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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 874th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 26 May 2003, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 6) (continued)

Initial report of the Solomon Islands (continued) (CRC/C/51/Add.6; CRC/C/Q/SOL/1; CRC/C/RESP/29)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Iniakwala, Ms. Kingmele and Ms. Billy took places at the Committee table.
2. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that, since the geography of the Solomon Islands made the dissemination of information difficult, the Government was planning to decentralize certain operations in order to give the provinces more freedom to manage their own affairs. The draft National Children's Policy, Strategy and Plan of Action called for the decentralization of centres responsible for children's issues in order to encourage closer ties with communities. Radio provided an effective means of spreading information throughout the country.
3. Although legislation required the registration of births and deaths, there were a number of gaps in the government registration system. Births that occurred within health facilities were recorded by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, while those that occurred in homes were recorded by church officials. Verification of birth registration was carried out during a child's first contact with a health facility and, if necessary, a birth certificate was sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs. A system was being developed to improve the transmission of data from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was responsible for keeping records of births and deaths. Death registration posed a problem, since death records were kept almost exclusively by the churches. However, deaths that occurred within health facilities were recorded by the Ministry of Health.
4. Children's influence on family and school affairs remained minimal. However, there had been some improvement in that area thanks to awareness-raising campaigns for parents and teachers. Children's views were usually taken into account in connection with families' decisions to move. The typical family structure in the Solomon Islands was the extended family and childcare responsibilities were often shared between parents and other relatives. The draft National Children's Policy, which had been updated to include such issues as children in difficult circumstances and drug abuse, would soon be submitted to the Government for approval. One of its aims was to serve as a basis for the formulation of sectoral strategies. Various key stakeholders had been involved in the consultation process to develop the policy, including governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and children.
5. External review or monitoring of the report would be welcomed and would perhaps improve the country's reporting on its implementation of the Convention.
6. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that, although corporal punishment had been banned in schools by a 1989 High Court decision, that practice still occurred. She requested recommendations on how the Government could monitor the problem. Regarding child abuse in

families, she said that national legislation addressed abuses in general but did not include specific provisions relating to child abuse in the home. The Government was currently considering a child protection bill that provided for the removal of abused children from their families.

7. Regarding the protection of privacy, the Juvenile Offenders Act prohibited the publication in the media of information that could lead to the identification of a child charged with an offence. It also provided that only the officers of the court, the parties involved, their advocates or other persons directly concerned with the case were allowed to attend proceedings where a child was being prosecuted.

8. While there had been international reports of torture during the ethnic conflict in the Solomon Islands, the Government did not have records of any such acts. It had granted amnesty to those who had been involved in the conflict from the time of the coup d'état until the signing of the peace agreement; it had not pardoned acts of torture that might have occurred subsequently. While it was up to complainants to take action on their own behalf, people were afraid to exercise their rights owing to the country's inability to guarantee law and order. To address that problem, six workshops had been held to teach human rights to law enforcement officers.

9. Under the current Adoption Act, only the mother's consent was necessary in order for a child to be put up for adoption. However, an adoption bill under consideration sought to eliminate that provision and require consent to be obtained from both parents or guardians of the child.

10. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that, as elsewhere, perceptions in the Solomon Islands were influenced by general stereotypes. Such stereotypes had been challenged by foreign organizations and by women's organizations in the country. Although school enrolment had always been low for girls, there had recently been a marked increase in girls' primary school enrolment, which had been brought up to the same level as boys'. The situation in secondary schools was less favourable because there were not enough boarding accommodations for girls. Although the Governments of Australia and New Zealand had provided assistance for the construction of dormitories for girls, much of that assistance had been diverted as a result of the armed conflict. An NGO had recently established a gender office in Honiara to raise gender awareness throughout the country, and numerous human rights programmes had been set up to train community paralegals to speak to communities on such issues as gender, human rights, the International Bill of Human Rights, and other international conventions, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Similar training programmes had been developed for schoolteachers and young people, and there were human rights workshops for judges, magistrates and law enforcement officers.

11. The Solomon Islands had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in May 2002 and a multisectoral committee had been set up to prepare a plan for its implementation, review national legislation and government policies in the light of the Convention and analyse the situation of women in the country.

12. Although the church was the main authority for dealing with community issues, the extended family was the main authority where children were concerned. The extended family was the predominant family structure in the Solomon Islands, although it was stronger in villages than in urban areas. It was difficult to mobilize civil society owing to the lawlessness prevailing in the country in the aftermath of the ethnic uprising.

13. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that, while the Ministry of Health and Medical Services had developed a rehabilitation programme to integrate disabled children into the community, it did not have the capacity to train children with severe disabilities. Such training was provided by NGOs, such as the Red Cross Society. Much work remained to be done, and the Government was considering the adoption of legislation to address issues relating to disabled persons. The problem of discrimination essentially concerned the Government's inability to help disabled persons and the wide disparity in the services available to such persons in urban and rural areas.

14. The ethnic problem was related to the unequal distribution of wealth in the country and to the ownership of resources by certain groups. The Government was trying to address the problems by giving communities more freedom to manage their own resources and affairs. Amendments had been made to the Constitution in an effort to end tribal and ethnic tensions.

15. The CHAIRPERSON wished to know the reasons for the erosion of the extended family and what measures the Government had taken to protect it. He also wished to know what kinds of problems the Government was experiencing in its efforts to maintain law and order.

16. Ms. AL-THANI asked for more information concerning the way in which cases of child abuse were handled. She wondered where an abused child would turn for help and how he or she could avoid being revictimized. She also enquired about the role of the church in such cases.

17. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that, unlike rural families, which practised subsistence agriculture, people in urban areas relied more heavily on monetary resources, which made it more difficult to meet the needs of an extended family. Living space was also more limited in urban areas.

18. Mr. LIWSKI enquired whether the Government had identified the needs of children traumatized by the ethnic armed conflict of 1998 and whether any special programmes had been set up to address them.

19. Mr. KOTRANE requested clarification on the system of the "bride price", which subordinated a woman to her husband. He wondered what could be done to abolish the related practice by which a mother lost custody of her child upon her husband's death; that was contrary to the Convention and the best interests of the child.

20. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that the Government currently did not have any measures to address the erosion of the extended family, although NGOs and churches provided counselling to families. The problem of law and order was mainly attributable to the Government's inability to enforce the law and bring offenders to justice. With regard to abused children, church-run institutions provided shelter and counselling; there were no State-owned homes for child victims of abuse.

21. There were no official statistics on the number of torture cases each year. However, there had been unofficial reports of torture.
22. Young people suffered from emotional problems partly because many of the freedoms they had enjoyed prior to the outbreak of ethnic tension had been restricted. Consequently, a significant number of young people had resorted to drug abuse and delinquency.
23. The system of transferring ownership of women and their offspring through payment of a “bride price” was practised only by certain ethnic groups. Under the system, children were usually cared for by members of the father’s family in the event of the death of either parent. The Government was having difficulty in bringing that tradition into line with the provisions of the Convention.
24. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that the authorities were considering the introduction of a mechanism to investigate and prosecute child abuse cases and to create a support system in which all stakeholders would work together to provide assistance to child victims.
25. Ms. ORTIZ enquired whether there was any legislation that provided for the removal of the perpetrator rather than the victim of domestic abuse from the family home.
26. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that there was no legislation in the Solomon Islands to combat domestic violence. However, the National Advisory Committee on Children had proposed the introduction of a family protection bill to address the issue.
27. Although there were measures to protect children from harmful information, recent financial difficulties had hindered their implementation. For example, a censorship board had been established but was currently not in operation. Under the Education Act, the Minister of Education had the authority to prohibit the use in schools of any material that was considered to be contrary to the best interests of the child. Furthermore, the Penal Code prohibited the distribution of illicit materials.
28. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that members of the extended family usually cared for children born out of wedlock. Under certain laws, including the Islanders’ Marriage Act, such children had no inheritance rights. However, a number of women’s organizations had asked for the relevant legislation to be reviewed and brought into line with the provisions of the Convention.
29. Mr. CITARELLA enquired whether there had been any problems in registering children born out of wedlock, in view of the fact that such children were referred to as being illegitimate.
30. Ms. ORTIZ asked if the delegation was aware of any cases involving the falsification of a child’s identity.
31. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that all births were registered under the names of the natural parents, regardless of whether the child was born in or out of wedlock. As far as he knew, there were no cases of falsified identity.

32. Ms. AL-THANI said that she was not convinced that any serious efforts were being made to meet the basic needs of disabled children and to eliminate discrimination against them at the national and local levels. She was particularly concerned by the fact that the Government continued to use discriminatory terminology when referring to persons with disabilities. Further information should be provided about the efforts being made to rehabilitate disabled children and reintegrate them into society and about the support provided by the Government to the organizations active in that field.

33. The statistics on birth and mortality were confusing. She enquired how the mortality rate had been calculated, given that there was no reliable death registration system. According to the report, the infant mortality rate had dropped from an estimated 38 per 1,000 live births in 1995 to 36 per 1,000 live births in 2000. However, the written replies indicated that the rate for 1999 had been 66 per 1,000 live births. Furthermore, the figures provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) did not correspond to any of the figures provided by the Government.

34. She had been surprised to learn that only one case of HIV/AIDS had been detected since 1995. She wondered whether that information was accurate and whether any particular measures had been taken by the Government to prevent the spread of the disease. The delegation should explain why a growing number of adolescents were becoming involved in drug and alcohol abuse and why there had been an increase in teenage suicides, teenage pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. She would be interested in knowing what steps were being taken to address those problems.

35. Ms. VUCKOVIC-SAHOVIC urged the Government to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Discrimination in Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in order to raise the population's awareness of the rights contained in those instruments with regard to education and to indicate to the international community its commitment to guaranteeing those rights. Other international instruments should be ratified in order to ensure adequate care for children in need of special protection measures.

36. In 1999, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had recommended that the Government should take measures to prevent the excessive exploitation of the country's forestry and fishing resources. Such threats to the natural environment affected the maintenance of an adequate standard of living. The Government should be encouraged to incorporate environmental education into school curricula.

37. Ms. CHUTIKUL said that further information should be provided about the situation of girls working in domestic service. While the Labour Act stipulated various age restrictions with regard to children working in industrial, mining and shipping enterprises, there were no prohibitions or special considerations governing those who employed children 12 years or older in the commercial sector. In its report, the Government recognized the need for additional or revised legislation to protect children from potential exploitation. It also drew attention to the fact that the Labour Act omitted any specific wording that protected children from economic exploitation or from work hazardous to children's health or mental, spiritual, moral or social development; such wording should be incorporated in future legislation. In its written replies,

the Government indicated that efforts to harmonize domestic laws with the Convention had come to a halt and that the Law Reform Commission currently existed in name only. She wondered whether there was any prospect of reactivating the Commission so that work in that field could continue.

38. Ms. ALUOCH noted that, according to the report, the Juvenile Offenders Act provided for a separate juvenile court. It was unclear whether there was only one juvenile court for the whole country; if so, she wondered whether one court was sufficient. She was deeply concerned about the procedure according to which a child as young as 10 could be arrested, held in a cell for 24 hours, interrogated, formally charged, fingerprinted and advised of a hearing date before being given an opportunity to meet a social welfare officer. The system should be changed to allow third-party involvement at a much earlier stage.

39. She was concerned that a child above 9 years of age who had been convicted of murder was subject to the mandatory and unconditional penalty of life imprisonment. It seemed that the Governor-General was the only person, acting on behalf of the Head of State, who could grant a pardon. She wished to know exactly how long the pardoning process could take.

40. Mr. CITARELLA requested information about the composition of the juvenile court and about how it differed from an ordinary court. Further clarification should be provided about the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Although the age of 8 had been cited, it seemed that any child aged 9 or over could be sentenced to life imprisonment; that was a very serious breach of the Convention.

41. Ms. TAYLOR said that, according to the information provided, a quarter of all children under 5 suffered from mild to moderate malnutrition. She wondered what steps were being taken to ensure that mothers and their children received sufficient food. She would also like to know whether any steps had been taken to provide health care, education and other assistance to internally displaced children.

42. The United Kingdom Privy Council had recently ruled that it was unconstitutional to detain juveniles indefinitely at the Governor-General's pleasure. As a member of the Commonwealth, the Solomon Islands was obliged to review its legislation in that regard.

43. She expressed concern that children who were convicted with adults were required to serve their sentence in an adult prison. Efforts should be made not only to ensure that children were separated from adults in prisons but also to find alternatives to imprisonment.

44. Mr. KRAPPMANN noted with disappointment that education was neither free nor compulsory in the Solomon Islands. Many parents could not afford to pay school fees and consequently did not send their children to school. Accurate statistics should be provided about how many children dropped out of primary school, how many were forced to repeat a year and how many did not attend school at all. Information should also be provided on the number of children engaged in vocational training. He wondered whether there was a high youth unemployment rate, since not all children who dropped out of school registered in a vocational training course. Children with nothing to do were more likely to become involved in drug and alcohol abuse. He urged the Government to consult with donor countries in order to find a solution to the problem.

45. Ms. Yanghee LEE said that further information should be provided about the Government's educational aims, which did not appear to include certain key issues. Although early childhood education was not widespread, she commended the Government for providing pre-school education in the local languages. The Convention should be translated into those languages and distributed among very young children.

46. She commended the establishment of a national disability register in 1995. The delegation should outline the progress made in that field and also explain why there continued to be such a severe lack of services for people with disabilities. There seemed to be some confusion in the report and written replies about the distinction between mental disability and mental illness, and further clarification was necessary. She would be interested in knowing whether the use of drugs had any impact on the rate of psychological illnesses among adolescents.

47. Mr. FILALI wished to know whether there were any mechanisms to counteract police abuses, in particular with regard to child arrests. He wondered whether habeas corpus was applicable under the legal system of the Solomon Islands. It would also be useful to know whether juvenile court judges had to take account of preliminary inquiries by the police or whether they could use their discretion in evaluating the situation. He asked what procedures were applied in cases where offenders were not caught in flagrante delicto. He stressed that courts should hear cases involving juvenile offenders in camera rather than in the company of adults.

48. Referring to paragraph 413 of the report, he said that the court had not only an option but also the obligation to direct a probation officer to prepare and submit a report on all the contributing aspects of the young person's life. The Juvenile Offenders Act should emphasize that the arrest of a child was an exceptional measure and should be accorded exceptional treatment.

49. Mr. KOTRANE said that the State party had ratified very few international conventions dealing with child labour. With regard to the protection of children against violence, he said that the Government should consider preventive measures and should involve authorities other than police in reporting cases of ill-treatment that did not necessarily constitute criminal offences. That would make it easier for the authorities to deal with cases of violence, since the need to qualify an act of violence as a criminal offence under the Penal Code would be eliminated.

50. Ms. KHATTAB wished to know what steps the church was taking to bridge the gaps in the education and health-care systems. She wondered why more funds had been allocated to higher education than to primary education, since more children were enrolled in primary education.

51. She wished to know whether judges received human rights training and to what extent their situation, including payment, morale and social standing, had been affected by the internal conflict.

52. She would be interested in knowing the teacher-to-pupil ratio and, if the ratio was not known, how the Government formulated its policies in the area of education.

53. She requested information on the number of people who had benefited from the regional adolescent reproductive health project, and on the Government's assessment of that project.
54. She wished to know what role family support centres played in dealing with child abuse and neglect, and how many people made use of those centres.
55. Mr. AL-SHEDDI asked for information on the assistance that the Government received from the World Bank, UNESCO and other institutions. It would be useful to know whether any programmes had been launched in the field of education and, if so, what the results of those programmes had been.
56. Mr. LIWSKI wished to know how the ethnic conflict had affected the health system and how accessible health units were in terms of distance, culture, language and fees. He would welcome information on the quality of peripheral services in terms of integration of professionals. With regard to the Government's accession to the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Healthcare, he asked to what extent different ethnic communities participated in the planning and implementation of health programmes.
57. He wished to know whether there were any mental health programmes for adolescents affected by the ethnic conflict. He also wished to know whether the Government's policy on healthy food and nutrition included the promotion of breastfeeding.
58. Mr. OUEDRAOGO wished to know what role the Government played in coordinating the management of natural disasters and what measures were envisaged to improve such coordination. Since Bougainvilleans were neither citizens nor refugees, they would eventually have to leave the country. He enquired whether the Government was responsible for their return or whether their return was negotiated.
59. Ms. ORTIZ, referring to paragraph 99 of the report, asked whether the term "informal adoptions" referred to substitute families rather than to bona fide adoptions. Adoptions could only be "formal" and had to be carried out in accordance with the law.
60. The CHAIRMAN said that there had been reports that some 100 children had been recruited as soldiers in the ethnic conflict. He wished to know what measures the Government was taking to prevent the phenomenon and what would be done to demobilize and rehabilitate child recruits.
61. He said that, according to the report, children as young as 11 were involved in prostitution. He wished to know whether the Government considered the failure to report cases of commercial sexual exploitation as a serious obstacle to action and whether it intended to take measures to facilitate the reporting of such cases.
62. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that the Ministry of Health was taking measures to improve the situation of children with disabilities. The Ministry was providing assistance to a disabled persons association that had been established in February 2003 and a task force had been set up to raise public awareness about persons with disabilities. He agreed that the Government needed to address the issue of the politically incorrect language that was used to refer to disabled persons.

63. Registration was carried out through a community rehabilitation programme within the Ministry of Health. However, owing to a lack of financial resources, the registration process was slowly coming to a halt.

64. Church organizations and other groups within the community provided support to families caring for children with disabilities. Although community rehabilitation assistants were trained to help such families and to provide them with relevant information, the continuation of the assistance programme had been jeopardized by a lack of support. With regard to basic health, he said that the Government would take the necessary steps to collect and provide reliable data on child mortality and a range of other health indicators.

65. The facilities that had been set up at the local and national levels by the Ministry of Health had been severely affected by the ethnic conflict. Facilities in the conflict zones had been destroyed. Service delivery had deteriorated as a result of the economic situation in general, and low morale among the workforce, which was often not paid, in particular. However, the Government was taking steps to improve the situation and to review its approach to health care. Health facilities were free of charge and open to all. Although communities were asked to provide in-kind support to facilities, people who declined to do so were not turned away.

66. Food production was not a problem, since much land was available for cultivation. Infection, endemic diseases and a lack of knowledge about healthy food were to blame for moderate malnutrition among the population.

67. Ms. AL-THANI asked whether there were any food taboos or cultural attitudes among pregnant women.

68. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that dietary taboos existed but, thanks to education, attitudes were slowly changing. A church-run project taught young mothers about diet and encouraged breastfeeding.

69. Although a new media-based government programme on adolescents' reproductive health had already made a considerable impact, no statistics were yet available.

70. He agreed that it was surprising that there had only been one case of HIV/AIDS in the Solomon Islands since 1994. High-risk groups and blood donors were systematically screened. A possible explanation was that the case concerned a foreigner who had since left the country. The Government was not, however, complacent and was fully aware of its inability to deal effectively with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. An agreement had been reached with the Australian Government to implement a new statistics programme. Government measures would focus on prevention through education and awareness-raising campaigns.

71. The role of churches in health and education was crucial in the Solomon Islands. Three hospitals and several clinics were church-run and the Government cooperated closely with religious groups to address health problems. Many primary and secondary schools were also church-run.

72. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that the Law Reform Commission had been left dormant because it had been receiving few proposals. Recommendations for legal reforms would be dealt with by the legal drafting division of the Attorney-General's Chambers, until the Commission could be reactivated.

73. There were no separate juvenile courts in the Solomon Islands, but the Magistrate's Courts sat once a week to hear cases involving juveniles. The composition of those courts depended on the availability of judges. The Juvenile Offenders Act 1972 defined a "child" as a person under the age of 14, and a "young person" as a person between the ages of 14 and 18. Children could be sent to prison only as a last resort, particularly when they posed a threat to public security. Under the Child Rights Bill, the presence of a child's parents, guardian or legal representative was required before charges could be made.

74. Mr. CITARELLA requested an explanation of paragraph 420 of the initial report, which stated that a child above 9 years of age convicted of murder would be sentenced to life imprisonment. He asked whether it was true that a child aged 12 years or more was not guaranteed legal assistance in court.

75. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that she had not heard of any case of children being sent to prison in the Solomon Islands.

76. Only formal adoption was recognized by the courts, but substitute parenthood did occur.

77. The concept of habeas corpus was applicable in the court system.

78. Despite the tension in the Solomon Islands, the courts continued to function normally and judges were being paid. The only problems they faced were of an administrative nature.

79. The Government of the Solomon Islands would endeavour to ratify all ILO conventions.

80. Ms. ALUOCH asked why section 4 of the Constitution, under which children above 9 years of age were sentenced to life imprisonment for murder, had not been amended.

81. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that in practice the courts avoided sending children to prison.

82. Ms. SARDENBERG asked whether the Government had any information about informal adoption, even though it was not officially recognized. Were any government measures taken to prevent the exploitation of girls by their substitute parents?

83. Ms. KINGMELE (Solomon Islands) said that, in most cases of informal adoption, single mothers entrusted their children to childless couples and the children were not at risk. The Government had no information about the health care or education that those children received.

84. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that, while there was no specific mention of the right to education in the current Constitution, the Child Rights Bill, the draft Bill of Rights and the draft Constitution included provisions on the right to education. The Education Act had already established the national framework for an education system.

85. The fact that education was neither compulsory nor free of charge was a major concern for the Government. A lack of resources, the Solomon Islands' rapidly growing population and the state of tension in the country were making it difficult for the Government to rectify the situation. With the help of the Australian Government, the issue of school fees and other education-related difficulties were being gradually addressed. New classrooms and dormitories had been built by the World Bank, and the European Union had lent the Government support in reopening the College of Higher Education, a teacher-training establishment.

86. The Family Support Centre, a non-governmental establishment, had been set up in 1985 in response to growing violence against women. The level of its legal and counselling services had declined since the onset of tension in the Solomon Islands. Although the Centre dispensed services only in Honiara, the capital, it also organized awareness-raising campaigns, concerning children's and other human rights, in the provinces.

87. The CHAIRPERSON asked what the Government was doing to address the problem of school dropouts until the Child Rights Bill was adopted.

88. Ms. BILLY (Solomon Islands) said that the repercussions of the school dropout rate were more serious in urban areas. In the villages, children were taught life skills, such as horticulture and fishing, by their parents. The Government was doing little to address the problem, which was being dealt with by NGOs. Under one unofficial programme, young people were being encouraged to teach their peers about major issues, including drug abuse.

89. Judges in the Solomon Islands were receiving instruction in human rights, including children's rights, as part of a United Nations Development Programme regional project. Judges from neighbouring countries where United Nations conventions were better implemented often shared information with their counterparts in the Solomon Islands.

90. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that the National Disaster Council did all it could to issue adequate warnings of natural disasters. In many cases, relief efforts were hampered by the wide geographical area affected.

91. The Government intended to give priority both to the creation of a juvenile court system and to environmental protection in its new National Plan of Action for Children.

92. There were no official data on child soldiers but the problem was known to exist, albeit to a limited extent. The Government was doing all it could to end the current conflict.

93. The CHAIRPERSON asked whether child labour was of concern to the Government.

94. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that the Government was doing all it could to address the problem of child labour. Traditionally, children were expected to perform various tasks within the family unit, which often made the term "child labour" difficult to interpret.

95. Ms. AL-THANI, speaking on behalf of the Committee, thanked the delegation of the Solomon Islands for its informative replies. The conclusions and recommendations would place emphasis on discrimination of all kinds, corporal punishment and domestic violence. Occurrences of child abuse and neglect were of major concern, as were the high infant mortality, morbidity and malnutrition rates. The fact that education was neither compulsory nor free of charge and the disparity in schooling between urban and rural areas would also be addressed. Juvenile justice and special protection for internally displaced children should be priorities for the Government.

96. Mr. INIAKWALA (Solomon Islands) said that the Solomon Islands looked forward to receiving the Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.