



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
11 July 2016

Original: English

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Pakistan*

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the fifth periodic report of Pakistan (CRC/C/PAK/5) at its 2118th and 2119th meetings (see CRC/C/SR.2118 and 2119), held on 25 and 26 May 2016, and adopted the following concluding observations at its 2132nd meeting (see CRC/C/SR.2132), held on 3 June 2016.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the fifth periodic report of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/PAK/Q/5/Add.1), which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high level and multisectoral delegation of the State party.

II. Follow-up measures taken and progress achieved by the State party

3. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved by the State party in various areas, including the ratification of or accession to international instruments, in particular the ratification of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as the adoption of a number of new legislative acts and institutional and policy measures related to children's rights since its last review.

III. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

4. The Committee remains aware of the difficulties facing the State party, namely catastrophic drought conditions and natural disasters threatening the right to survival and development of the child, as well as the law enforcement operations and terrorist activities

* Adopted by the Committee at its seventy-second session (17 May-3 June 2016).



in certain regions that have displaced a large number of people. All of these problems seriously impede progress towards the full realization of children's rights, as enshrined in the Convention.

IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44 (6))

The Committee's previous recommendations

5. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all the measures necessary to address the recommendations made in its concluding observations of 2009 (CRC/C/PAK/CO/3-4), that have not been implemented or sufficiently implemented, including those related to a comprehensive policy and strategy, data collection, independent monitoring, the dissemination of the Convention, training and respect for the views of the child, which will not be repeated further on in the document.**

Legislation

6. While reiterating the positive legislative developments, in particular in the areas of child labour and education, the Committee is concerned about the significant delays in the adoption of a number of bills in the area of children's rights, which are crucial for the implementation of the State party's obligations under the Convention. The Committee is also concerned that, despite the Committee's previous recommendations, the State party has not taken sufficient steps to harmonize its legislative framework with the Convention. The situation has been further exacerbated by adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 2010, as some federal laws on children's rights have not been retained by the provincial governments.

7. **The Committee recommends that the State party promptly adopt pending bills in the area of children's rights and ensure that they are in conformity with the Convention. It also recommends that the State party take measures to harmonize its legislation and regulations with the principles and provisions of the Convention in all areas affecting children, at the federal, provincial and territorial levels.**

8. The Committee remains concerned about the implementation of sharia law under the Sharia Nizam-e-Adl Regulation of 2009, which is not in line with the Convention, in large areas of Khyber Pakhtunkwa. It is also concerned that the Frontier Crimes Regulation of 1901 and the 2011 amendments thereto (for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and the Zina and Haddood Ordinances, which are in conflict with the principles and provisions of the Convention, remain in force.

9. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation that the State party carefully scrutinize existing legislative and other measures, at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, with a view to ensuring their compatibility with the Convention. It reminds the State party of its obligation to ensure that domestic laws, whether federal, provincial or territorial, are in conformity with the Convention, so that the principles and provisions of the Convention are recognized and enjoyed by children throughout the territory at the national, provincial and territorial and local level, including in the tribal areas.**

Coordination and devolution of powers

10. The Committee notes the State party's information that the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development and its provincial offices remain the coordinating bodies of policies and activities in the area of children's rights. However, it is concerned that coordination among federal, provincial and territorial entities is weak and inadequately resourced. The Committee is also concerned that, since the introduction in 2010 of amendments to the Constitution that devolved most powers to the provinces, the standards and services in different provinces and territories, including those relating to the protection of children, vary greatly and that coordination has reportedly become even more difficult.

11. The Committee reminds the State party that despite the devolution of powers to provinces and the different administrative arrangements of its territories, the State party remains responsible for the implementation of children's rights under the Convention throughout its territory. Therefore, it should establish adequate coordination mechanisms, with a sufficient level of authority and the human, technical and financial resources necessary to carry out its work, including coordination tasks, effectively.

Allocation of resources

12. The Committee notes that the State party's social welfare expenditure has increased in recent years. However, it is concerned that despite the commitments made as part of its previous dialogue with the Committee, the State party's budget allocations for the health and education sectors remain extremely low. It is also concerned that there are no systematic budget tracking mechanisms that take into account a child rights perspective and that the budget allocated for children is not spent appropriately.

13. The Committee refers to its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party effectively increase budgetary allocations for children, particularly for groups of children who require social affirmative actions, such as girls, refugee and internally displaced children, children from religious and ethnic minorities, children without parental care, children with disabilities and children in street situations, in order to alleviate disparities and ensure the equal enjoyment of all rights enshrined in the Convention throughout the country. The Committee encourages the State party to start budget tracking from a children's rights perspective, with a view to monitoring budget allocations for children.

Cooperation with civil society

14. While noting the State party's rules and procedures to facilitate the registration of non-governmental organizations and its ongoing cooperation with civil society, the Committee is concerned that such cooperation is limited and that restrictions are reportedly imposed on certain non-governmental organizations. It is also concerned about the insufficient financial support provided to non-governmental organizations.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party establish a clear mechanism and procedures at the national, provincial and territorial and district levels to strengthen cooperation with, and provide financial support to, civil society organizations.

B. Definition of the child (art. 1)

16. While it welcomes the 2013 amendments to the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act to increase the marriage age for both boys and girls to 18 years, the Committee remains

concerned about the disparity between the minimum legal age for marriage for boys (18 years) and that for girls (16 years) in all other provinces, and that the Zina and Hadood Ordinances (1979) provide a definition of a “girl child” that only covers girls up to the age of 16 years or puberty. It is also concerned about legal inconsistencies concerning the definition of a child at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, and disparities in that regard between secular and sharia law.

17. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party ensure the full harmonization of its legislation as regards the definition of the child so as to define a child as any human being below the age of 18 years. In particular, it recommends amending the Zina and Hadood Ordinances (1979) and the Child Marriages Restraint Acts in all its provinces, in order to align the age of marriage for boys and girls by raising the minimum age of marriage for girls to 18 years.**

C. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)

Non-discrimination

18. The Committee remains extremely concerned about:

(a) Serious discrimination against girls in the State party and the persistent gender disparity in infant mortality rates and school enrolment rates, the persistence of early marriages and exchanges of girls for debt settlement, as well as domestic violence targeting girls;

(b) The status of girls under sharia law, whereby, for example, girls are entitled to only half of the inheritance provided to boys;

(c) Widespread discrimination against children belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, children born out of wedlock, children living in poverty, children from Dalit communities, children living in rural or remote areas and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children.

19. **The Committee urges the State party to take concrete measures to address and reduce the serious gender disparities and discrimination against girls prevailing throughout the State party. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to review its legislation and practices in order to eliminate any gender disparities in entitlements through the implementation of comprehensive public education and awareness-raising programmes to combat and prevent discrimination against girls, aimed at local authorities, religious leaders, judges and prosecutors, and to inform children, especially girls, about their rights under the Convention. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party take all appropriate measures, such as comprehensive public education programmes, to combat and prevent discrimination and negative societal attitudes and mobilize political, religious and community leaders to support efforts to eradicate traditional practices and attitudes that discriminate against children belonging to religious or other minority groups, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children from Dalit communities, children living in rural or remote areas and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children.**

Best interests of the child

20. The Committee notes that the principle of the best interests of the child is enshrined in some of the State party’s legislation. However, it is concerned that the implementation of legislation is not always in line with this principle, and, in particular, that the best interests of the child are often disregarded in the justice system.

21. In the light of its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions, and in all policies, programmes and projects that are relevant to and have an impact on children. In this regard, the State party is encouraged to develop procedures and criteria to provide guidance to all relevant persons in authority on determining the best interests of the child in all areas and for giving it due weight as a primary consideration.

Right to life, survival and development

22. The Committee is gravely concerned about the large numbers of children killed as a result of counter-terrorism activities and acts of terrorism and violence, such as the killing of 142 children in an attack on a school in Peshawar in 2014, as well as the deaths of children as a result of drought, including in Tharparkar, malnutrition or lack of maternal and neonatal care. The Committee also expresses serious concern about the reports that the number of infanticides targeting girls is increasing and that such crimes are rarely prosecuted.

23. **The Committee urges the State party to take immediate measures to:**

(a) **Prevent the killing of children as a result of counter-terrorism activities and acts of terrorism and violence, and improve the protection provided to schools and other areas with a high concentration of children;**

(b) **Prevent and combat malnutrition, especially among vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children, such as those living in poverty, including Dalit children;**

(c) **Ensure that, in cases of drought, children are provided with immediate access to aid, including sufficient food and water, and closely monitor the delivery of such aid in order to avoid possible misappropriations;**

(d) **Provide easy access to quality maternal and neonatal care, especially in remote rural areas;**

(e) **Investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of infanticide, and those who have instigated such crimes, with sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the crime and raise public awareness of the need to report such crimes to the police.**

Children sentenced to death

24. The Committee is seriously alarmed by reports of the execution of several individuals for offences committed while they were under the age of 18 years, or where the age of the individual was contested following the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty in December 2014, despite numerous calls from the international community and the United Nations in this regard. It is also seriously concerned that a large number of persons are currently on death row for crimes committed while they were under the age of 18 years and that these persons have limited access to procedures for challenging their sentence on the basis of their age. The Committee highlights the cases of Abdu-ur-Rehman, of Moinuddin and of Muhammad Anwar, among others, who are awaiting imminent execution for crimes committed while they were under the age of 18 years.

25. **The Committee urges the State party to take, as a matter of highest priority, measures to:**

(a) **Order a stay on all executions involving minors and launch a review of all cases where the death penalty was handed down to children or individuals who had committed a crime while under the age of 18 years and where there is, or was, any indication that they were juveniles, with a particular emphasis on how the age of the accused was determined and, where necessary, to reopen inquiries in relation thereto, with a view to either releasing the prisoner or commuting his or her sentence to a prison term. This should also apply to cases where the crime was committed before the entry into force of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance of 2000;**

(b) **Establish effective age determination mechanisms in order to ensure that in cases where there is no proof of age, the child is entitled to a proper investigation to establish his or her age and, in the case of conflicting or inconclusive evidence, has the right to the rule of the benefit of the doubt;**

(c) **Ensure that all stages of cases involving children, even those concerning terrorism-related crimes or violations of sharia law, including arrest, detention (whether pretrial or post-trial) and trial, are overseen by juvenile courts, in compliance with the Convention and all applicable international standards;**

(d) **Provide data on the number of children, and the number of persons alleged to have committed a crime while under the age of 18 years, on death row.**

Killings in the name of so-called honour

26. The Committee is seriously concerned that, despite the adoption of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004, the practice of killing in the name of so-called honour is reportedly on the rise due to societal acceptance and the attitude of law enforcement agencies, which are either unaware of the law or knowingly ignore it. In addition, the Committee is concerned about the possibility of applying *qisas* and *diyat* under sharia law for such killings, under the provisions of which the perpetrator can be set free.

27. **The Committee urges the State party to apply a zero tolerance policy towards gender-based crimes committed in the name of so-called honour and ensure the prompt and effective investigation into all cases. In particular, the State party should:**

(a) **Ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence and crimes committed in the name of so-called honour are prosecuted under the relevant provisions of the Penal Code, are not subjected to sharia law settlements and receive sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(b) **Undertake awareness-raising efforts targeting the general public, the media, religious and community leaders, law enforcement officials and judicial authorities, in order to eliminate all misogynistic attitudes relating to so-called honour;**

(c) **Ensure that effective protection, including shelter and other protection measures, is provided to women and children victims of crimes committed in the name of so-called honour, and to those at risk of falling victim to such crimes.**

D. Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 and 13-17)

Birth registration

28. The Committee welcomes the birth registration units and the optional chip-based card system introduced by the State party to encourage birth registration in all provinces. Nevertheless, it remains concerned that only around 30 per cent of children are registered at birth, with the lowest registration rates in Balochistan and the Federally Administered

Tribal Areas. The Committee is particularly concerned about the low level of public awareness, the complicated procedures and high fees for birth registration and the lack of effective measures to ensure the birth registration of children belonging to marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including children born out of wedlock and refugee and internally displaced children.

29. **Taking note of target 16.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals on providing a legal identity for all, including through birth registration, the Committee strongly urges the State party to:**

(a) **Promote the timely registration of births, especially among marginalized and disadvantaged communities, and educate the public at large about the consequences of non-registration;**

(b) **Remove all fees and simplify the procedures related to birth registration throughout the country, including through the introduction of mobile registration units;**

(c) **Undertake a survey to identify children lacking birth registration or identity documents and take immediate administrative and judicial measures to ensure retroactive birth registration and the issuance of documents for those children;**

(d) **Ensure that children lacking identity documents are not refused access to education, health and public services.**

Freedom of religion

30. The Committee is seriously concerned about the limited freedom of religion in the State party, the sectarian violence targeting children from religious minorities, such as Shia Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Ahmadis, and forced conversions. It is particularly concerned about the blasphemy laws that incur heavy penalties, including the death penalty, for “tainting” the Koran and insulting the Prophet Mohammed, and which are vaguely defined and frequently misused. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at reports that religious intolerance is taught in schools, that non-Muslim students are forced to complete Islamic studies, and that some school textbooks include derogatory statements about religious minorities.

31. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Protect the freedom of religion of all children, including Shia Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Ahmadi children, and ensure that children are able to choose their religion, or not to profess any religion at all, including in schools;**

(b) **Review and repeal its blasphemy laws to avoid their misuse or misinterpretation and ensure that children under the age of 18 years are exempt from criminal responsibility for such crimes;**

(c) **Remove all derogatory statements about religious minorities from school textbooks and promote the teaching of tolerance, non-discrimination and human rights.**

E. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)

Torture and other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment

32. The Committee deplores the reports of systematic and widespread torture and ill-treatment of children in police stations and prisons in the country, including reports of torture of children by the Faisalabad district police. The Committee is seriously concerned

that sharia law allows children to be subjected to punishment for *haddood* offences that include amputation, whipping, stoning and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment.

33. **With reference to the Committee's general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State party to launch without delay an independent inquiry into all alleged cases of torture and ill-treatment of children, in particular those committed by law enforcement officers, including the Faisalabad district police, and to ensure that those involved in carrying out, ordering, condoning or facilitating these practices are brought to justice and punished using penalties commensurate with the gravity of their crime. The Committee further recommends that the State party review its laws and practices and exempt all children below the age of 18 years from punishment for *haddood* offences, in particular penalties such as amputation, whipping, stoning or other forms of torture and cruel and degrading punishment.**

Corporal punishment

34. The Committee notes the efforts of the State party to eradicate corporal punishment in schools by implementing directives and establishing hotlines. However, it is concerned about the widespread use of such punishment in all settings.

35. **In the light of its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State party to eradicate and prohibit all forms of corporal punishment. It also recommends that the State party implement awareness-raising campaigns on the harmful impact of corporal punishment, with a view to changing the prevailing attitude towards this practice and in order to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.**

Sexual exploitation and abuse

36. The Committee is seriously concerned about:

(a) The large number of children falling victim to sexual abuse, exploitation, rape and abduction, including by the Taliban, in particular in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkwa, parts of the Punjab and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas;

(b) Reports of children being sexually exploited for the purpose of child prostitution and child pornography;

(c) The lack of effective measures taken by the Government to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, prosecute perpetrators and provide justice to the victims, who are often stigmatized by society.

37. **The Committee urges the State party to take, as a matter of highest priority, measures throughout its territory to:**

(a) **Adopt appropriate laws that clearly and explicitly define and prohibit child sexual abuse and exploitation;**

(b) **Initiate a prompt, effective, accessible and child-friendly system for the mandatory reporting of cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the home, in schools, in institutions or in other settings, to investigate all reports and allegations of child sexual abuse and exploitation and to punish perpetrators by handing down sentences that are commensurate with the gravity of the crime;**

(c) **Conduct awareness-raising activities to combat the stigmatization of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse;**

(d) **Develop programmes and policies focusing on prevention and the recovery and social reintegration of child victims, in accordance with the outcome documents adopted at the world congresses against the commercial sexual exploitation of children.**

Harmful practices

38. The Committee welcomes the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act 2011, which lays down stricter punishments for traditional practices such as *vanni*, *swara* or *budla-i-sulha*, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of the Custom of Ghag Act 2013, which criminalizes the practice of forced marriages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. However, the Committee is concerned about the generally low level of public awareness of such laws, in particular among families and children, and the persistent practice of child marriage throughout the country. The Committee is particularly concerned that, although illegal, informal judicial systems (local *jirga*) continue to operate and take decisions about children's lives in violation of their rights. Furthermore, the Committee remains concerned about other inhuman customs and rituals threatening the lives and security of girls, such as burnings, acid attacks, mutilations, stripping and sexual harassment.

39. **The Committee urges the State party to immediately:**

(a) **Enforce legislation to prohibit child marriage throughout the country and investigate and prosecute persons, including members of local councils (*jirga*), who endorse harmful practices in violation of the State party's laws and its international obligations;**

(b) **Develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful impact of child marriage on the physical and mental health and well-being of girls, targeting families, local authorities, religious and community leaders, judges and prosecutors and inform children, especially girls, about their rights under the Convention, including the right not to be subjected to forced marriage;**

(c) **In the light of joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices (2014), take active measures to put an end to harmful practices against children, such as burnings, acid attacks, mutilations, stripping and sexual harassment and bring perpetrators to justice.**

Freedom from all forms of violence

40. **Recalling the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children of 2006 (A/61/299), taking into account its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, the Committee recommends that the State party prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children. In particular, it recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Develop a comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children;**

(b) **Adopt a national coordination framework to address all forms of violence against children;**

(c) **Pay particular attention to and address the gender dimension of violence;**

(d) **Cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children and other relevant United Nations institutions.**

F. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9-11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))

Family environment

41. The Committee is concerned about the insufficiency of the assistance provided to families with children living in poverty and the absence of psychosocial support and guidance for families in need, which lead to the abandonment and institutionalization of children. The Committee is also concerned about the persistent practice of polygamy in the country, which, although permitted by law, has a negative impact on children.

42. **Drawing the State party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee emphasizes that financial and material poverty — or conditions directly and uniquely attributable to such poverty — should never be the sole justification for removing a child from parental care, for receiving a child into alternative care or for preventing a child's social reintegration. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to provide financial assistance to families living in poverty and psychological and social support and guidance to help them fulfil their parental responsibilities, in order to prevent the abandonment and institutionalization of children;**

(b) **Review the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961 to ensure that all provisions that have a negative impact on children, particularly those which authorize polygamy, be repealed.**

Children deprived of a family environment

43. The Committee notes the establishment of national and provincial child protection centres, national rehabilitation centres for child labourers and the Pakistan Sweet Homes project, which aim to provide children with alternative care, but regrets that the State party does not provide foster care for children deprived of a family environment. It is concerned that many children without parental care reside in private orphanages, institutions, including religious institutions (madrassas), and shelters that are sometimes registered with the national or provincial governments, but are not provided with any benchmarks for quality of care or monitored by the State party. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that such institutions lack appropriate medical, psychological and educational facilities, and have no complaint mechanisms to ensure that children's rights are not violated.

44. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its promotion of and support for family-type and community-based alternative care for children deprived of parental care, in order to reduce reliance on institutional care;**

(b) **Establish a clear regulation on alternative care for children, including provisions for quality care standards, a periodic review of placements and the right of the child to be heard at all stages of the procedure;**

(c) **Provide training for staff in care settings, provide children with accessible channels for reporting ill-treatment, including through complaints mechanisms, and implement measures to monitor and remedy the ill-treatment of children;**

(d) **Ensure that adequate human, technical and financial resources are allocated to alternative care centres and relevant child protection services, as well as medical, psychological and educational services, in order to facilitate to the greatest extent possible the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children resident therein.**

G. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)-(3) and 33)

Children with disabilities

45. The Committee is seriously concerned about reports of the frequent abandonment of children with disabilities due to their widespread stigmatization by society. While noting the State party's intention to provide inclusive education, it is concerned that large numbers of children with disabilities living in the State party have no access to education. It is also concerned that special education centres, attended by a small proportion (reportedly 0.04 per cent) of children with slight disabilities, do not meet the needs of those children and are totally absent in rural areas. The Committee is further concerned that the accessibility of schools, hospitals and the recreational infrastructure is limited for children with disabilities.

46. **In the light of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) **Prevent and protect children with disabilities from abandonment by providing appropriate assistance and guidance to families with children with disabilities and implement awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the general public and families to combat the stigmatization of and prejudice against children with disabilities and to promote a positive image of such children;**

(b) **Encourage and ensure that all children with disabilities have access to inclusive education and ensure that inclusive education is given priority over the placement of children in specialized institutions and classes;**

(c) **Improve the infrastructure and facilities of schools, health-care centres and public buildings in order to provide barrier-free access to children with disabilities throughout the country;**

(d) **Organize the collection of data on children with disabilities and establish an efficient system for diagnosing disability, in order to put in place appropriate policies and programmes for children with disabilities.**

Health and health services

47. While noting some improvement in the State party's budget allocations for health care and the "lady health worker" programme, the Committee is concerned that State health-care services are insufficient and inadequate, especially in rural areas, where they are primarily provided by the private sector. In addition, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The slow progress being made in reducing the child mortality rate and the increase in the rate of neonatal mortality;

(b) The increasing rate of polio infection, especially in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, due to the ban on vaccination imposed by the Taliban and the killings of personnel providing vaccines for children, as well as large-scale and frequent outbreaks of measles;

(c) Inadequate health facilities and services, especially for internally displaced children from North Waziristan Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, almost half of whom are reported to have serious health conditions;

(d) A lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and the problem of malnutrition, which reportedly leads to 35 per cent of deaths in children under 5 years of age and is attributed to, among other things, to the mismanagement of food aid for children in need.

48. **In the light of its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and taking note of targets 3.2 and 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Increase budget allocations for health and expand the provision of quality health-care services, especially in rural areas;**

(b) **Take all necessary measures to significantly reduce the mortality rate among children under 5 years of age, to at least as low as 25 deaths per 1,000 live births, and neonatal mortality, to at least as low as 12 deaths per 1,000 live births, by 2030;**

(c) **Provide all children from birth to 5 years of age with a package of health services, which includes immunization against diseases such as polio and measles, throughout the country, especially in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and raise awareness in communities about the importance of vaccinations;**

(d) **Ensure that children throughout the country have access to adequate health facilities and quality medical services provided by trained medical professionals, paying particular attention to the children of internally displaced persons;**

(e) **Provide, as a matter of highest priority, access to water and sanitation and develop nutrition programmes to reduce problems such as stunted growth or other forms of malnutrition and implement an essential nutrition package in all health facilities, in particular targeting children affected by severe malnutrition;**

(f) **Seek financial and technical assistance from bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization, among others, in this regard.**

Mental health

49. The Committee is concerned about reports of suicide and attempted suicide among children and the lack of information concerning investigations into the reasons behind such suicides. The Committee is also concerned about the low number of mental health professionals in general, and the acute shortage of child psychiatrists (estimates suggest that there is 1 child psychiatrist for every 4 million children) and psychologists in particular. It is also concerned that the State party has not provided data on the overall situation with regard to children's mental health.

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party take urgent action to prevent suicide among children, including by increasing the provision of psychological counselling services and the number of social workers in schools and communities, and to ensure that all professionals working with children are adequately trained to identify and address early suicidal tendencies and mental health problems. The Committee also recommends that the State party collect data and adopt a comprehensive national child mental health policy, ensuring that mental health**

promotion, counselling, prevention of mental health disorders in primary health care, schools and communities and child-friendly mental health services are integral features of the policy.

Adolescent health

51. The Committee welcomes the establishment of mobile service units, which provide family planning and reproductive health services. However, it is concerned that the State party has not provided more details on the types, scope and coverage of such services, and that no information has been provided on the budget allocated for this purpose. In particular, the Committee is concerned about the low level of awareness of sexual and reproductive rights among young persons and the reported lack of access to sexual and reproductive health-care services for girls, especially in rural areas, due to social constraints. The Committee is also concerned about reports of large numbers of teenage pregnancies terminated using unsafe and clandestine abortion procedures and lack of access to legal abortion, especially for unmarried girls.

52. In the light of its general comment No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and is aimed at adolescent girls and boys, paying special attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;**

(b) **Review its legislation with a view to ensuring that children, including unmarried girls, have access to contraception, safe abortion and post-abortion care services, and that the views of girls should always be heard and respected in abortion-related decisions;**

(c) **Develop and implement a policy to protect the rights of pregnant teenagers, adolescent mothers and their children and to combat discrimination against them.**

HIV/AIDS

53. While noting the national AIDS control programme, the Committee is concerned about the low level of awareness of HIV/AIDS, especially among adolescents. It regrets the lack of information and dearth of studies carried out to understand the risks and dynamics of the disease among children, especially vulnerable groups of children, such as those in street situations, working children, children who use drugs and those involved in prostitution. Furthermore, it is concerned that pregnant women with HIV/AIDS are not aware of their status and are not provided with anti-retroviral drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

54. In the light of its general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child, the Committee recommends that the State party take measures to raise awareness among the general population, and in particular children, about HIV/AIDS and carry out a study of the risks and dynamics among children, especially among children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations. It also recommends that the State party put in place measures to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and provide anti-retroviral drugs to affected pregnant women. To this effect, the Committee recommends that the State party seek technical assistance from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Drug and substance abuse

55. The Committee notes the adoption of the 2010-2014 drug abuse control master plan, but regrets the lack of information on the measures taken to address the issue of drug abuse among children in general, and more specifically among those in vulnerable situations and those at risk. It also regrets the shortage of information on the treatment of drug-addicted children and the lack of standard ethical protocols for both State-run and private drug rehabilitation centres, where people are often subjected to inhuman and unethical treatment practices.

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party take appropriate measures to address the issue of drug abuse among children including by, providing children and adolescents with accurate and objective information and life skills education on preventing substance abuse — including tobacco and alcohol abuse — and by developing accessible and youth-friendly drug-dependence treatment and harm reduction services. It also recommends that the State party adopt standards applicable to rehabilitation centres, especially concerning the treatment of persons below the age of 18 years.**

Environmental health

57. The Committee is seriously concerned about the negative effects of polluted air, water and soil on children's health and the insufficient measures taken to address that challenge.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State party conduct an assessment of the effects of polluted air, water and soil on children's health, as a basis for designing a well-resourced strategy to remedy the situation, and regulate the maximum concentrations of air and water pollutants.**

Standard of living

59. The Committee is concerned that relative and extreme poverty levels in the country remain high, particularly among children, and that the State party's efforts to help families in need through projects such as the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Child Support Programme and the Zakat Programme are still insufficient and do not extend to the poorest in society.

60. **The Committee draws the State party's attention to target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals on implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, and recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to provide sufficient and adequate assistance to families with children living in poverty, in particular to those in marginalized and disadvantaged situations.**

H. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28-31)**Education, including vocational training and guidance**

61. The Committee welcomes the Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Programme of 2013, which focuses on out of school children and the school infrastructure. However, it is concerned about:

(a) The lack of a compulsory education law in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, and poor enforcement of education laws in provinces where they do exist;

- (b) The large number of children (47.3 per cent of all children aged 5 to 16 years) not in formal education, of which the majority have never attended any school;
- (c) The high dropout rate for girls, which reportedly is as high as 50 per cent in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 77 per cent in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas;
- (d) Persistent, large-scale gender, regional and urban-rural disparities in the enrolment of children in schools;
- (e) The poor school infrastructure of schools damaged by natural disasters or armed groups and the lack of basic necessities, such as drinking water, toilets, electricity and walls;
- (f) The poor quality of education due to a shortage of qualified teachers and teacher absenteeism, among other reasons, as well as curricula content and teaching methods that promote gender-based and religious discrimination;
- (g) Large numbers of attacks on schools, especially secular and girls' schools, during the reporting period, including the targeted killing of teachers and the use of school buildings by armed groups;
- (h) The privatization of education, with a lack of measures to ensure the compliance of private schools with minimum educational standards, curriculum requirements and qualifications for teachers;
- (i) Limited and inadequate preschool education.

62. **In the light of its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education and taking note of Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Ensure universal, free and compulsory primary education for all children in the country by adopting relevant laws and policies at the national, provincial and territorial levels;**
- (b) Prevent children from dropping out of school, including by facilitating access to schools and providing financial support to children from disadvantaged families, and emphasize the importance of education for girls by overcoming deeply rooted attitudes favouring boys and their well-being;**
- (c) Raise awareness and encourage communities and parents in particular to enrol children, especially girls and children living in underrepresented provinces and rural areas, in school;**
- (d) Prioritize the construction and reconstruction of school infrastructure, especially in schools affected by natural disasters or conflict, and allocate sufficient resources to provide basic necessities, including drinking water, toilets and heating;**
- (e) Improve the quality of education and provide quality training and incentives for teachers, with a particular emphasis on rural areas, and ensure that curricula and teaching methods are monitored, in order to prevent unlawful teaching content or behaviour;**
- (f) Take measures to protect schools, in particular secular and girls' schools, and prevent possible attacks, including those targeted at teachers, and the occupation of schools by armed groups;**
- (g) Prevent the privatization of schools and establish mechanisms to monitor the compliance of private schools with minimum educational standards, curriculum requirements and qualifications for teachers;**

(h) **Allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood care and education, on the basis of a comprehensive and holistic policy covering early childhood care and development.**

Madrasas

63. The Committee notes the increase in the number of madrasas registered during the reporting period following the 2011 agreement between the Ministry of the Interior and a coalition of major madrasas. However, the Committee is gravely concerned that, under the agreement, madrasas have been given total autonomy in designing the religious curriculum without the State's oversight and that children are reportedly being exploited, including for commercial purposes, by madrasa administrations. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that private madrasas are often used for child recruitment and military training by non-State armed groups.

64. **The Committee urges the State party to monitor registered and unregistered private madrasas, using adequate mechanisms, in order to prevent any possibility of abuse and exploitation. In particular, it urges the State party to ensure that the curricula of madrasas follow the overall State curriculum and do not teach religious or sectarian intolerance, are designed in the spirit of human rights and include subjects on children's rights and international human rights instruments to which the State is a party. It also urges the State party to monitor non-State armed Groups and prohibit them from accessing educational facilities and to protect children from being exposed to recruitment and given military training by armed groups.**

I. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32-33, 35-36, 37 (b)-(d) and 38-40)

Asylum-seeking, refugee and stateless children

65. Although the Committee appreciates that the State party continues to host a large number of refugees, especially from Afghanistan, it regrets the lack of a legal framework for refugees and stateless persons. It also remains concerned that refugee children are often unregistered (especially those whose parents do not hold proof of registration cards), have no access to education, which forces them to join madrasas, live in harsh conditions and are subjected to child labour and early marriages, making them easy targets for abuse, trafficking and religious radicalization. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that children from Bengali, Bihari and Rohingya communities remain stateless.

66. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to:**

(a) **Consider adopting a national refugee law in accordance with international standards and continue to host refugees, especially families with children and unaccompanied children;**

(b) **Ensure that all children born to refugees, including those who do not hold proof of registration cards, asylum seekers and stateless persons, are registered at birth;**

(c) **Integrate refugee and asylum-seeking children into national and provincial education systems on equal terms with nationals of the State party;**

(d) **Provide refugees, in particular families with children, with adequate housing and provide shelter to those who live in the streets;**

- (e) **Enforce legal measures against child and bonded labour involving refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless children;**
- (f) **Prevent and protect refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless children from falling victim to early marriage, abuse, trafficking or religious radicalization;**
- (g) **Ensure the equal implementation of its citizenship laws with a view to extending citizenship to Bengali, Bihari and Rohingya children;**
- (h) **Consider ratifying the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

Internally displaced children

67. The Committee notes that, since its previous concluding observations in 2009, the internal displacement of children has not ceased. It continues to take place as a result of natural disasters and ongoing law enforcement operations. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not taken sufficient measures to prepare a contingency plan and that many internally displaced children and their families live in harsh conditions with no access to shelter, sanitation and health-care or education services. The Committee is also seriously concerned about reports of sexual abuse, harassment, abduction and trafficking of internally displaced children following each emergency and the lack of measures to provide them with adequate security.

68. **The Committee, recalling its previous concluding observations, recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Pursue efforts to address the immediate humanitarian needs and protect the human rights of internally displaced children in the country;**
- (b) **Take all necessary precautions and adapt its military tactics to limit civilian casualties in military operations;**
- (c) **Ensure that displaced children are provided with shelter, food, sanitation, health care and education, as well as with physical and psychological rehabilitation services, paying specific attention to particularly vulnerable groups, especially unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities and children suffering from malnutrition and disease;**
- (d) **Take special measures to protect internally displaced children from sexual abuse, harassment, abduction and trafficking following any emergency situation.**

Children in armed groups

69. The Committee is gravely concerned that children continue to be targeted for recruitment and training by armed groups for military activities, which include suicide bombing and detonating landmines, and are transferred to the front lines of conflict areas, where they are exposed to mortal danger and risk of physical harm, and that insufficient measures have been taken by the State party to prevent such recruitment. While noting the Sabawoon Centre, and other centres established for the rehabilitation of children recruited by armed groups, the Committee is concerned about the inadequacy of such centres as well as the lack of other measures to ensure the reintegration and rehabilitation of such children.

70. **The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to prevent and prohibit non-State armed groups from recruiting children and using them in armed campaigns and terrorist activities, in particular suicide bombings. It also recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to provide adequate**

rehabilitation and reintegration structures and services and sufficient resources for all child victims and children who have taken part in hostilities.

Economic exploitation, including child labour

71. The Committee welcomes the legislative acts passed in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces that prohibit the employment of children in certain hazardous occupations. However, the Committee remains seriously concerned about:

- (a) The extremely high number of children involved in child labour, including in hazardous and slavery-like conditions in domestic servitude and prostitution;
- (b) Reports of abuse and torture of working children, including child domestic workers, in some cases leading to the deaths of such children, mainly girls;
- (c) The continuing practice of bonded and forced labour affecting children from poor and vulnerable backgrounds, including Dalit children;
- (d) The absence of nationwide or provincial studies on the extent of child labour;
- (e) Insufficient programmes and mechanisms to identify and protect child victims of forced labour, particularly bonded labour and child labour in the informal sector, including domestic work;
- (f) The low minimum age for hazardous work, namely 14 years;
- (g) The inadequate number of sufficiently trained inspectors, their vulnerability to corruption and a lack of resources to inspect workplaces.

72. **The Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Take appropriate measures to eradicate child labour, in particular the worst forms of child labour, by addressing its root causes, including poverty;**
- (b) **Establish mechanisms for the systematic and regular monitoring of workplaces that employ children, in order to prevent ill-treatment, abuse and exploitation;**
- (c) **Eradicate all forms of bonded and forced labour of children, in particular those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups, such as Dalit children, and bring those responsible, in particular employers, to justice;**
- (d) **Conduct a survey or study to assess the prevalence of child labour, including the worst forms of child labour such as bonded and forced labour, and inform the Committee about the findings in its next periodic report;**
- (e) **Develop programmes and mechanisms to identify and protect child victims of forced labour, particularly bonded labour, and child labour in the informal sector, including domestic work;**
- (f) **Strengthen the labour inspectorate by eradicating corruption and providing labour inspectors with all the support necessary, including child labour expertise, to enable them to monitor effectively, at the national and local levels, the implementation of labour law standards and to receive, investigate and address complaints of alleged violations;**
- (g) **Expedite the harmonization of the labour laws in order to establish minimum ages for employment in accordance with international standards, notably the International Labour Organization Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and vigorously pursue the enforcement of minimum age standards, including by**

requiring employers to possess, and to produce on demand, proof of the age of all children working on their premises;

(h) **Seek technical assistance from the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organization in this regard.**

Children in street situations

73. The Committee is alarmed by reports that a large number of children live in street situations and are deprived of their basic rights, including access to health care, education and shelter, and are subjected to hazardous forms of labour, sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking. It is also concerned that children living or working on the streets, or whose parents are in conflict with the law, are often dealt with by the police rather than trained staff in child protection centres.

74. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party:**

(a) **Carry out a systematic assessment of children in street situations in order to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy, which should address the root causes of the problem, in order to prevent children from leaving families and schools for the streets;**

(b) **Ensure that children in street situations are provided with adequate protection and assistance, nutrition and shelter, as well as health care and educational opportunities, in order to support their full development;**

(c) **Respect the right of children in street situations to be heard when developing programmes and measures designed to protect and assist them.**

Sale, trafficking and abduction

75. The Committee is seriously concerned that the State party remains a significant source, destination and transit country for children trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced or bonded labour. In particular, it is concerned that children are bought, rented and sold into domestic servitude, bonded labour and sexual exploitation or forced marriages abroad and in Pakistan. The Committee regrets the lack of clarity in the State party's laws on internal trafficking and the lack of information about specific shelters for child victims of trafficking and prostitution.

76. **While taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, the Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to protect children from being trafficked or sold either within Pakistan or abroad by addressing the root causes of the sale and trafficking, including gender-based discrimination, poverty, early marriage and a lack of access to education and vocational training. It also recommends that the State party provide comprehensive social and psychological assistance to children who have been sold or trafficked in order to support their recovery and social reintegration. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party clarify its laws on internal trafficking, take measures to ensure that all reports of trafficking and sale of children are promptly and effectively investigated, and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished.**

Enforced disappearances

77. The Committee is seriously concerned about reports of enforced disappearances of children in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, who were allegedly abducted by law enforcement agencies, which are authorized to arbitrarily detain any person, including those below the age of 18 years.

78. **The Committee urges the State party to review its security legislation in order to ensure that persons below the age of 18 years are not subjected to arbitrary detention and are instead handled by the juvenile justice system. It urges the State party to promptly and effectively investigate all cases of enforced disappearances.**

Administration of juvenile justice

79. The Committee deplores the worsening situation of juvenile justice in the State party and is seriously concerned about:

- (a) The low minimum age of criminal responsibility (10 years);
- (b) Death sentences and lengthy prison terms handed down to children by the judiciary, mostly for terrorism-related crimes or *hadood* offences under sharia law;
- (c) The inadequate implementation of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance of 2000, which provides for juvenile courts, and the fact that children are tried as adults in sharia courts and special courts for drug and terrorism-related offences;
- (d) The lack of mechanisms and of any obligation to investigate the age of an accused person in the absence of a birth certificate, leading to situations where many children are tried as adults and sentenced to death;
- (e) The detention of children together with adults, especially in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to the abuse of children by other prisoners and prison staff;
- (f) The continued functioning of informal courts (*jirgas* and *panchayats*), which — although they are banned by law — decide on cases concerning honour killing and bride price, among others.

80. **In the light of its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children’s rights in juvenile justice, the Committee urges the State party to bring its juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) **Revise, as a matter of the highest priority, its legislation and increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility to an internationally accepted level;**
- (b) **Review its legislation with a view to prohibiting cruel and inhuman punishments for any persons below the age of 18 years, including death sentences and lengthy prison terms;**
- (c) **Ensure that the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance of 2000 prevails over all other laws, including sharia law, paying particular attention to sections 11 and 12 (a) of the Ordinance, which both apply “notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law for the time being in force”;**
- (d) **Introduce compulsory procedures and mechanisms to establish the age of a child, including a presumption of validity of official records such as birth certificates and placement of the onus on the State to prove adulthood beyond reasonable doubt;**
- (e) **Promote alternative measures to detention, such as diversion, probation, mediation, counselling or community service, wherever possible and ensure that detention is used as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time, and that it is reviewed on a regular basis with a view to withdrawing it;**

(f) In cases where detention, including pretrial detention, is unavoidable, ensure that children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions comply with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services;

(g) Carry out systematic and regular monitoring of detention facilities where children are detained, investigate any reports or allegations of torture or ill-treatment of children and ensure that perpetrators receive punishments commensurate with the gravity of their crimes;

(h) Set up, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance of 2000, specialist juvenile courts staffed by specially trained juvenile judges, prosecutors, probation officers, defence advocates and other relevant personnel, and ensure that all persons below the age of 18 years are tried exclusively by such courts, without exception;

(i) Ensure the provision of free, qualified and independent legal representation to children in conflict with the law, from the outset and at all stages of the legal proceedings;

(j) Prohibit informal courts, such as *jirgas* and *panchayats*, and carry out prompt and effective investigations into decisions taken by such courts and, where appropriate, prosecute their members, in particular in cases of honour killing, under the relevant articles of the criminal law.

81. To that effect, the Committee recommends that the State party make use of the technical assistance tools developed by the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice and its members, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and non-governmental organizations, and seek technical assistance in the area of juvenile justice from members of the Panel.

J. Ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on a communications procedure

82. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on a communications procedure.

K. Ratification of international human rights instruments

83. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, ratify the core human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party, namely the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

84. The Committee urges the State party to fulfil its reporting obligations under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, for which the State party report has been overdue since 2013.

V. Implementation and reporting

A. Follow-up and dissemination

85. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented. The Committee also recommends that the fifth periodic report, the written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

B. Next report

86. The Committee invites the State party to submit its combined sixth and seventh periodic reports by 11 June 2021 and to include therein information on the follow-up to the present concluding observations. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 31 January 2014 (CRC/C/58/Rev.3) and should not exceed 21,200 words (see General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16). In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the treaty body cannot be guaranteed.

87. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document, not exceeding 42,400 words, in accordance with the requirements for the common core document in the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I) and paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 68/268.
