their children out of school thereafter. Early marriage sometimes played a role in such decisions. Vocational and technical education was being promoted as an alternative to the final two years of secondary education.

62. As part of a drive to improve the quality of teaching, resources were being focused on human capital. In addition to the education budget, the State was funding around 20 specific education-related programmes, including one aimed at bringing the use of computers in schools up to date. Standard national examinations had been introduced for students in the final three years of secondary education.

63. **The Chairperson** asked what the State party was doing to improve the quality of teacher training.

64. **Mr. Novruzov** said that the issue of teacher training was being addressed in the framework of an education reform project carried out under the auspices of the World Bank. The introduction of new curricula three years previously had created further challenges and the content of teacher-training programmes had had to be adapted to the new curricula.

Initial report of Azerbaijan on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC/C/OPSC/AZE/1; CRC/C/OPSC/AZE/Q/1 and Add.1)

65. **Ms. Al-Shehail** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) said that the Committee welcomed the adoption of new legislation and a related action plan to combat human trafficking, but that obstacles appeared to be hampering their application. She would like to know whether specific funding would be made available within the budget set aside for combating human trafficking in order to implement the Optional Protocol. There appeared to be no overarching policy on the Optional Protocol and she wondered whether the State party intended to amend its Criminal Code to take account of all the offences enumerated therein.

66. The victims of prostitution, pornography and sexual abuse tended not to be registered in the State party and the perpetrators were not identified, especially when they were the parents or guardians of the children in question. She asked whether a monitoring system had been established, whether measures had been taken to prevent child abuse in institutions and whether assistance and rehabilitation were provided to victims of offences under the Optional Protocol. Had any working groups been set up to address the issues of child prostitution and pornography covered by the Optional Protocol?

67. Noting that the number of street children in the State party was estimated at between 2,000 and 4,000, she asked what measures had been taken to assist and shelter them, as well as to address the root causes of the problem. Had any such children been exposed to the risk of sexual exploitation? Noting efforts to promote awareness-raising in secondary schools of human trafficking, she asked whether schoolchildren were taught how to avoid becoming victims of sexual exploitation or abuse.

68. **Mr. Kotrane** said that the State party's Criminal Code did not include all the offences set out in the Optional Protocol. The specific case of children was not mentioned in legislation designed to combat human trafficking. Article 144 of the Criminal Code addressed trafficking in persons, including minors, but did not appear to cover all the offences enumerated in paragraph 3 (a) of the Optional Protocol. Subjecting persons to forced labour was punishable under the Criminal Code and it was considered an aggravating circumstance when the victims were adolescents, but the nature of forced labour was ill-defined. Was the subjection of young children to domestic service considered a case of the sale of children? Article 174 of the Criminal Code, which dealt with illegal adoption, failed to cover the offence of "improperly inducing consent, as an intermediary, for the adoption of a child in violation of applicable international legal instruments on adoption".

69. Article 242 of the Criminal Code criminalized the creation and distribution of pornographic material involving children, but was it an offence to be in possession of such material? Were legal persons liable for committing acts prohibited under the Optional Protocol? With regard to extraterritorial jurisdiction, he wished to know whether the courts considered themselves competent to hear cases involving nationals of the State party who were victims of any of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol or perpetrators of such offences in other countries.

70. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked whether the State party had taken steps to set up a database on child prostitution and pornography in order to better understand the extent of those problems in the State party.

71. **Mr. Pollar** asked whether the State party had entered into multilateral, regional or bilateral agreements with other States in order to promote the prevention, investigation and prosecution of the offences covered by the Optional Protocol.

72. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked whether children were offered special protection when family members were involved in their sale, prostitution or participation in pornography. He said that he would also like to know to what extent the parents of those children could be held liable, even if they were not directly involved in such offences.

73. **Ms. Lee** said she would like to know whether the State party's tourist industry had any guidelines on how to deal with sex tourism. Was information available on sex tourism in Azerbaijan or on nationals of the State party travelling abroad for that purpose?

74. **The Chairperson** asked whether child victims who testified in court had special status under the law and whether there were measures in place to avoid them being re-victimized during court proceedings, as required under article 8 of the Optional Protocol. Were techniques such as videoconferences used to protect such children?

Initial report of Azerbaijan on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/AZE/1; CRC/C/OPAC/AZE/Q/1 and Add.1)

75. **Ms. Sandberg** (Country Rapporteur for the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict) said that, although the State party had a monistic system, some provisions of the Optional Protocol still had not been fully incorporated into domestic legislation. Noting that many bodies appeared to be involved in the implementation of the

Optional Protocol, she asked how their work was coordinated. She noted that the minimum age for military service in the State party was 18 years but asked whether pupils who attended military lyceums and high schools, which they entered at the ages of 14 and 17 respectively, could be called upon to participate in military operations either as pupils or upon graduation.

76. **Mr. Pollar** asked whether the State party had adopted a legal definition of the direct participation of children in armed conflict and what preventive measures had been taken in that regard.

77. **The Chairperson** asked whether the State party intended to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and whether it had implemented peace education programmes in schools. He also asked whether adolescents were recruited by or for private security firms to serve in conflict zones outside the country, and what legislation was in place with regard to the sale of weapons to countries in which young people or children might be involved in armed conflicts.

78. **Ms. Nores de García** asked what steps the State party had taken to make the contents of the two optional protocols known to the general public and, in particular, to persons who worked with children.

79. **Ms. Wijemanne** said that she would like to know whether 17-year-olds attending military high school could complain about their treatment in those schools to an independent complaints mechanism. Was information available on the involvement of the children of refugees and asylum-seekers in armed conflicts?

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.