



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child Fifty-eighth session

### Summary record of the 1646th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 22 September 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Zermatten

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

**Consideration of reports of States parties** (*continued*)

*Combined third and fourth periodic reports of the Syrian Arab Republic on the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/SYR/3-4; CRC/C/SYR/Q/3-4 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Khabbaz Hamoui** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the detailed reports and replies and the high-level delegation before the Committee provided a clear indication of his country's commitment to protecting children's rights.

3. **Ms. Hamad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Government had withdrawn its reservations to articles 20 and 21 of the Convention. The best interests of the child underpinned all the policies and measures that the Government and other stakeholders were implementing in order to provide health care, education and protection to children. That was the case for boys and girls alike, and in rural and urban areas. No limitations were placed on children's rights to express their opinion and seek and receive information. Nonetheless, while a great deal of progress had been made since the submission of the second periodic report, there were challenges ahead, particularly because of the difficult situation that her country was currently facing.

4. As the Government had acknowledged even before the current crisis had begun, the country was in need of the political, social and economic reforms that the people were demanding. However, the unremitting pressure that had been brought to bear on her country and attempts to isolate it had hindered progress in that regard. In recent times, the legitimate demands of the Syrian people had been exploited by armed groups that fomented sedition, undermined security, terrorized citizens and sabotaged public and private property. That situation provided a pretext for foreign intervention, which jeopardized national security and the country's future. Nonetheless, several legislative reforms had been introduced, guaranteeing political plurality, parliamentary elections, local administration and a free and independent media. The Constitution was also to be updated in order to facilitate a peaceful, democratic transition. Those reforms were due to be implemented within a maximum of six months and, to that end, a national dialogue had been launched with a view to setting up the necessary mechanisms at the governorate level. In spite of those efforts, armed groups continued to commit violent acts, spurred on by foreign intervention, which made it necessary for the authorities to prioritize citizens' safety and security. The Government's aim was to put an end to the violence and the conspiracies against the Syrian people and to garner support for political, economic and social reform.

5. Children were being exploited for political purposes in the protests and, regrettably, some children had lost their lives. The authorities had called on all parents to ensure that they protected their children and kept them out of harm's way. The Syrian people, including children, were victims of the groups that conspired against the State and citizens' right to reform. Moreover, the political media campaign against the country had included fabricated and exaggerated reports of events, including the number of children's deaths. The authorities had established an independent judicial committee to investigate those deaths and ensure that the perpetrators were brought to justice. The economic sanctions being imposed on the country further impeded progress, as they reduced available resources, which in turn limited the Government's capacity to provide its citizens, particularly children, with services such as health care, education and protection.

6. All the relevant stakeholders had participated in the preparation of the combined third and fourth periodic reports (CRC/C/SYR/3-4). The reports described the country's

legislative framework and the statutory laws, decrees and edicts that upheld human rights and fundamental freedoms. Of particular note were Decree No. 3 of 2010 on the prevention of human trafficking, which provided special protection for women and children and encompassed the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In addition, the country's labour laws prohibited the employment of children under the age of 15 and children who had not completed their basic education. Decree No. 1 of 2011 increased the punishment for honour crimes to no less than 5 to 7 years. Under Decree No. 9 of 2011 on support for poor families, some 12 billion Syrian pounds in benefits had been provided to 415,000 families in 2011. As a result of Decree No. 49 of 2011, about 50,000 Kurds and their children, who had been registered as foreigners in Hasakah Governorate, had been granted Syrian nationality, enabling them to enjoy all the rights of citizens with retroactive effect. A further 50,000 applications were currently being processed. Additional decrees had been issued concerning peaceful demonstrations, political parties, information and the mass media, a general amnesty and wage increases. Draft legislation on children's rights had recently been approved by the Judicial Reform Committee.

7. The periodic reports described the steps that had been taken to protect children and disseminate information about the Convention. They also outlined the measures the Government had taken to eliminate disparities between girls' and boys' enjoyment of their rights and to ensure that there was no discrimination against children in given geographical regions or social categories. The school enrolment rate for boys and girls was currently almost equal. Both the Government and NGOs were working to guarantee children's rights to life, protection, health and education, as detailed in the reports. Information was also provided on the participation of children, respect for their views, protection of their civil liberties, preservation of their identities and cultural specificities, their right to be informed and their right to religious freedom.

8. Despite all its efforts, the Government was faced with other obstacles as well, such as the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, which prevented it from protecting Syrian children living there. The State terrorism practised by the Israeli occupants violated the Convention, depriving those children of their rights to cultural identity, language, health and education. Furthermore, those children were subjected to economic exploitation, detention and house arrest, and their lives were endangered by landmines and other flagrant human rights violations. The occupation obliged the Syrian Government to allocate additional resources to defence.

9. The high rate of population growth and the protracted drought presented further challenges to the authorities in their efforts to improve people's standard of living. The Government had acknowledged the need to adjust its economic policies in order to achieve balanced regional development and social justice and to eliminate poverty. However, it was proving difficult to marshal sufficient technical, financial and human resources to make the necessary improvements in social, cultural, health and education services. That situation was further exacerbated by the influx of 1.5 million refugees from Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. Rather than obliging them to stay in refugee camps, the Government worked to integrate those people into Syrian society, where they benefited, free of charge, from all the services available to citizens. However, that generous refugee policy placed a heavy burden on the country's budget and natural resources. While NGOs had increased their support for social development, most of them had limited administrative and technical capacity. The legislation regulating those organizations was currently being amended and would enable them to play a more important role in upholding people's rights in future.

10. **Mr. Kotrane** (Country Rapporteur) said that the consideration of the State party's report was taking place under extraordinary circumstances, at a time of great suffering for the Syrian people. The Committee had received reports indicating that the current unrest

had begun with groups of young people putting up posters and chanting slogans calling for change, in much the same way as had been seen in several other Arab States. Syrian security forces had used excessive force in their initial reaction to demonstrators, and their use of force had increased exponentially since the protests had begun in March 2011. Tanks had been deployed in residential areas and live ammunition had repeatedly been fired at demonstrators. It would seem that there had been no regard for human rights, with civilians, including children and young people, being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Several sources had reported that a large number of children — over 187, according to some reports — had died as a result of such treatment since the beginning of the unrest. Many more children had been subjected to torture and violence in detention and interrogation centres, some of which had even been set up in schools. Children had been exploited for political gain by all parties to the conflict, including opponents of the regime. Images of children hoisting banners in favour of the regime had been broadcast on television, which was another form of exploitation.

11. The violations that were taking place ran counter to all the international human rights instruments, including the Convention. The Committee was extremely concerned at reports of flagrant violations of all the principles enshrined in the Convention, including the right to life, the right to survival and development, the right to be protected from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to freedom of expression, and the right to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly. He asked what urgent measures the Government and the security forces planned to take in order to remedy the deteriorating situation. He wanted to know what steps were being taken to ensure that the investigations into violations of civilians' rights, particularly children's rights, would be truly independent and impartial. In that regard, he wished to know who would provide training for the investigators.

12. **Ms. Varmah** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee remained very concerned about the arbitrary arrest and detention of children as young as 7 or 8 years old since the start of the protests. Children were still being arrested and detained along with adults, and there were reports of torture and mutilation. She requested information on the number of children in detention, their ages, how long they could be detained and when they would be released. What special measures had been adopted to protect those children? She asked when the many heads of families who had been arrested would be released, as their wives and children had been left with no income and thus no means to buy food or other basic necessities. She also asked who would be held accountable for the killing of children. The Syrian Arab Republic was a party to almost all of the international human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols, and it therefore had a duty to respect and protect children's rights in all circumstances.

13. **Ms. Maurás Pérez** said that the Committee had received numerous reports from United Nations sources and international organizations about the killing, torture and arbitrary detention of children. A fact-finding mission had received information from credible, corroborated sources that up to 2,700 people had been killed, some of whom were children. That information had come from outside the country, as the Syrian Government had refused entry to the mission. Amnesty International had reported that 82 children had been killed and that 10 had died in prison; it gave their names, ages and places of origin. The Committee was deeply concerned that children were caught up in the turmoil, which amounted to State violence exercised by the armed forces and police, and hoped that the independent judicial committee mentioned in the State party's opening statement was truly independent. She suggested that it should include international observers from such bodies as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

14. She was concerned by the delegation's statement that it was the role of parents to protect their children from being caught up in the conflict. The Convention clearly

stipulated that it was the State's role to protect them. She was alarmed that the State party was endeavouring to remove children from the protests, as children had a right to participate in peaceful demonstrations on issues that concerned them. She was deeply concerned by reports that at least 10 children had died as a result of torture and mutilation and asked what steps were being taken to release those children still in detention, ensure impartial investigations, and bring the alleged perpetrators to justice.

15. **Ms. Lee** asked what steps were being taken to ensure that the State party's courts were truly independent and to implement the recommendation of the Committee against Torture that legislation permitting immunity should be rescinded. She requested information on the conditions under which children were being held in secret detention centres. She wished to know whether an independent monitoring body inspected detention centres where children were held and whether an independent mechanism was in place through which detained children could lodge complaints.

16. **Ms. Al-Shehail** asked what measures had been adopted to provide psychological support for children who had been caught up in the violence or who had witnessed it on television. She also asked what progress had been made in implementing the numerous outstanding measures outlined in the five-year plan for children, in particular the creation of a centre for the protection of the family and the establishment of a hotline.

17. **Mr. Madi** sought clarification on whether the recent adoption of legislation granting a general amnesty meant that there were no longer any children held in detention. If that were not so, how many children were in detention and what were the charges against them?

18. **Mr. Gastaud** enquired whether the provisions of the Convention were still being implemented during the current crisis, or whether they had been suspended.

19. **Mr. Kotrane** welcomed the positive measures adopted by the State party in recent years, not least the adoption of new legislation to prevent human trafficking, provide for persons with special needs, increase the penalty for honour crimes and grant Syrian nationality to the Hasakah Kurds, including children. However, he wondered why there had been a delay in adopting the bill on the rights of the child. He urged the State party to adopt it quickly because Syrian domestic legislation was still not in conformity with the Convention in areas such as children born outside of wedlock, child custody and guardianship. He had observed that the State party had a tendency to ratify conventions, but not their optional protocols, and asked what steps it intended to take to ratify the new optional protocol to the Convention. He welcomed the State party's withdrawal of its reservations to articles 20 and 21, although he had been unable to find an official record of the withdrawal. He asked what steps it was taking to withdraw its reservation to article 14 relating to the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

20. **Ms. Varmah** asked whether the representatives of civil society involved in the preparation of the State party report were fully versed in children's rights issues and expressed concern at the lack of participation of NGOs in the dissemination and promotion of the Convention. She asked whether the State party intended to increase the family allowances that were intended to reduce economic and social disparities between rural and urban areas. She also asked what steps had been taken to implement the recommendation to raise the minimum age for marriage to 17, since girls as young as 13 and boys as young as 15 were still entering into marriage, especially in rural areas. She wished to know whether children had the right to be heard during court proceedings in matters concerning them. While welcoming new legislation granting Syrian nationality to registered stateless Kurds (*ajanib*), she was concerned that it would not apply to unregistered stateless people (*maktumin*). Did the children of the *maktumin* enjoy any rights at all? She requested information on the progress of the study on possible amendments to the nationality law, in particular with respect to allowing Syrian women married to non-Syrian men to grant

Syrian nationality to their children, including those married to Palestinians. There was no explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in the law. What measures would be adopted to rectify that? She welcomed the success of the children's parliament established in 2005 and enquired whether there were plans to extend that initiative to other areas.

21. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that the Committee disagreed with the State party's reservation to article 14 on the grounds that it was incompatible with article 18, paragraph 4, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which gave parents the liberty to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. As children should have the right to choose their religion, article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was entirely compatible with the Covenant. Furthermore, the obstacles to inheritance involving the transfer of property from a person of one religion to another violated the right to non-discrimination on the basis of religion; all children had the right to exercise their rights, including the right to inherit. He sought clarification on what steps were envisaged to ensure that children's opinions were heard. It did not appear, for example, that children's opinions were being heard when it came to decisions on child custody arrangements in cases of separation.

22. **Ms. Al-Shehail** asked whether there was a separate, independent budget allocation specifically for children's leisure, play and recreational activities in conformity with article 31 of the Convention. She asked what criteria were used to distinguish between orphans and children born out of wedlock. Why were the two types of children treated differently in children's shelters, given that Islam called for social coherence and coexistence?

23. **Ms. Sandberg** said that the high school enrolment rate for girls was commendable, but asked what steps were being taken to address the high female secondary school dropout rate. She asked why boys studied vocational subjects while girls took housekeeping, sewing and cooking classes. What steps were envisaged to remedy that situation? The State party had said in its report that the fundamental consideration when making policy decisions was the best interests of the child. What steps were being taken to ensure that the best interests of the child were considered in individual cases as well as globally?

24. **Ms. Nores de García**, referring to the principle of non-discrimination, said that she was concerned by the situation of children born to unmarried parents, parents of different religions, foreign nationals and single mothers.

25. **Ms. Wijemanne**, noting that children were among the first to be affected by conflict, asked whether any measures had been taken to protect children and prevent them from suffering, directly or indirectly, as the result of the ongoing conflict. She also asked whether the State party had cooperated with the international organizations present on the ground in an effort to provide proper training to military personnel and create a system for protecting children from recent events.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.*

26. **Mr. Dalla** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that a number of laws had been enacted in various areas, including laws relating to political parties, elections and economic measures, as had been requested by the protesters. Within 10 days of the escalation of the protests, a judicial committee had been founded, on 31 March 2011, to investigate the situation, including the alleged arrests of children in Dar'ā. That judicial committee, which was impartial and had already held a number of press conferences, was presided over by the General Prosecutor and composed of judges. Complaints could be made to the committee online or by telephone, and over 1,500 complaints had already been received. The complaints were related to a number of issues in addition to arrests, including attacks on private property. Following events in Al Lādhiqīyah and Dar'ā, decisions were taken to dismiss and, in some cases, arrest a number of officials and members of the security forces. Due to the confidential nature of those proceedings, no further information was available at

that time, but the judicial committee was to issue an initial report the following week. The judicial committee's mandate had been broadened, and subcommittees had been formed as the protests had spread. Armed groups had committed violations while the security forces had tried to restore order. The figures on the detention and killing of children that had been cited by Committee members did not correspond to the information available to his Government. No children had been detained as a consequence of the recent events. One child had been killed during the demonstrations — Hamza Ali al-Khateeb — and a judicial committee had been founded to investigate his death. It was clear, however, that the boy had not died under torture as was alleged.

27. No children had been knowingly arrested during the recent events, since the arrest of children was illegal. It was possible that some of those arrested during the demonstrations might have been children who did not have their identification cards with them and whose age was therefore unknown. However, as soon as their age was discovered, they would have been released. There was no evidence that schools had been used as detention centres. Syrian schools were currently open and 6.5 million Syrian children were attending school that week.

28. The Convention was in force, both as international law and through domestic legislation, and had been in force even during the state of emergency that had preceded recent events. Although the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that would establish communications procedures had not yet been signed and ratified, children were able to make complaints through their parents or guardians.

29. **Ms. Maurás Pérez**, responding to the statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the detention and killing of children, said that she would read aloud, from an Amnesty International report entitled *Deadly Detention: Deaths in Custody and Popular Protest in Syria*, five full names of children who were reported to have died in custody. Those names were as follows: Hamza Ali al-Khateeb, age 13; Tamer Mohamed al-Shar'i, age 15; Hussam Ahmed al-Zu'bi, age 17; Saleh Ahmed al-Khateeb, age 14; Dhiyaa Yehyeh al-Khateeb, age 16. Those were 5 of the 10 children who had died; the names of children who had been tortured were also available. The Committee requested that serious attention should be given to that specific information, investigations into the matter should be held and the results of inquiries should be made known to the Committee and the wider international community.

30. **Mr. Kotrane** said that he had doubts about the independence of the judicial committee. If that committee was presided over by the General Prosecutor, who reported to the Ministry of Justice, it was not independent. He asked whether the other members of the committee were independent figures who represented international or other impartial organizations.

31. Ratification of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communications procedure would allow children to bring complaints before the Committee. He asked whether there was a mechanism that allowed children to lodge complaints directly, without using their parents as intermediaries.

32. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee was requesting that immediate and effective measures should be taken to protect children in the State party. The investigation of recent events should be independent and transparent, and compensation should be given to those whose rights had been violated.

33. **Mr. Dalla** (Syrian Arab Republic), expressing his concern that some of the facts and figures presented by Committee members contained distortions and exaggerations, said that it was clear that certain events had taken place in the context of the current crisis. The Administrative Council of the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, of which he was a member, was first and foremost a national commission, rather than a governmental

commission, and would be interested in receiving credible, documentary information which it could forward to the judicial committee.

34. One of the children whose name had been read out had in fact died one year before the recent events in the country, when he was bitten by dogs in the street, and the photographs of that child had been modified and the information about the case had been manipulated. Other children had died of natural causes and in road traffic accidents.

35. The recent unusual disturbances in his country had led to the creation of the judicial committee. The judicial committee was under the Ministry of Justice and had originally been presided over by the General Prosecutor. However, the committee was now chaired by the First Attorney-General in Damascus, who was the head of the Judicial Inspectorate, and the other members of the committee were senior judges. The committee had branches at the different levels of government in the country, since events had taken place in several areas under several different jurisdictions.

36. He had no information regarding the ratification of the optional protocol on a communications procedure.

37. **Ms. Hamad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her country had concerns about both the situation within the country and the fabrication of facts by the media, which was all too apparent to anyone in the field. Her Government was aware that children had died and that there had been violations of rights as a consequence of the unrest and the State's lack of control over areas that had fallen into the hands of armed groups. The State had a duty to protect its citizens and had instituted a media campaign to advise parents not to allow their children to go into areas of unrest.

38. Although she did not question the information presented by the Committee, or the information supplied by international organizations, she encouraged the Committee to take care when verifying the reports it received. False figures were in the public domain and photos had been circulated of children who had allegedly died during the blockade of Hamah which were in fact photos taken in Alexandria. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stood ready to verify the facts surrounding alleged cases of the torture or murder of children if the Committee had any names for submission. The children involved were Syrian children, so any such cases would be treated with the utmost seriousness, and she appealed to the Committee for assistance in that respect.

39. The advanced, unedited version of the report of the fact-finding mission on Syria that had been undertaken pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-16/1 contained information obtained from individuals who were not present on the ground, which indicated that some information in the report could not be verified. The Committee had quoted the report as a reliable source, but information transmitted by the Syrian Government had not been reflected in the report, and her country had consequently appealed for help in providing a clearer picture of the ongoing situation. The names of persons who had been arrested and had claimed that they had been ordered to fire on protesters could be provided to the Committee if requested.

40. Responding to an earlier question regarding the delay in passage of a bill on children's rights, she said that the ongoing situation in the country had slowed the progress of the bill, which, under ordinary circumstances, would already have been adopted. It was hoped that the bill would be passed during the next parliamentary session.

41. If it had not been for recent events, the children's parliaments would already have taken place and been extended as planned. The Government worked with civil society organizations to jointly implement positive measures for children, and that work included cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund and other organizations with a presence in the country. Psychological help was provided to children in areas affected by recent events.



42. **The Chairperson** enquired about the status of the bill on the registration of NGOs and the opportunity afforded to NGOs to register and obtain the necessary operating licence.

43. **Ms. Hamad** said that the initial draft bill had not received the approval of the ministries or of NGOs. Several drafts had therefore had to be prepared before a final version could be approved, and there were still certain religion-related issues on which agreement had not yet been reached. The Government strove to cooperate fully with the country's approximately 90 children's rights NGOs, 105 family-oriented associations and 2,500 others associations and federations countrywide. The law on associations should be enacted shortly. The prevailing view on freedom of religion was that it was less disruptive to family unity when the choice of religion was made as an adult. Therefore, the State party was not intending to lift its reservation to article 14, although it was open to hearing opposing arguments.

44. **The Chairperson** noted that a failure to recognize the fundamental freedom of religion for children was in complete contradiction with the Convention.

45. **Mr. Kotrane** said that it would be a shame for the Syrian Arab Republic, known for its religious tolerance, to maintain its reservation on article 14 when so many countries, even in its own region, had lifted their reservations.

46. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that the duty of parents to guide their children did not negate children's right to make their own decisions and that the State party's position on that issue stood in contradiction to all the conventions that it had ratified, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which recognized that children had certain inalienable rights. It was possible for the State to help mediate when problems arose in families where children chose a different religion from their parents.

47. **Ms. Hamad** said that the State party's prevailing view on children's freedom of religion did not mean that it would not consider reviewing its position. The delegation would convey the points raised by the Committee to its Government with a view to undertaking a national dialogue and possibly holding workshops on the matter.

48. **Ms. Varmah** said that the State party's remarkable progress in the field of education and health had not extended to remote areas where children still did not have adequate access to education and health facilities, specialized hospitals were lacking, many children suffered from anaemia, and schools did not have safe drinking water. What measures was the Government undertaking to remedy those inequalities? She asked if the national immunization campaign was ongoing and covered all regions of the country, what other measures were being taken to eliminate micronutrient and iron deficiencies, and if children and infants in conflict areas were being vaccinated as stipulated in the immunization programme. She wished to know if there were any awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases directed at adolescents both in and outside schools and if sex education was included in school curricula. She asked whether the teachers in mobile schools in rural or remote areas were adequately trained and if the children there received a quality education. Did children from minorities have the opportunity to study in their own language? She wondered if there was a toll-free helpline for children. She asked whether the quality and marketing of breast milk substitutes were monitored and whether breastfeeding was encouraged in private clinics.

49. **Mr. Kotrane** enquired whether Syrian legislation permitted children born out of wedlock to establish their paternity, whether genetic testing was allowed and available, and whether there were procedures in place for children to exercise all their rights in that respect. Noting that the law tended to favour fathers over mothers in awarding custody, which sometimes led to cross-border kidnappings in the case of mixed marriages, he asked whether the Government had plans to enter into bilateral agreements in order to put an end to such occurrences. He asked what measures were taken to encourage children not to drop

out of school in order to work and to protect child domestic workers, including those from abroad.

50. He wished to know if Decree No. 3 of 2010 on trafficking in persons had brought Syrian legislation into compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and whether it established the jurisdiction of Syrian courts over crimes perpetrated by Syrian nationals or against a Syrian child abroad. Although the State party had aligned most of its legislation with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict, it still needed to make the participation of children in armed conflict an offence under the law and establish the universal jurisdiction of Syrian courts in that domain.

51. **Ms. Nores de García** asked if any measures had been taken to address the lack of safe drinking water in 45 per cent of schools, introduce content on gender equity in the national curriculum, implement sex and reproductive education, and put a stop to corporal punishment in schools.

52. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** asked if steps were being taken to change the prevailing practice of awarding guardianship over a child's material assets to the father or a close male relative while mothers tended to have physical custody of the children. In addition, mothers tended to bear the entire burden of caring for a child born out of wedlock, which often led them to abandon their child. How many children did this situation concern and was anything being done to counteract it? He enquired if there would be sufficient human and financial resources to back the new policy on the integration of children with disabilities.

53. **Ms. Maurás Pérez** asked if codes of military procedure were in line with the provisions and spirit of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict and the Convention. She also wanted to know whether special protection was provided for child crime victims or child witnesses to crime who were involved in court proceedings, particularly in the context of the current unrest.

54. **Mr. Koompraphant** asked if there was a mechanism in place for monitoring the living and working conditions of domestic workers and whether labour inspectors could receive complaints concerning the employment of children, particularly as domestic workers. He would like to know what body was tasked with indentifying child victims of trafficking in persons, how its personnel were trained and how they identified victims. He asked whether domestic legislation criminalized the sale of children as stipulated in the Optional Protocol and if child victims of prostitution or pornography and undocumented child migrants were guaranteed immunity from prosecution.

55. **Ms. Sandberg** enquired about measures taken to address the root causes of child vagrancy and to reduce the number of street children.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*