



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.1180
3 October 2006

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Forty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1180th MEETING (Chamber B)

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 September 2006, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHATTAB

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GE.06-44349 (E) 210906 031006

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

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 4) (continued)

Initial report of Denmark under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (HRI/CORE/1/Add.58; CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/1; CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/Q/1; written replies of the Government of Denmark to the questions raised in the list of issues)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Aamann, Mr. Berling-Rasmussen, Ms. Hoffmann, Ms. Holve, Ms. Jespersen, Ms. Larsen, Mr. Nielsen, Ms. Rubow, Ms. Sandbeck, Mr. Svanberg and Mr. Vinthen (Denmark) took places at the Committee table.
2. Mr. VINTHEN (Denmark) thanked the Committee for its endeavours to ensure national compliance with the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The independent international monitoring of compliance with international human rights standards was among the five priority areas of Danish international human rights policy, which was directed to redoubling efforts in focus areas such as the fight against torture and the rights of indigenous peoples, drawing attention to the human rights situation in individual countries, promoting democratization and respect for human rights in Danish development activities and enhancing cooperation with civil society. The Government was firmly committed to ensuring that Denmark met its international obligations at all times and welcomed scrutiny. Although Danish ratification of the Optional Protocol did not extend beyond the mainland, the Greenland Home Rule authorities had recently announced their intention to consider the possibility of accession to the Optional Protocol by Greenland.
3. Denmark's initial report (CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/1) had been submitted exactly two years after the entry into force of the Optional Protocol in Denmark on 24 August 2003. The report comprehensively addressed issues relevant to both optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which had entered into force in Denmark in 2002 and had been considered by the Committee at its fortieth session in 2005. Children in Denmark benefited from the advantages of a comparatively affluent society that focused on their best interests by establishing favourable conditions for the family. Denmark's deep commitment to international cooperation aimed at improving children's living conditions and their rights was demonstrated by its active involvement in Security Council efforts to determine the impact of armed conflict on children. The Government had pledged to maintain its development assistance at 0.8 per cent of gross national income (GNI), above the United Nations 0.7 per cent target, and a high level of funding to enhance children's conditions in developing countries. Denmark's multilateral and bilateral development assistance also provided support in the fight against child trafficking and child prostitution and many of its activities contributed directly and indirectly to the implementation of the Optional Protocol under consideration. A human trafficking programme had been launched in 2005 under the Neighbourhood Programme with a view to supporting national authorities, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus in their efforts to combat human trafficking by strengthening and promoting the judicial system and to protect victims. NGOs received support from the Government for street children and children subjected to prostitution, sexual abuse and trafficking. In line with its policy to combat AIDS in developing countries, Denmark provided support to orphans and other

vulnerable children. It also made generous contributions to children in vulnerable situations caused by natural disasters and civil war. The Government had actively promoted the preparation of an addendum to the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2003), which addressed the special needs of child victims of trafficking, and a formal decision to draft the addendum had been taken at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting held in Sofia in December 2004. The effective protection of children against sale, prostitution and pornography required constant coordination, often with national NGOs, and monitoring by public authorities at the national and local levels.

4. Broad national legislation had been enacted to protect children against all forms of abuse. An Act of Parliament, passed in June 2006 to amend provisions of the Criminal Code on jurisdiction in cases of sexual abuse of children committed abroad, was clearly in line with international efforts to combat sexual abuse of children in developing countries. Contrary to the principle of dual criminality, Danish nationals who committed child abuse abroad were subject to Danish jurisdiction, even if the offence was not punishable under the law of the foreign State concerned. Further, Danish courts of law were not bound by the maximum penalty applicable in countries where the sexual offence against a child had been committed but could rule according to Danish law.

5. An Internet child pornography filter had been introduced in Denmark in October 2005, thanks to the combined efforts of the National Commissioner of Police, Save the Children and TDC, Denmark's leading telecommunications provider. To date, the filter had successfully blocked pornographic images for 1,700 users per day. The National Commissioner of Police was working with other providers to expand its use.

6. An action plan to combat trafficking in children and young people had been drawn up in 2005 as an appendage to the 2003-2006 action plan to combat trafficking in women, with provisions regarding prevention, protection and recovery of the victims. A new action plan, superseding the current one, would be launched in early 2007.

7. Ms. VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC (Country Rapporteur) commended the Danish Government for current action plans to combat the sexual abuse of children, child prostitution and trafficking. Scrutiny was important, but effectively promoting the implementation of the Optional Protocol was just as important. She asked whether the Optional Protocol could be directly applied and invoked in the Danish courts. She requested information on legal provisions relating to the sale of children, which appeared to be lacking in Denmark's initial report and written replies, perhaps because trafficking as such was not explicitly referred to in the Convention preamble, although the issue was relevant to the rights of the child. She also wished to know the delegation's views on the definition of the sale and trafficking of children, taking into account the internationally accepted definition and that which was contained in the Optional Protocol. She requested further information on the amount of funds allocated to train officials on issues covered by the Optional Protocol, since the budget appeared to be insufficient. She wondered whether the Government would have the necessary budget to implement the new Teacher Education Act that would come into effect in August 2007.

8. Mr. ZERMATTEN welcomed the legal provisions covering the status of child victims of crime in Denmark. He requested further information on the video interviews of child victims that had been introduced in 2003. Had they produced tangible results? What type of training

was required for the caseworker that accompanied the child during the interview? Could a person accused of committing an offence against a child request more than one hearing, thus making it necessary for the child to undergo a second video interview? He suggested, with reference to paragraph 90 of document CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/1, that the principle of public hearings involving child victims of crime should be reversed to protect a child's privacy in compliance with article 16 of the Convention. He wished to know how damages were determined. Would a child victim be entitled to full, partial or symbolic compensation? Referring to paragraph 103 of document CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/1 on the establishment of a special unit for sexually abused children at Copenhagen University Hospital, he wondered whether victims living outside the metropolitan area received assistance from that unit or whether additional units, teams or other means were available to handle those cases.

9. Mr. PARFITT asked whether non-governmental organizations had been involved in the preparation of document CRC/C/OPSC/DNK/1. He wished to know what mechanisms were in place to ensure a holistic response to issues of child protection at the national and regional levels, what expertise was available at the local level and what the State was doing to ensure delivery of services to children affected by the problems under consideration. What was being done to trace missing asylum-seeking children? In Canada, for example, social workers bonded with young asylum-seekers, thus maintaining contact with them and providing a safety net for the children even after they left their jurisdiction.

10. He asked what mechanisms had been set up to monitor the implementation of the Optional Protocol and whether the Ombudsman had a mandate to do so. The criminal records disclosure policy implemented in Denmark applied solely to staff working with children up to the age of 15. He wondered whether consideration was being given to expanding the age range to 18, especially in cases where age was not a determining factor, for example, with regard to children suffering from disabilities or mental illness. Should cost be a deterrent, perhaps the expense of carrying out the criminal records check could be borne by the job applicant. He asked who decided on the relevance of a criminal record with respect to a specific task. How did the principle of dual criminality work in cases of extradition? Were Danish citizens who had committed an offence abroad extradited for trial? He wished to know how Danish legislation defined child pornography because it seemed to exclude child cartoons and visual depictions of children - a means used by paedophiles to entice victims. He wondered whether the Government intended to expand its definition along the lines of article 2 (c) of the Optional Protocol.

11. Mr. LIWSKI said he wished to take the opportunity to commend the Government of Denmark for its solidarity with various countries in Latin America, in particular, for the assistance it had provided over the years to victims of systematic violations of human rights, including children. He requested additional information on the preventive measures that had been included in Denmark's action plan to combat sexual abuse of children, including information on the functioning of the Danish National Centre for Social Efforts Against Child Sexual Abuse. With respect to the hotline operated by the Centre, he enquired how the privacy of callers was ensured and what follow-up was given to the calls. He asked what type of register was kept of calls and whether it was used to evaluate and redefine strategies for dealing with the phenomenon of sexual abuse.

12. He wished to know whether the studies undertaken in 2005 to determine the extent and nature of sexual abuse of disabled children and those in institutions had been motivated by complaints received from those groups. He asked what had been the impact of the manual published by the Government to help children and young people through dialogue with their parents. He requested information on the features of the “Safety, Awareness, Facts and Tools” project, and wished to know how a consensus had been reached by the various countries involved in establishing the project. He wished to know what had been the Government’s reaction to the results of the studies undertaken among young pupils to determine the number of those who had been sexually exploited against payment one or more times. He wondered whether it found those numbers to be high and whether the studies had led to changes in the problem. He asked whether young people had been invited to participate in discussions of the use of Internet filters, which was likely to encourage their acceptance of them.

13. Ms. ALUOCH, referring to paragraph 73 of the initial report, asked whether police counselling of child victims of criminal acts about the rules governing assignment of a victim advocate might not frighten children or be too difficult for them to understand. She wondered what was the role of the child’s parents or guardians in that procedure. The figures contained in paragraph 112 of the report concerning the number of 15- to 17-year-old pupils who had been sexually exploited did not take into account young people in that age bracket who did not attend school. That group would have to be included in order to obtain a more complete picture of the situation.

14. Ms. SMITH welcomed the fact that the dual criminalization of sexual offences against children had been abolished. She recommended that Denmark should withdraw its declaration concerning article 2 (c) of the Optional Protocol, according to which the possession of child pornography was not punishable if the person shown in the photograph had reached the age of 15 and had consented to such possession. The situation could arise in which a girl could be persuaded to have pornographic photographs taken by an adult. In order to prevent such cases, the possession of child pornography should be criminalized.

15. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether the Government envisaged expanding the role of NGOs in combating the activities covered by the Optional Protocol. She enquired whether it planned to isolate resources allocated to such activities in order to monitor their level and to report that information to the Committee. She wished to know whether any consideration had been given to ensuring that government reforms currently in progress did not have a negative impact on the protection of children in the areas covered by the Optional Protocol. She requested additional information on the extent of child prostitution in Denmark, as well as on the number of Danish nationals who had been convicted of sexual offences against children in other countries. She wished to know whether the Government was looking into reports that Danish travel agents were organizing sex tours to Eastern Europe. She enquired whether any action had been taken against the Danish owner of a hotel in India, where a Danish national had reportedly engaged in sexual exploitation of boys. She asked what was the extent of the exposure of Danish children to activities involving the Internet that were covered by the Optional Protocol.

16. The delegation should provide information on the extent to which incidents of child trafficking and the sale of children coincided in Denmark. She would appreciate information concerning the type of witness protection that was provided to children who testified in court. In the case of non-nationals, she asked whether they were returned to their countries of

origin - possibly to be victimized by organized criminals - or whether they were given permission to stay in Denmark. She asked what hotline services were available to children at weekends and on holidays, when the risks of child abuse were high. It would be interesting to know whether financial assistance was provided for hotline services and, in particular, whether any assistance was provided to children who could not pay for calling the hotline.

17. Mr. PARFITT asked whether the Danish Government had entered into any bilateral or multilateral agreements, especially with countries that had a large number of immigrants, to ensure that services were available to help victims of child trafficking and the sale of children in all the countries concerned.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

18. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark) said that the Optional Protocol could be invoked in the Danish courts and had been fully incorporated into the Danish criminal justice system. The Ministry of Justice considered that the sale of children was covered by existing laws that prohibited child trafficking.

19. Ms. VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC said that child trafficking and the sale of children were two separate issues, which was why they were addressed by two separate international instruments: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, respectively. Although there were instances in which the two coincided, not all children who were trafficked were sold and not all children who were sold were trafficked. Each act could lead to varying consequences. She therefore asked whether the Danish authorities would consider introducing separate provisions for child trafficking and the sale of children.

20. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark) said that the Ministry of Justice would look into the suggestion to introduce separate provisions.

21. Ms. LARSEN (Denmark) said that numerous professionals, such as social educators, teachers and social workers, worked with child victims of the offences prohibited in the Optional Protocol. Social educators were trained to work with children facing social problems. In 2006, the Danish Parliament had enacted legislation that made changes to the Bachelor of Social Education study programme; they included enabling students to specialize in subjects regarding children at risk and the introduction of an inter-professional element that enhanced cooperation between trained educators and other professionals.

22. In 2006, the Danish Parliament had enacted legislation that made improvements to the Bachelor of Education study programme. They included the introduction of mandatory training in basic special education, greater emphasis on cooperation between schools and pupils' families, and the introduction of a course in the compulsory subjects of the primary and lower secondary schools, including health and sex education. In the subjects that were required for all students preparing the Bachelor of Education, students were taught to identify problems that could indicate that a child had been abused, as well as how to initiate contact with the social

services departments. The need for knowledge about and prevention of child abuse had been taken into account in drafting the ministerial orders regarding both social educator and teacher training.

23. The requirements under the Bachelor of Social Work curriculum included ensuring that students were qualified to identify and assess social problems and to choose the appropriate course of action in a given situation. Students took courses in psychology, psychiatry and relevant legal and administrative issues.

24. Mr. ZERMATTEN asked what the results of the inquiry into video questioning had been, how staff were trained, and what type of social services professional was present during video questioning of children.

25. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said that a caseworker experienced in dealing with children's issues was present during video questioning.

26. Mr. FILALI asked what information children were given to prepare them to give statements, and how they were informed about the procedures that would take place and about the responsibilities of those involved in questioning. He wondered whether children were made aware of their rights and the value of their statements.

27. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether legal procedures had been adapted to incorporate the issues raised in the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime.

28. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark) said that the Director of Public Prosecutions had issued an administrative order applicable to persons dealing with child victims of sexual abuse. A specifically trained police investigator was responsible for working with child victims and witnesses. Children were questioned as early as possible in the proceedings, with account being taken of the best interest of the child. Children were questioned in an appropriate environment, which varied according to the child's age. Young children could be accompanied by a guardian or person whom they knew well, who would either be present in the room during questioning or would wait for the child nearby. Every effort was made to ensure that questioning did not cause any distress to the child. A legal officer was appointed to make child witnesses aware of their rights.

29. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark) said that efforts were made to ensure the least possible suffering for child victims in the event that they had to be questioned more than once. Although in the majority of cases, children were heard only once, at the beginning of the investigation, in some cases they were questioned a second time if particular clarification was necessary. Although there was no official limit on the number of times a child could be called for questioning, in practice the authorities made every effort to keep the number of interviews to a minimum. Although court hearings were open in principle, they took place behind closed doors. On compensation for children, he said that different kinds of compensation were awarded for physical injury or psychological suffering, in accordance with the rules on compensation that applied to all other cases. Victims were usually granted compensation amounting to between 50,000 and 100,000 Danish kroner.

30. Ms. ALUOCH asked how long the courts usually took to grant compensation.
31. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark) said that the issue of compensation was addressed during criminal cases. Although some criminal proceedings were lengthy, civil proceedings did not have to be instituted afterwards to claim compensation.
32. Mr. FILALI asked whether there was a minimum age for children to be heard in criminal cases.
33. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark) said that there was no minimum age for children to be heard in criminal proceedings. The trained investigating officer in charge of the case was required to judge whether the child was fit to cope with the stress of being interviewed.
34. Mr. FILALI asked what the procedure was if a person who was required to pay damages to a victim was unable to do so.
35. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark) said that the Government operated a national fund which paid out compensation if the perpetrator of an offence did not have the financial means to do so.
36. Ms. JESPERSEN (Denmark) said that the knowledge centre had been established in 2001 as a reception centre for child victims of sexual abuse. It had been subjected to an external evaluation in 2004. The Danish Pediatric Society and the Danish National Board of Health had come to the conclusion that it was particularly important to have special facilities in regional hospitals to deal with child victims of sexual abuse, rather than just one centre. A proposal had therefore been made to establish five regional centres, and to ensure that there were specially equipped paediatric wards in hospitals. Regarding rehabilitation, the centre could play a protective role by providing temporary accommodation for victims, and it could provide physical and psychological treatment and diagnosis along with medical examinations. Medical support from hospitals was provided on a collaborative basis with the social authorities. Efforts would be made to expand those services in hospitals as soon as possible.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5 p.m.

37. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said that, as a result of the local government reform, which would be implemented by 1 January 2007, the number of municipalities would be reduced by two thirds. The new municipalities would be larger, with a larger budget and more staff, and would bear most of the responsibility for services for children with special needs. Some health services and institutions for disabled children would remain under the regional authorities. The larger municipalities were developing new methods and approaches to social work. A new national knowledge and counselling centre for social issues was being established, to provide guidance in complicated and specialized cases that could not be handled by the municipalities. Citizens could approach the new centre for advice independently, rather than being referred to it by municipal authorities. The centre's task was to gather and promote knowledge on social issues, and to disseminate that knowledge to local and national authorities. Studies would be systematically carried out at the request of municipalities, individuals, government ministries or on the centre's own initiative. Staff of the centre would participate in international networks to gather knowledge on specific problems. A liaison committee had been established, consisting of representatives of the regional and municipal authorities, to ensure communication between the

authorities in respect of social issues. Figures on social spending were not available, since the central government allocated funds to the municipalities, and those funds were subsequently distributed by the municipal authorities, as they saw fit.

38. Regarding the three plans of action, she said that the Ministry of Social Affairs had introduced a new approach to social services projects, which included conducting evaluations and issuing recommendations for use when drafting new plans of action. Several NGOs had telephone hotlines and Internet services, some of which specialized in children, while others specialized in areas that affected children, such as pornography and prostitution.

39. The CHAIRPERSON expressed concern that those hotlines were not toll-free, and that the numbers were not easy for children to remember. She asked whether that would be rectified.

40. Mr. LIWSKI said that he wished to know whether the telephone line of the Danish National Centre for Social Efforts against Child Sexual Abuse (SISO) was accessible to children, and whether it was free of charge.

41. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said that SISO had a telephone line for professionals who were working with child victims of sexual abuse, enabling them to seek advice about how to deal with specific cases. The parents or relatives of victims could also telephone the Centre to seek advice. Regarding NGO hotlines, she said that telephones were widely available for children to use in all homes, and asylum-seeking children were housed in centres for asylum-seekers with easy access to telephones.

42. Mr. VINTHEN (Denmark) said that the delegation would make known the Chairperson's concerns in respect of NGO telephone lines.

43. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said that in 2007 a survey would be conducted to evaluate care for children with disabilities, since international studies had shown that disabled children were particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Turning to early intervention, she said that a manual had been written on dialogue between professionals working with children and parents. In 2005, the Government had run a campaign on sexual abuse of children, which had aimed to raise awareness among children, parents and the general public. An Internet site, which had received considerable media publicity, had been launched to provide information on how to detect cases of child abuse and what measures to take. The evaluation of the campaign had shown that it had been a success.

44. Although Denmark had not concluded any bilateral agreements with other States regarding the return of child victims of trafficking to their countries of origin, the Government cooperated closely with the Red Cross and NGOs such as Save the Children, in order to ensure that children were returned safely and were adequately cared for on their return.

45. Mr. FILALI asked how the Danish Government was able to investigate cases of child abuse committed abroad if it was party to no judicial cooperation agreements.

46. Mr. VINTHEN (Denmark) said that was a misunderstanding. In the area of mutual assistance in criminal matters, Denmark was a party to European Union agreements as well as numerous bilateral agreements.

47. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said, by way of clarification, that Denmark had no agreements with other countries with respect to assistance for victims returning to their countries of origin.

48. Mr. NIELSEN (Denmark), referring to the Danish declaration under article 2 (c) of the Optional Protocol, said that the intention of the Government was to avoid criminalizing the sharing of intimate photographs between girls and boys. The relevant law allowed young persons to consent to sharing photographs. If the recipient of the photograph was an older man, however, the court must decide whether the girl freely consented to his receiving her photograph. The law targeted “obscene photographs or other visual representations”: that included cartoons.

49. Ms. JESPERSEN (Denmark), replying to a question raised about the allocation of funds for the implementation of the Optional Protocol, said that there was a national registry of health-care patients and another registry concerning the application of the Health Security Act. It would therefore be possible to describe progress made in the implementation of the Optional Protocol in terms of the numbers of patients covered by resource allocations.

50. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark), referring to paragraphs 137 and 138 of the report, said that employers had to request the consent of a prospective employee if they wished to consult that person’s criminal record. A certificate system had been introduced; the certificate established the relevance of the record in question. There were no plans to extend those protections to 18-year olds.

51. The Internet child pornography filter not only worked as a filter but also provided feedback: the screen would state, for instance, that the computer user was trying to access materials that had been deemed illegal; and that if he disagreed, he could contact the relevant police adviser. Young people were not, however, the target of the filter, since they were not generally users.

52. The CHAIRPERSON enquired what happened after the user received such an on-screen message.

53. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark) said that he or she would be unable to access the illegal materials, and was therefore blocked from committing a criminal act. The police kept a log of IP addresses of such users, but did not pursue them.

54. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether the police were able to determine if the filter had been breached.

55. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark) said that the National Commissioner of Police was responsible for monitoring access to illegal materials, and was aware when such sites were entered.

56. Paragraph 61 of the report mentioned only one case involving the sale of a child: that was a 17-year-old girl who had been sold into prostitution. No other case had been registered. He had no information on the extent of child prostitution inside Denmark.

57. The CHAIRPERSON asked how many Danes were involved in child prostitution outside Denmark.

58. Mr. SVANBERG (Denmark) said that no data were yet available because the relevant legislation had been adopted only within the last year.
59. Mr. FILALI asked whether international adoption agencies were monitored to ensure that they did not engage in commercial transactions.
60. Mr. VINTHEN said that there were strict controls on the adoption of children under Danish law; paragraphs 30 to 34 of the report provided details.
61. Ms. ALUOCH asked what measures were being taken to remedy the problem of the disappearance of child asylum-seekers.
62. Ms. AAMAN (Denmark) said that the disappearance of young asylum-seekers from asylum centres was indeed a significant problem in Denmark. Guidelines had been drawn up to ensure that the authorities took prompt action if such an event occurred. They specified that the Danish Red Cross must report the disappearance to the police and the Danish Immigration Service. The police were required to make a search just as they would if a Danish child had disappeared from his or her home. If the staff of a centre had any indication that a child might be involved in criminal activities, that information must also be shared with the police. In addition, the guidelines required that photographs and fingerprints should be taken immediately upon the arrival of the child in Denmark, to facilitate subsequent identification. If the child was found, he or she was generally not imprisoned or detained. If the staff of the centre felt that disciplinary measures were necessary, the child was monitored, and might be confined to a particular house. Those decisions were made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with all relevant authorities. If the staff of the centre suspected that a child was in danger, in particular from traffickers, the centre was obliged to report that information to the police and to the social authorities. If necessary, children could be moved to a secret place and deprived of their cellphones so that they could not be located by traffickers.
63. Any and all children could seek asylum in Denmark, including those involved in witness protection programmes. Children were considered to be a vulnerable group; therefore, special guidelines had been drawn up, stipulating that their applications must be reviewed as quickly as possible and that child applicants should be housed in special accommodation centres with specially trained staff. If the Danish Immigration Service determined that a child was not sufficiently mature for the application process, a residence permit was often granted without an application review. Even where an application was rejected, a child might receive a residence permit, on the ground that the child lacked adequate support in his country of origin.
64. Mr. LIWSKI said that information and comments would be welcome on the sexual exploitation of children in Denmark.
65. Ms. SANDBECK (Denmark) said that a local survey conducted in 2002 had shown that 1.1 per cent of the young people interviewed had been paid for participation in sexual acts; according to another survey that figure was 1.6 per cent. It was unacceptable that any child should feel the need to sell him or herself for sexual favours. Surveys in Sweden and Norway had turned up similar figures. That phenomenon was as yet unexplained. The action plan entitled "A New Life", whose purpose was to combat prostitution, focused in particular on helping young people avoid entering that life. A survey was being conducted to assess the

sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people, especially institutionalized youth. When it was completed, relevant staff would receive special training to assist children in avoiding prostitution, and resources would be allocated for psychiatric counselling.

66. Ms. ALUOCH asked the delegation to provide further information about the situation of children from ethnic minorities.

67. Ms. VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC (Country Rapporteur) said she would be interested to know if the Government of Denmark considered the unequal treatment of Danish children and refugee children or child asylum-seekers to be a problem.

68. Mr. VINTHEN (Denmark) said that the Government of Denmark took seriously its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which prohibited, inter alia, discrimination on the grounds of ethnic background, and had given a full account of its position in its seventeenth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/496/Add.1).

69. Ms. VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC (Country Rapporteur), commended Denmark for its excellent record on human rights, particularly the rights of children, and thanked the delegation for the succinctness of its replies.

70. Mr. VINTHEN (Denmark) said that his delegation had appreciated the openness and candour of the dialogue. He thanked the members of the Committee for the issues they had raised and the comments they had offered. He hoped that the delegation's replies had demonstrated the firm commitment of Denmark to fulfilling its international obligations.

71. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee appreciated the work carried out by Denmark on behalf of children not only in Denmark but throughout the world.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.