



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Summary record of the 1654th meeting*

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 28 September 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Zermatten

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* No summary records were issued for the 1652nd or 1653rd meetings.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties (continued)

Combined second to fourth periodic reports of Seychelles on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SYC/2-4, CRC/C/SYC/Q/2-4 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Seychelles took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that the Republic of Seychelles was an island state with a population of over 87,000 inhabitants, 28 per cent of whom were children. Youth affairs came under the purview of the Ministry of Social Development and Culture, but programmes and services for children were run by a variety of ministries and NGOs.
3. The National Plan of Action for Children 2005–2009 was founded on the principles of the Convention and built on earlier work done under the Seychelles Programme of Action for Children, which had been adopted in 1995. Some of the most important initiatives to come out of that plan were The Child Well-being Project, which measured trends in the perceived quality of life and well-being of children and adolescents; the Risk Indicator Framework, a tool for the early identification of vulnerable children; and the Child Development Centre, which worked to promote optimal child development. The Government had recently approved the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, a multisectoral policy document intended for all stakeholders which had been developed on the basis of a broad consultative process following the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in 2010.
4. In a study published by the Royal Commonwealth Society in March 2011, Seychelles had been ranked as the fourth-best country in the Commonwealth for a female child to be born. The ranking was based on life expectancy, the ratio of underweight female children, the average number of years of school attendance, the number of teenage pregnancies, girls' access to scholarships, political participation, the number of female athletes and wage equity.
5. The State party acknowledged that financial and human resource constraints impeded the full implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention. To address the challenges posed by the global financial crisis, Seychelles had embarked in 2008 on an ambitious macroeconomic programme which called for a reduction in public-sector jobs and fiscal discipline. The Government had nonetheless taken the precaution of ensuring that investment in important social sectors, notably health and education, would be maintained and made more efficient. The social safety net had been reorganized under the 2008 Welfare Agency Act to provide timely assistance to needy families, and programmes had been implemented to support families and teach them how to cope in difficult times. All State schools were allocated funds to assist students whose parents were unable to afford school supplies.
6. In 2008, the Government and the NGO umbrella organization had signed a memorandum establishing an institutional framework for increasing cooperation between the Government and civil society, and NGOs were being encouraged to supplement or take over services provided by the Government. Psychological services for children had been transferred from the Social Development Department to the National Council for Children; the vocational centre for disabled children had been transferred to the National Council for Disabled Persons; and alternative care institutions for children had been transferred to the Children's Homes Foundation. The Government provided some funding to NGOs.

7. The Education Reform Action Plan 2009–2010 was aimed at creating a high-quality education and human resources development system in tune with national needs. It focused on the need to provide for diversity, address national development priorities, improve the governance of educational institutions, and shape responsible, empowered students. Key areas of the curriculum were also being reviewed. In addition, new codes of conduct for primary and secondary schools had been introduced in 2010.

8. Aware of the need for disaggregated data on areas covered by the Convention, the State party had undertaken a number of studies to gather reliable data for policy formulation. A study examining the changing structure of the Seychellois family and current family support provisions was being prepared. Its findings would inform family policy and a reform of services.

9. Now that the economy was relatively stable and public debt was at a more manageable level, the Government's attention was firmly focused on social reform. A series of dialogues were to be held in schools and workplaces starting in October 2011. Those consultations, in which child, adolescent and family issues would feature prominently, would then serve as the basis for a plan of action for social reform.

10. **Ms. Aidoo** (Country Rapporteur) said that the State party was to be commended on its consistent investments in child services, on its attainment of most of the targets for the Millennium Development Goals, on the development of a media code of conduct and on its introduction of the National Plan of Action for Children, the National School Nutrition Policy and the Seychelles Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education. However, many of the reports on the human rights instruments that Seychelles had ratified were long overdue, and she wondered when the State party was planning on ratifying the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

11. There were several structural factors which hindered implementation of the Convention, including prevailing attitudes according to which children did not seem to be viewed as rights-holders and children's rights were thought to be detrimental to the interests of the family and society at large. Frequent transfers of the institutional responsibility for protecting children's rights and constant turnover of relevant staff were also a problem.

12. She asked what the State party was doing to review and amend the Civil Status Act in order to make the marriageable age the same for boys and girls. She wished to know to what extent civil society had been involved in preparing the report and if it was available on the Government website. The Committee would like to know if the Ministry of Social Development and Culture had sufficient human, financial and technical resources to coordinate the various agencies that implemented policies and programmes on children's rights both at the national and district level and how it monitored and evaluated the implementation of the Convention. Were the district task forces operational and how were they linked to the coordinating body, since their annual progress reports were submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers? She wondered what the role of the National Commission for Child Protection was and how useful it still was considering that it had not met since August 2009.

13. It would be useful to know when the National Population Group would undertake the formal assessment of the 2005–2009 National Plan of Action for Children, and whether a new plan for children was under consideration.

14. She welcomed the initiative to encourage businesses to make tax-exempt donations to the trust fund for early childhood care and education. However, it was not clear what measures were being undertaken to protect children's rights in the tourism industry. She asked if a code of conduct had been formulated in conjunction with the tourism industry to protect the rights of children and shield them from sex tourism and child prostitution.

15. In the light of a study conducted by NGOs in January 2011 which showed that the voices of children, especially those of girls, were not being sufficiently heard or taken into account, she enquired what measures were being taken or considered to ensure that children enjoyed freedom of expression.

16. **Ms. Nores de García** (Country Rapporteur) said that the State party was to be commended on the many legislative measures that it had recently adopted to promote the welfare of children and on its establishment of a family court. However, the report stated that the court had heard 18,696 cases, which raised the question as to whether the figure was a typographical error or whether a majority of Seychelles children had had to appeal to the courts concerning rights violations.

17. She shared Ms. Aidoo's concern at the difference between the legal age for marriage for boys and girls and asked what the reason for that difference was. The two-year gap between the age of sexual consent and the age at which adolescents could obtain contraceptives contributed to high levels of unwanted teenage pregnancy. Were measures being considered to rectify that inconsistency and to make it easier for teenage mothers to return to school? The Committee concurred with the recommendation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) that there should be clearly worded legislation on what were considered to be dangerous forms of child labour.

18. The Committee had been unable to ascertain the effects of the financial crisis on social expenditure on child services because it had not been provided with disaggregated data on budget allocations or the effectiveness of social expenditure. What corrective measures was Seychelles considering in that regard? It would be useful to have data on children who had been abused, mistreated or abandoned, on disabled children and on children with drug or other addictions in order to gauge the progress made in the State party. Noting that some forms of corporal punishment were still allowed, she asked if awareness campaigns on the subject were being carried out.

19. It was regrettable that girls had few opportunities to pursue technical careers and that schools did not make a greater effort to integrate disabled children. Social integration also appeared to be problematic for some ethnic minorities, such as Creoles and Chagossians who had not been able to obtain citizenship due to its prohibitive cost. It was of particular concern that the law prohibiting discrimination did not include social origin among the grounds that it cited.

20. **Mr. Kotrane** said that the Children's Act failed to ensure that the best interests of the child would be the primary consideration in court decisions because article 78 of the Act referred only to "the interest of the child". The same article was similarly ambiguous about the obligation of the family court to hear the views of children, since it included the proviso "where it is able to do so". Since existing legislation did not protect the right of children to know the identity of their biological parents, he wished to know what measures the State party intended to take to ensure that all children could claim a nationality.

21. **Ms. Maurás Pérez** said that, although collaboration between Government agencies and civil society organizations was important, there had been complaints that slow decision-making on the part of the Government at times hampered the work of civil society organizations, and she wished to know the State party's view on the matter. The heavy reliance on civil society for the implementation of child protection programmes also required examination. She would also like to know whether the new foundation headed by the First Lady and other organizations working for and with children could operate independently even if they received State funding and whether they used a rights-based approach or were engaged solely in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

22. Since the laws governing the media were undergoing reform, it would be useful to learn how the new legislation would impact children and whether the reforms would

include a code of conduct to ensure that the media respected the rights of the child, especially the right to appropriate information, given the well-known power of advertising to promote unhealthy habits and consumerism.

23. **Mr. Madi** asked how the State party was addressing the situation of the former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago. He wished to know why they had been forcibly evicted and transferred to the main island of Seychelles and then obliged to pay fees to obtain Seychellois citizenship. What was the legal status of those who did not obtain citizenship? Were they and their children entitled to State services?

24. Given the large gender disparities that still existed in Seychelles despite the equal opportunities afforded to boys and girls in education, the State party should consider launching a far-reaching campaign in the media and schools to overcome the traditional cultural values and paradigms that accounted for those disparities.

25. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked whether training was given to parents and to professionals who worked with children to ensure respect for children's rights and to change attitudes that led to children being treated like property.

26. **Ms. Lee** said that the increase in child-related activities reported in the State party's written replies (CRC/C/SYC/Q/2-4/Add.1) did not necessarily imply an increase in budget allocations. Moreover, investments seemed to have been made mostly in infrastructure, whereas the Committee would also like to see investment in child and family services. Disaggregated data on spending in each sector that affected children and on vulnerable groups were needed, and she would like to know whether the Indian Ocean Observatory of Children's Rights would continue its monitoring and data collection activities. The State party had referred to various studies in its report and written replies, but she would like to know whether the results shaped policy design and programme planning for children and families. Specifically, the Committee would like to know what impact the first biannual report on child well-being had had and whether the second report had been published yet.

27. **Mr. Pollar** asked what steps the Government had taken to ensure that the impact of all State action in connection with children was assessed in advance and evaluated ex post and that the principles of the Convention were built into policy delivery. How was independent representation in the best interests of the child provided for in the child protection system? Given the pressures that Seychelles faced, he wished to know what measures were in place to ensure that the principle of the best interests of the child would be upheld. It would be appreciated if the State party would comment on the fact that some persons, particularly the Chagossians, remained stateless because citizenship application fees were so high and explain how their children could acquire citizenship.

28. **Mr. Gastaud**, noting that the post of Commissioner of Children's Rights had been created but not filled, asked whether the eventual occupant of that post would have sufficient resources and the power to refer cases involving alleged criminal conduct to the courts. Also, apart from the National Youth Council, there were no permanent mechanisms for dialogue or arrangements for gathering children's opinions, and he wished to know what action the State party was taking in that regard.

29. **Ms. Al-Asmar** asked whether the right of the child to be heard in the home and at school, as well as in court, was protected by laws or regulations and whether a body had been appointed to protect children's right to be heard and taken seriously as set forth in general comment No. 12. She also wished to know whether a Seychellois mother married to a foreigner could pass on her nationality to her children and whether the State party was planning to prohibit corporal punishment, which was apparently commonly used on girls and women in the home.

30. **Ms. Wijemanne** said that Seychelles ranked high on certain adolescent health indicators, but the available information pointed to a high rate of underage pregnancies, which raised the issue of illegal abortions and illegal adoptions. With regard to adolescent health outreach work, she enquired about access to contraception, the support given to adolescent mothers after they gave birth and the measures taken to prevent illegal drug use and to support adolescents from dysfunctional families.

31. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a Committee member, noted that Seychelles had opened its first university in 2010 and asked whether there were plans to develop specific courses on the rights of the child and the research skills needed to fill the gaps in the country's data collection procedures. He also invited the State party to comment on the issue of corporal punishment.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 11.40 a.m.

32. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles), responding to an earlier question, said that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had drawn up a list of the conventions to which Seychelles was a party but had not yet reported on. It was also looking into the question of which protocols it should consider becoming a party to. In the past, Seychelles had signed and ratified conventions without subsequently incorporating them properly into its domestic legislation, and it wished to be more thorough in that regard in the future. Progress would be slowed, however, by human resource limitations.

33. **The Chairperson** said that the real issue of interest to the Committee was why the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had not been ratified. Did the tourist industry pose a problem in that respect?

34. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that there were no obstacles to ratification of the Optional Protocol, but its provisions first needed to be studied in full. Tourism was a pillar of the economy of Seychelles, but that did not represent an obstacle to developing a code of conduct, in cooperation with the industry, to prevent tourism from having a harmful impact on children.

35. He agreed that more disaggregated data on children were needed and said that the Ministry of Finance was revising its budgeting formula and the Ministry of Social Development and Culture was providing training in gender budgeting with the help of international partners. Improvements also needed to be made in the National Statistics Bureau. Data on children aged 15 to 18 needed to be separated from the data collected on the larger group of persons aged 15 to 19; that needed to be done without abandoning the larger age grouping, however, which was used by the World Health Organization.

36. Seychelles had a very small population; as a result, human resources were stretched and people involved in civil society or organizations often also worked in the Government. Although most services in Seychelles had traditionally been provided by the State, the Government was encouraging civil society organizations, including the churches, to undertake new roles in society. The State provided funding to the Liaison Unit of Non-Governmental Organisations of Seychelles and to some civil society organizations, such as the National Council for Children and the Council for the Disabled.

37. **Ms. Aidoo** said that there was a danger that attempts to share resources could in fact lead to the State relieving itself of some of its responsibilities by transferring significant areas of children's services to NGOs. Examples included the transfer of responsibility for providing psychological services for children who had been sexually abused or neglected and services for children with disabilities to NGOs. If NGOs provided services but were not included in discussions on strategy, policy and standards, they were not being treated as strategic partners, but instead merely as service providers.

38. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that the provision of psychological services for children had been transferred to the National Council for Children because that had seemed the most appropriate arrangement; similar services were also provided by the Ministry of Health. The Social Development Department retained oversight of vocational training programmes for young people that were administered by the National Council for Disabled Persons.

39. Certainly, the interests of the private sector were sometimes at odds with children's best interests. A media association was being set up, and there was also a media commission which acted as a supervisory body. The two media bodies were due to draft a code of conduct, and it was clear that the code should make specific reference to the rights set forth in the Convention. Training was given to members of the media to assist in their coverage of topics relating to environmental protection and gender equality, and the same could be done for the rights of the child. The main daily newspaper in Seychelles was State-owned and did not carry advertisements for alcohol or tobacco products as a matter of principle. Almost all social workers and probation officers had obtained a diploma in social work and all teachers completed training that included information on the Convention.

40. **Ms. Aidoo** asked whether foreign nationals who were recruited into public service in Seychelles were also trained on the rights of the child.

41. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that foreign nationals did not receive training on the rights of the child. The judiciary, which was undergoing a general review, was keen to strengthen the protection of children's rights. The Indian Ocean Observatory of Children's Rights had not functioned since 2010 due to a lack of resources.

42. The difference in the legal ages for marriage for boys and girls was a legacy of past traditions. His country did recognize the need to harmonize those age limits, although there was some question as to whether it might be in a girl's interest to marry if she became pregnant while still under the age of 18.

43. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, suggested that the key principles of the consideration of the best interests of the child and the child's right to be heard, as provided for in the Convention, should be properly applied in the State party.

44. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that the consideration of the best interests of the child and the child's right to be heard would be taken into account when reviewing legislation. Although there was a need to develop a stronger culture of respect for that right, some progress had been made in that area. In reply to earlier questions regarding nationality, he noted that all children who were born in Seychelles, including children born to parents from the Chagos Archipelago, automatically received Seychellois nationality. He did not personally know of any problem regarding the nationality of Chagossians in Seychelles, but would investigate the matter.

45. **Mr. Pollar** said that the information that he had received indicated that when the population of the Chagos Archipelago was cleared, Chagossians were charged a fee to obtain Seychelles nationality. Those who could not afford to pay the fee were left stateless and might have passed that status onto their children.

46. **Ms. Varmah** asked whether children of Chagossian parents had access to free education and health care and to social welfare benefits.

47. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that all children residing in Seychelles were given the option of attending State schools, including the children of foreign nationals. On a personal level, he was surprised by the information regarding discrimination against people of Chagos origin, since the Seychellois were proud to be one people descended from many different places.

48. **Ms. Nores de García** said that important questions with regard to the country's legislation included whether consideration was given to the best interests of the child, whether children could keep their paternal surname after their parents had divorced and whether children had a right to know who their biological parents were. Two of the key principles embodied in the Convention were that every person under the age of 18 should be considered a child and that the best interests of the child should be the primary consideration in any decision affecting the child. Neither of those principles was in evidence in the legislation of Seychelles, leading her to ask whether there were any initiatives to introduce them.

49. **Mr. Pollar** said that if everyone born in Seychelles received Seychellois nationality, then the literature surrounding the problems of Chagossians and nationality appeared to be inaccurate.

50. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that everyone born in Seychelles received Seychellois nationality and that his country recognized dual nationality. When the parents of a child divorced, the child could retain his or her father's surname. The fathers of children who were born to unmarried parents were increasingly acknowledging those children, although that was not always the case. The child's right to know his or her origins should be given consideration in cases in which the mother did not want to reveal who the father of her child was, or in which she misidentified the father, and that principle, as set forth in the Convention, needed to be translated into legislation.

51. **Mr. Kotrane** said that, in situations where different individual's rights conflicted with one another, the Convention stipulated that the interests of the child should take precedence; that was also the case regarding the conflict between the mother's right not to reveal the father's identity and the child's right to know his or her parents. In cases where fatherhood was disputed, the matter should be settled by the courts.

52. **Ms. Varmah** asked whether children born to foreign parents in Seychelles automatically acquired dual nationality and whether dual nationals were required to renounce one or the other nationality upon reaching a certain age.

53. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that, as far as he was aware, children born in Seychelles to foreign nationals automatically received Seychellois nationality; whether or not they received another nationality as well depended on the laws of the parents' home country. Seychelles did not require dual nationals to renounce other nationalities at any point.

54. Corporal punishment was not used in schools, but there was no law against its use in the home. Public attitudes indicated that corporal punishment was being less frequently practised in the home than in the past.

55. **The Chairperson** said that he was concerned by the fact that some parents still disciplined their children with what they perceived as "reasonable" forms of corporal punishment. The Committee would recommend that the State party should intensify its efforts to change people's attitudes about corporal punishment and that it should be explicitly prohibited by law. Campaigns to convince parents that the use of corporal punishment was unacceptable were not enough.

56. **Mr. Shamlaye** (Seychelles) said that he agreed that corporal punishment should be prohibited, even in the home, but parents had to discipline their children somehow. With regard to the age of sexual consent, the law said that a person who had sexual relations with a child under 15 could not use alleged consent as a defence. The law did not set a certain age for access to contraception, but there was a common understanding that parents had a say in the matter. The fact that children under 18 were having sex, yet advice and contraception were not readily available, should be addressed. A national sexual and

reproductive health policy was under development to help counter the high teenage pregnancy rate.

57. **The Chairperson** said that he welcomed the new policy. There was an obvious need for adequate sex education in schools and for young people to have access to contraception and advice without having to ask their parents. He invited Committee members to ask any questions that they had on the family environment, education, health and special protection measures.

58. **Ms. Nores de García** said that there had been a sharp increase in the number of divorces. She would like to know what steps were being taken to protect single-parent families and provide adequate childcare, education and health care. The cost of childcare represented 12 per cent of the average daily wage, which was quite high. What measures were being adopted to halt the trend towards family disintegration? She asked what steps were being taken to protect teenage mothers and their children and to prevent the number of teenage pregnancies from rising. How was the State party addressing the problem of teenage drug addiction and what steps were being taken to provide a dedicated drug rehabilitation centre for children?

59. **Ms. Aidoo** said that, given the small size of the child population and the relative wealth of Seychelles, the Government should develop more dynamic, proactive policies to overcome the major social challenges that were leading to serious violations of children's rights and undermining the human capital of the country. She asked what parenting programmes were in place for teenage mothers and what steps had been taken to ensure that fathers took responsibility for supporting their children. She would also like to know whether the State party intended to ratify the Hague Conventions on child maintenance, especially conventions Nos. 24, 25 and 34. She wished to know what preventive measures had been adopted to counter drug and alcohol abuse among children, including measures to curb advertising and marketing that promoted such substances. Were there enough psychologists in place to support those children? She requested information on the specific actions taken to prevent child sexual abuse and to reduce the long delays experienced in the judicial process. What steps were being taken to reintegrate such children and ensure that the perpetrators were found and punished?

60. **Ms. Varmah** said that much remained to be done to combat discrimination against children with disabilities. She asked what steps had been taken to avoid the institutionalization of abandoned children. Most children with disabilities were educated in special schools, and she wondered whether there were plans to promote inclusive education. What provision was made for in-service training to ensure that teachers were equipped to cater for the specific needs of children with different types of disabilities? She asked what measures had been adopted to ensure that children with disabilities could express their views on an equal footing with other children. She enquired whether children with disabilities had access to information on sexual and reproductive health. She would like to know whether the subject of human rights was included in primary school curricula as well as at secondary level and whether a human rights education strategy existed that covered both the formal education sector and the public at large.

61. **Ms. Lee** said that she was concerned about the high school dropout and truancy rates, especially among boys, and took note of the information provided in the NGO report entitled "Together We Can Do Better for Children of Seychelles". She asked whether vocational training was available to address the low educational outcomes prevalent among boys. She wished to know why the mortality rate, especially the neonatal mortality rate, was high among boys.

62. **Ms. Al-Shehail** requested an update on progress in building a centre to accommodate children in conflict with the law. The project was urgent, as the country's

only prison was at full capacity and conditions were poor. She asked what steps were being taken to address the inefficiency of the juvenile justice system and shorten the length of pretrial detention, which was often over three years.

63. **Ms. Sandberg**, referring to the harbouring or trafficking of children for purposes of sexual exploitation, enquired whether the State party intended to pass legislation to prohibit trafficking. What measures had been taken to identify, protect and rehabilitate the victims of trafficking?

64. **Mr. Kotrane** said that he would appreciate clarification on reports that child labour was still legal for children under the age of 15. While he welcomed the fact that Seychelles had ratified most of the ILO conventions on enforced labour, the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999 (No. 182) could be effective only if the State adopted regulations to define the type of work that was deemed to be hazardous for children under the age of 18. When did Seychelles intend to adopt such regulations?

65. **Ms. Al-Asmar** asked whether, under the recently reformed educational system, gender stereotyping in curricula had been eliminated. If so, why did girls still have problems gaining access to vocational training? She wondered whether the educational system concentrated on preparing children for life or whether it was entirely competitive, encouraging children to focus on exams and getting the best marks possible. She commended the State party on the high level of kindergarten attendance, which was a great investment in early childhood. She wished to know whether steps were being taken to detect disabilities early on so that children could be provided with appropriate support.

66. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked what steps were being taken to ensure that parents respected the right of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities. It had been reported that many parents did not allow their children to stay indoors to play, so they could play only outside in the street. He would like to know what specific legal measures had been adopted to support child victims and witnesses of crimes at all stages of legal proceedings. How was the child protected from victimization by defendants' lawyers and other officials? What measures had been taken to minimize the negative effects of legal proceedings on child victims?

67. **Ms. Wijemanne** asked whether there was a programme for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS that specifically focused on children and adolescents. She was concerned by the lack of a national campaign to promote breastfeeding and by the fact that guidelines concerning the use of replacement formula milk from a very early age did not appear to be adhered to. There might be a link between those factors and the growing problem of child obesity.

68. **Mr. Pollar** asked what measures had been adopted to prevent illicit international transfers of children by a parent. It appeared that voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces was permitted under the age of 18 if the child had parental consent. He wished to know how many children were currently in the Armed Forces and whether the State intended to prohibit the recruitment of children in conformity with the African Union's rule that the minimum age of recruitment should be 18 years. What provision had been made to provide instruction to military personnel on children's rights?

69. **The Chairperson** said that he understood that the minimum age of criminal responsibility was 12, but could even be as low as 7, which would contravene the Convention.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.