



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 1627th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 8 June 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Lee (Vice-Chairperson)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Second periodic report of Cuba (continued) (CRC/C/CUB/2; CRC/C/CUB/Q/2; CRC/C/CUB/Q/2/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Cuba took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Aidoo** said that the Government of Cuba was to be commended for its achievements in the area of social development, for they had had positive impacts on children's health and education in that country. Its contribution to international cooperation in sharing the expertise of its doctors was also significant. She asked whether preschools in Cuba, attended by all children up to age 6, focused on a holistic approach to early child development or rather saw it as preparation for primary school, with an emphasis on strengthening their learning capabilities. She was concerned by accounts of malnutrition, obesity and iron deficiency among children in Cuba, and asked if early childhood development programmes were being used to detect such problems and what was being done to address them, in particular with regard to exclusive breastfeeding and feeding young children. She wished to know what steps were being taken by the State party to sustain the achievements in the area of social development and to protect children's standards of living in the light of recent changes triggered by the global economic crisis, the United States of America's embargo on Cuba and the Government's efforts to develop a free-market economy. She also wished to know whether the impacts of those changes on children and their families were being monitored and, if so, whether they were being monitored according to children's age group, region of origin and sociocultural background to detect vulnerabilities, gaps and inequalities affecting them.
3. **Ms. Maurás Pérez**, referring to article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to standards of living, asked what measures were being taken by the Government to maintain standards and achievements in health and education. She also asked for information on social security in Cuba, and how it affected children, families and the unemployed.
4. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked for clarification regarding the non-institutional education programme mentioned in the State party report. She wished to know more about inclusive education policies in Cuba and whether outreach services were available for children suffering from mental health problems. Did children who were unable to attend school due to serious physical disabilities benefit from the services of peripatetic teachers? She wondered why only 70 per cent of newborns were breastfed when all Cuban children were born in maternity hospitals that reportedly promoted exclusive breastfeeding. She wished to know whether feeding practices were monitored and whether the use of infant formula might explain the decline in breastfeeding.
5. **The Chairperson** asked why some regions — Isla de la Juventud and Ciego de Ávila in particular — were characterized by very high infant, child and maternal mortality rates.
6. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba), replying to questions raised earlier, said that Haitian economic migrants who came to Cuba were not refugees. They received various services — health, food, clothing and shelter — from the Cuban Government on their way to other destinations, mainly the United States. The Government worked closely with the International Organization for Migration to organize voluntary repatriations of such migrants to their home country. Often they would make fresh attempts to leave Haiti, stopping anew in Cuba, where the Government would continue to provide assistance and protection while they were in transit. The Government was undertaking a thorough review

of migration policies. As for international cooperation, in particular where minors were concerned, several legal protection and assistance agreements had been concluded with other countries. In the absence of such agreements, the principle of reciprocity was strictly applied.

7. Transnational corporations in Cuba did not pose a problem to the economy. In general, foreign investment was closely regulated and took the form of joint ventures governed by Cuban legislation, particularly with regard to employment and social security.

8. Cuba had a broad network of consular services in 143 countries enabling the registration of children born to Cuban parents abroad so that they could obtain Cuban citizenship.

9. Special efforts had been made to sustain social services for children and young people. Indeed, it was the only area that had not been subject to cuts during the acute economic crisis that had hit Cuba in the 1990s. It would be necessary to establish monitoring mechanisms, however. As the economy got back on its feet, the Government expected to eliminate the dual currency system that had been adopted during the economic crisis.

10. He suggested that the high mortality rates in certain regions could be attributed to the poor development and economic situation of those regions.

11. **Ms. Herrera Caseiro** (Cuba) said that young people fully enjoyed the right of peaceful assembly and association, as recognized in article 54 of the Cuban Constitution. The only limitations to that right were those established under international instruments such as the prohibition of organizations aiming to promote racism, racial superiority or hatred or to disrupt public order. There were over 2,200 civil society organizations in Cuba. The largest children's organization was the José Martí Pioneers Organization, followed by the Federation of Senior Secondary School Students.

12. **Mr. Zermatten** (Country Rapporteur) asked for information concerning the procedure for establishing a non-governmental organization in Cuba. He also asked whether children had the right to form their own organizations or whether they had to join organizations set up by adults.

13. **Ms. Audivert Coello** (Cuba) said that children were free to join whatever association they wished, and to carry out whatever type of activity they wished with whomever they wished. All organizations were entered into a register of associations.

14. **The Chairperson** asked what types of activities were open to children in Cuba and what the procedure was for children who wished to set up, for example, a human rights organization.

15. **Ms. Audivert Coello** (Cuba) said that children could take part in activities related to culture, sport, leisure, research and religion, among others. To set up an association, it was necessary to submit a written application indicating the number of potential members and the purpose of the association. The application would then be evaluated to determine whether authorization would be granted.

16. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) added that children did not pay a fee to set up an organization.

17. **Mr. Kotrane** asked whether children were free to hold discussions among themselves and with children from other countries on topics that were not in line with socialist doctrine or objectives. It was the Committee's hope that Cuban children enjoyed the right to full freedom of expression.

18. **Ms. Al-Shehail** (Country Rapporteur) asked whether authorized non-governmental organizations received strict guidance concerning the nature of their activities, whether they

were required to submit periodic reports about their activities and whether any limitations were placed on the conduct of their activities.

19. **The Chairperson** said she hoped that the principle of diversity was promoted and recognized by the Government.

20. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) said that children's organizations were not subject to any guidelines or guidance from adults. Even in informal gatherings in the streets, children could be seen and heard openly discussing politics and other topics.

21. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that schools provided an excellent forum for discussion as a place that brought all students together. The children, not the teachers, led the discussion. One day of the week was often reserved for such discussions, for example, on Government policy and legislation. It was a practice to hold community discussions and children had a voice in them. Children had the right to vote and to run for municipal and provincial office at age 16. At 18, they could stand for election to the National Assembly.

22. In Cuba, non-governmental organizations played an important social role and did not merely pay lip service to the Government. For example, the Federation of Cuban Women was recognized by the Government in the national action plan for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women as a national mechanism for furthering the advancement of women. The National Union of Jurists of Cuba worked with the Federation and the Ministry of Justice to disseminate information on children's rights and women's equality. The Government and the United Nations Development Programme had launched a joint project on gender and law to provide additional training for judges and lawyers throughout the country. Although women worked hand in hand with all members of society to further the Cuban revolution, women and girls still faced sexual stereotyping at home. It was thus necessary to combat such stereotyping through awareness programmes aimed at families. Women's and family counselling centres staffed by volunteers offered guidance and training courses, workshops and community outreach activities for women and were effective in fighting sexual stereotyping. The implementation of the Convention would be examined in workshops on judicial and notarial efficiency later in 2011 and was promoted in proceedings under family law by Instruction No. 187.

23. The Family Code covered proceedings to establish parentage regardless of whether a child was born of a marriage or out of wedlock, and children, as well as single mothers, could take legal action to do so. Court decisions could also be challenged to support a child's right to have two parents. Genetic testing to determine paternity was not widely practised in Cuba because it was expensive, but other blood tests were available.

24. A responsible parenthood programme set up in 2003 provided information for future parents on issues such as preparation for pregnancy and childbirth, nutrition, breastfeeding and health risks such as smoking. Under the Working Women's Maternity Act, as amended by Decree-Law No. 234/2003, women were entitled to 6 weeks of prenatal leave and 12 weeks of post-partum leave. If a woman chose not to take the former, it did not affect her right to take the latter. The responsible parenthood programme advocated exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a child's life; hence the emphasis on maternity leave. Mothers were entitled to receive 60 per cent of their wages throughout their maternity leave and the period during which they were entitled to social benefits to care for their child. The parents could decide which of the two would take care of the child while the other parent worked.

25. **Ms. Herczog** said that she would like to know why not all maternity wards were baby-friendly.

26. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that all hospitals in Cuba were baby-friendly and had been recognized as such by the World Health Organization.

27. **The Chairperson** said that, by all accounts, the number of baby-friendly hospitals in Cuba had been declining since 2002, when all hospitals in Cuba had been reported to be baby-friendly. She would like to know what measures the Government intended to take to reinvigorate the baby-friendly approach.
28. **Ms. Wijemanne** said that the reported decline in exclusive breastfeeding might be due to advertising by infant formula manufacturers rather than to any problem with the mothers. She asked whether breastfeeding was monitored and whether efforts had been made to ban such advertising.
29. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that, during the first year of life, children received community-based medical care from a family doctor and nurse that included regular paediatric check-ups, immunization and full monitoring of breastfeeding practices.
30. **The Chairperson** said that exclusive breastfeeding helped to establish the bond between mother and child and to prevent obesity in youngsters, which was why the Committee promoted the practice.
31. **Ms. Al-Shehail**, noting that abortion posed a risk to girls aged 13 to 16, asked whether the Government had a programme that addressed that problem.
32. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that abortion was an issue taken very seriously by the Government. It was not viewed as a means of contraception. Condoms were widely promoted as a safe, effective, inexpensive means of contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. A comprehensive national health programme for young people, set up in 2000, focused on issues such as sexual and reproductive rights, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and road accidents. As a result of the programme, the Adolescent Section of the Cuban Paediatric Society had been established in 2002. The Adolescent Section had established community-based development and support centres where young people themselves promoted holistic health care and educated their peers.
33. **Mr. Zermatten** asked whether contraceptives were free in Cuba.
34. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that contraceptives were free. The Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education worked together in programmes such as “Educate Your Child” and spots aired on prime-time television, as part of Government efforts to provide assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities under article 18 of the Convention.
35. **The Chairperson** recalled that further clarification had been sought with regard to outreach activities for high-risk groups, data collection, drug prevention and the availability of a helpline for young people.
36. **Ms. Silot Navarro** (Cuba) said that the Government practised a policy of zero tolerance for drug use and carried out campaigns against it through the mass media. A drugs helpline was available to young people. Although Cuba was not spared from the scourge of drug abuse, such abuse did not pose a risk to children. The Comprehensive National Drug Abuse Prevention Programme of 1999, which involved various Government bodies and ministries, aimed to warn the public against drug use and promote all-round health. The Criminal Code prohibited the manufacture, sale, distribution, trafficking and possession of drugs and illegal substances. Penalties were stiff and were increased where minors were involved. Parents or legal guardians were punishable under Criminal Code article 311 on the corruption of minors if they had knowledge of the use of illegal substances by their children and consented to it or did not report it to the authorities, or if, because of their negligence, a child in their care used or consumed illegal substances.
37. **Mr. Zermatten** asked whether children were penalized for using drugs.

38. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) said that drug users were not considered to be delinquents but rather persons suffering from an illness.
39. **Ms. Valle** (Cuba), replying to a question from Ms. Aidoo, said that child nutrition was a major challenge, but that malnutrition was not a major health problem in Cuba. Nevertheless, the Government was aware of the existence of nutritional disorders caused by micronutrient deficiencies and had launched a programme in conjunction with various international organizations to combat iron deficiency. The Government aimed to reduce anaemia in children under 24 months of age and in pregnant women by 15 per cent by 2015.
40. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that the Government was closely following accident statistics in Cuba. Road accidents were the fourth cause of death of all children up to 19 years of age and the leading cause of death affecting children between the ages of 5 and 19. A national accident prevention programme established in 1995 aimed to prevent mortality, morbidity and disabilities due to accidents by means of targeted strategies that covered information, communication and education as well as risk assessments, monitoring and control. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior had implemented a traffic accident prevention programme and the issue of road safety was raised in civic education classes for children and young people. Legislation containing preventive and educational components governed all aspects of road safety and provided guidelines for young people on how to prevent accidents in and outside the home and at school.
41. **Ms. Al-Shehail** asked whether strict regulations were in force to prohibit or prevent young people from driving under the influence of alcohol.
42. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) said that a new, stricter law was now in force that prohibited the presence of alcoholic beverages in motor vehicles.
43. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) added that under the new law young people under the age of 18 could drive bicycles and motorcycles, but not automobiles.
44. **The Chairperson** asked whether young people in Cuba contested the new legislation, since they could take part in political activities at 16 but not drive until they were 18.
45. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) said that it was too soon to know how young people would react to the new law, which had entered into force in April 2010.
46. **The Chairperson** asked for further information concerning children with disabilities and policies on inclusive education and special education. She wished to know why special education classes outnumbered inclusive education classes.
47. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that special education programmes were part of the mainstream educational system. Special education was provided in special schools where children with special needs received the necessary attention until they were ready to join mainstream classes. Because of the economic embargo on Cuba, it was even more of a challenge to ensure that those children benefited from highly trained teachers and support staff, as well as state-of-the-art equipment. With regard to special education, the Cuban Government fully complied with article 23 of the Convention. Under a joint programme of the ministries of public health and education for children with severe disabilities who could not attend school, peripatetic teachers went to their homes or, if they were hospitalized, gave them lessons in hospital classrooms. There were currently 704 peripatetic teachers attending to 1,798 children in 36 hospital wards.
48. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that the Committee was aware of the scarcity of funds to equip all special schools with technological resources for children with disabilities. However, given the human resources available in the State party, he failed to understand

why over 60 per cent of children with disabilities were in special education centres. He asked whether there was any reason why they could not be integrated into mainstream schools, where staff supported by teaching assistants could be trained to address their needs.

49. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that the special education system had been significantly strengthened since its inception, with additional resources and specialist staff. That said, the Ministry of Education and the Department of Special Education continued to work towards the objective of fully integrating children with disabilities into the mainstream system. Many students with disabilities were now following technical, vocational and university courses, including a blind law student who would graduate in 2011.

50. Schools and associations for disabled persons organized leisure and recreational pursuits for children with disabilities. Many of those children also participated in sporting and other activities offered by cultural associations.

51. **Mr. Zermatten** asked why the State party had not introduced specific legislation concerning persons with disabilities. Given that many ministries and other entities were involved in providing services for them, a law would help coordinate efforts to guarantee disabled people accessibility and inclusion as well as financial allowances and education for both children and adults with disabilities.

52. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that the National Council to Support Persons with Disabilities had been established in 1996. The Minister of Labour and Social Security coordinated the work of all the participating Government entities and associations for disabled persons. A national plan ensuring comprehensive care for disabled persons had been introduced in 1995 and was updated every five years.

53. **Ms. Valle** (Cuba) added that the Ministry of Labour and Social Security was currently preparing a series of legislative amendments proposed by associations for disabled persons.

54. **Mr. Reyes Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that, as a disabled person himself, he could assure the Committee of the Government's commitment to persons with disabilities. In the country's economic crisis in the 1990s, when means of transport had been extremely scarce, fuel rations had been allocated to disabled workers to ensure they could continue to be fully integrated in society. Moreover, the associations for disabled persons had a strong influence on Government policy.

55. **Ms. Wijemanne** said that the State party's database on children should include information on children with disabilities. That would be particularly useful in ensuring that their educational needs were met, whether in special or mainstream schools.

The meeting was suspended at 4.40 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

56. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that physical abuse of children was prohibited by law and was widely condemned by society. However, there were still isolated cases in which parents used physical, psychological or sexual violence as a means of exerting control over their children. As explained in paragraphs 281 to 284 of the periodic report, a national working group on the prevention of domestic violence had been set up in 1997.

57. **The Chairperson** requested clarification on whether the current Family Code still permitted parents to use moderate punishment. She asked whether corporal punishment was specifically banned in families, schools and alternative care centres.

58. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that, while the current Family Code made no reference to corporal punishment, it provided that parents could reprimand their children in an appropriate and moderate fashion. While that was open to interpretation, judging from

the jurisprudence of the courts and public opinion, corporal punishment of children was not tolerated in Cuba. Moreover, in the draft of the new Family Code, that provision was replaced by an article that reflected the content of the Committee's general comment No. 8 on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment.

59. **Mr. Kotrane** welcomed that legislative amendment and urged the State party to bring the new Family Code into force in the near future. He asked whether professionals who worked with children, such as teachers, doctors and social workers, were obliged to report cases in which they suspected that a child was a victim of corporal punishment. It would be interesting to know whether the State party planned to introduce any preventive mechanisms that would enable the child protection authorities to intervene when there was evidence that a child was at risk in the family environment.

60. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that the national working group on the prevention of domestic violence had run several major media campaigns on the need to respect children's right to protection from corporal punishment, sexual abuse and psychological violence. The campaigns were proving increasingly effective. The working group had also conducted training sessions for police officers in order to ensure that they reacted appropriately to reports of any type of violence against children.

61. The draft of the new Family Code made several references to the need to resolve conflicts within the family without recourse to violence, and highlighted children's rights as well as parents' obligations. As explained in paragraph 81 of the written replies, the Criminal Code provided that committing certain acts of violence against a family member constituted an aggravating circumstance.

62. **The Chairperson** requested additional information on the role and function of the social services in cases of violence against children. She also wished to know how children could report violence at school and how perpetrators were brought to justice.

63. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that all citizens were obliged to report offences of which they were aware, including when the victim was a child. When the police or the Prosecutor-General's Office received a report of child abuse, a multidisciplinary team intervened immediately. If necessary, the child was removed from the family home and placed with its grandparents or in a children's home. If no crime had been committed, the parental authority of the parent responsible for the violence could be suspended. Discussions were currently under way involving many of the country's judges on the preventive action the courts could take in such cases.

64. The regulations governing the employment of all education sector employees prevented them from taking any action that might harm a child's development, such as violence and sexual abuse. Any teachers who violated those provisions were immediately removed from the school and if they had committed an offence, they were convicted accordingly and banned from the profession.

65. **Ms. Silot Navarro** (Cuba) said that, when it was advised of a case of domestic violence affecting a child, the Prosecutor-General's Office summoned the parents to advise them of their duties and their potential criminal responsibility. Where appropriate, the parents were given an official warning and staff from the Office closely monitored the situation until it had been resolved. If necessary, legal proceedings were brought against the perpetrator and other measures were implemented, such as removing parental authority and placing the child in an institution.

66. **Ms. Audivert Coello** (Cuba) said that much preventive work had been done in terms of awareness-raising and training within the framework of a project to publicize children's and young people's rights, which was being carried out in cooperation with the

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The project had highlighted the need for effective communication between parents and their children, and had been effective in making parents more conscious of the negative effects of corporal punishment. Courses had also been run for lawyers, judges and journalists to inform them about how to address cases of corporal punishment.

67. **Ms. Silot Navarro** (Cuba) said that, while the age of criminal responsibility was 16, the Criminal Code included a special regime for young people aged between 16 and 18, under which the maximum penalties were reduced by half. As detailed in paragraphs 145 to 150 of the written replies, young offenders were held in special prisons where their educational, vocational and other needs could be met. In some cases, offenders up to the age of 27 were placed in those prisons.

68. **Mr. Zermatten** asked why the age of criminal responsibility was not 18. He failed to understand why adult offenders up to the age of 27 were held in young offenders' prisons. It would be useful to know what happened to young offenders under the age of 16.

69. **Ms. Silot Navarro** (Cuba) said that a proposed amendment to the Criminal Code which included a provision to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 18 was currently under consideration by the authorities. People up to the age of 27 were held in prisons for minors in exceptional circumstances only, depending on the offence they had committed, their personality, and the danger they posed to society. On their release from prison, young offenders were guaranteed paid employment. Judges were assigned to each offender in order to monitor their progress and increase their chances of social integration.

70. Since young offenders under the age of 16 were not criminally liable, they were dealt with by the Councils for Minors, which interviewed them in the presence of one of their parents, guardians or legal representatives. Thereafter, reorientation and specialized education measures were implemented, which could include monitoring by the Ministry of the Interior or social workers, increased supervision by the parents or guardians, individual attention at school and undertaking an apprenticeship. Only when all other measures had failed was a young offender under the age of 16 placed in a "comprehensive training school". Such schools followed the same curricula as other schools, and students there were educated and encouraged to reach their full potential. The schools were part of the special education system and were not equipped with security fences or armed guards.

71. **Mr. Kotrane** asked who decided which educational measures should be applied in the case of young people under the age of 16 who were in conflict with the law, and what the minimum age was at which such measures could be applied.

72. **Ms. Silot Navarro** (Cuba) said that the Councils for Minors decided which measures would be applied. The Councils were composed of experts in the field, including teachers, psychologists and lawyers.

73. **The Chairperson** asked what happened to young women between the ages of 16 and 18 who were found working as prostitutes.

74. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that, as prostitution was not an offence in her country, measures were taken to provide those girls with an education and ensure they had access to health care. They were considered victims of sexual exploitation, and were given the requisite assistance for their social reintegration, such as the opportunity to undertake vocational training and courses at the Women's and Family Counselling Centres.

75. **The Chairperson** asked why, according to paragraph 139 of the written replies, those women could be confined in a rehabilitation centre. The Committee was concerned that they were placed under the supervision of judges.

76. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that girls aged 16 to 18 could be required to attend study or work institutions, but were never detained.

77. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked whether steps were taken to address the factors that had pushed those girls into working as prostitutes, such as abuse at home or having been caught up in trafficking or sexual exploitation networks.

78. **Ms. Aidoo** asked whether the clients of prostitutes were considered to be engaging in antisocial behaviour, as was the case for the women and girls who worked as prostitutes, according to paragraph 139 of the written replies. It would be interesting to know if the State party had any programmes or strategies to change the behaviour of prostitutes' clients.

79. **Mr. Guráň** said that, given that the prostitution of young girls and boys was a significant problem in the State party, the Committee would welcome information on the Government's plan to combat that phenomenon, including any specific projects aimed at travel agencies.

80. **Ms. González Ferrer** (Cuba) said that the magnitude of child prostitution in Cuba had been blown out of all proportion by the foreign press. The few girls between the ages of 16 and 18 who were found to be working as prostitutes were treated as victims and were not detained, but offered assistance with vocational training in readiness for their proper integration into the workforce at the age of 18.

81. Individuals found guilty of the offences of procuring and human trafficking received severe punishment. Procurers who were found to have used minors were charged with corruption of minors, which carried even heavier penalties. Anyone providing or using a girl or boy under 16 for the purposes of prostitution, acts of heterosexual or homosexual corruption or pornography was guilty of corruption of minors. In addition, anyone whose neglect or negligence resulted in a child being prostituted, or who failed to report a case of child prostitution, was also guilty of corruption of minors.

82. **Mr. Zermatten** said he was still concerned that young people between the ages of 16 and 18 could be confined in a rehabilitation centre and that they were not properly protected, since they were not considered to be minors.

83. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) emphasized that cases of child prostitution were extremely rare and there were no child prostitution networks in his country.

84. **Ms. Valle** (Cuba) said that early childhood development, for children under the age of 6 years, took place in day-care centres or under the Teach Your Child programme, as explained in paragraphs 17 to 22 of the written replies. The programme had been praised by UNICEF and was popular among parents, including those whose children had special educational needs. It had many benefits, including its accessibility to those living in remote rural areas, the preparation of women for motherhood from early pregnancy and the inclusion of fathers and grandparents. Owing to its success, the programme had been replicated in other countries, including Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico.

85. **Ms. Al-Shehail** said that the Committee acknowledged the challenges facing the State party; despite the economic blockade, its implementation of children's rights demonstrated that political will was more important than economic resources. However, while significant progress had been made in recent years, the Committee had several concerns: the relevant domestic legislation did not yet incorporate the principles and provisions of the Convention, and the process of enacting legislation on the rights of the child was slow; there was no separate, independent monitoring mechanism to promote and protect the rights of the child effectively and coordinate all activities; there was insufficient provision for adequate recovery and integration services for victims of child prostitution; the authorities appeared to lack awareness of human rights in general and the provisions of

the Convention in particular; and a children's rights approach was not yet in evidence in the State party's policies.

86. **Mr. Zermatten** welcomed the delegation's indication that the draft of the new Family Code included a specific reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, incorporated the child's best interest and respect for the views of the child, and made children rights-holders as opposed to subjects of protection. The delegation had also stated that the age of majority in civil and criminal law would be raised to 18 years. Therefore, it only remained for him to encourage the State party to enact the new legislation as soon as possible.

87. **Mr. Moreno** (Cuba) said that, in spite of the economic blockade and the effects of the global economic crisis, the Government was striving to implement its child protection and social development policies. He assured the Committee that there were social reintegration mechanisms in place for the few young women who had worked as prostitutes. Every effort was made to help those women reach their full potential and take their rightful place in Cuban society.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.