



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### **Concluding observations on the second to fourth periodic reports of Republic of Congo\***

1. The Committee considered the consolidated second to fourth periodic reports of the Republic of Congo (CRC/C/COG/2-4) at its 1847<sup>th</sup> and 1848<sup>th</sup> meetings (see CRC/C/SR.1847 and 1848), held on 13 and 14 January 2014, and adopted, at its 1875<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 31 January 2014, the following concluding observations.

#### **I. Introduction**

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the consolidated second to fourth periodic reports of the State party (CRC/C/COG/2-4) and the written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/COG/Q/2-4/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 undertaken and progress achieved by the State party**

3. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the following legislative measures:

- (a) Law No. 10-2012 instituting the regime for families and children facing difficulties (4 July 2012);
- (b) Law No. 30-2011 on persons living with HIV (3 June 2011);
- (c) Law No. 5-2011 on the promotion and protection of rights of indigenous peoples (25 February 2011); and
- (d) Law No. 4-2010 on the protection of the child in the Republic of the Congo and containing the Child Protection Code (14 June 2010).

4. The Committee also notes with appreciation the ratification of:

- (a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (24 September 2010); and

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session (13 – 31 January 2014).

(b) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (24 October 2009);

5. It welcomes information from the delegation of the State party on the future ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

6. The Committee also welcomes the following institutional and policy measures with an impact on children:

- (a) The National Development Plan (PND) 2012-2016;
- (b) The National Policy for Social Action (PNAS) 2013-2016; and
- (c) The Congo-Benin agreement to protect children from human trafficking.

7. The Committee notes as positive the invitation, for the first time, extended by the State party to United Nations special procedures in 2010.

### III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

#### A. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6, of the Convention)

##### The Committee's previous recommendations

8. While welcoming the State party's efforts to implement the Committee's concluding observations of 2006 on the State party's initial report (CRC/C/COG/CO/1), the Committee regrets that several concerns and recommendations have been insufficiently or only partly addressed, including those related to: coordination, birth registration; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and harmful practices.

9. **The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures to address the recommendations in the concluding observations (CRC/C/COG/CO/1) that have not been fully implemented and to provide adequate follow-up to the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations on the second to fourth periodic reports.**

##### Legislation

10. The Committee takes note of the efforts by the State party to review its legal framework on the rights of the child with the aim of bringing national legislation in line with the Convention and notes, in particular, Law 4-2010 on the protection of the child. However, it notes with concern that the Convention has still not been fully domesticated in national legislation and that the draft law on the modernization of the justice system has not yet been adopted. It also notes with concern the lack of information on whether the Convention could be or has been enforced directly in national courts.

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party continue to harmonize its legislation with the principles and provisions of the Convention, incorporate the Convention into domestic legislation, and expedite the adoption of the draft law on the modernization of the justice system and its implementation. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that the Convention can be invoked as a legal basis by individuals and judges at all levels of administrative and judicial proceedings.**

### Coordination

12. While noting the coordination by the Interministerial Committee of activities to implement the Convention, the Committee is concerned that the State party lacks permanent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The Committee reiterates its concern at the absence of a permanent body mandated to coordinate the implementation and enforcement of all laws, policies, programmes, and measures for children.

**13. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 9) and urges the State party to designate a main coordination body for children and to allocate the adequate human, financial and technical resources for its effective functioning.**

### Comprehensive policy and strategy

14. The Committee takes note of the adoption of several national action plans with an impact on children but is concerned the lack of data on the results achieved by these various plans and the absence of a comprehensive policy and strategy on children.

**15. The Committee recalls that the State party has the lead responsibility for adopting a comprehensive policy on children and encourages it in this regard. It recommends that the State party also develop a strategy with the necessary elements for its application, on the basis of the policy, and provide it with sufficient human, technical and financial resources. The Committee also recommends that the strategy be implemented with the necessary monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to regularly assess progress achieved and identify possible deficiencies for corrective action. It urges the State party to take necessary steps to ensure effective participation of children in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.**

### Allocation of resources

16. The Committee notes with concern that despite earnings from its oil sector, the State party's social indicators have not improved and investment in the social sectors continues to be insufficient for all children to fully exercise their rights. While noting the increased spending earmarked for children belonging to vulnerable groups by the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Committee is concerned that only children from the capital are benefitted. The Committee also notes that corruption remains pervasive despite efforts by the State party to eliminate it and expresses its concern about the lack of information on budgetary monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

**17. In the light of its day of general discussion in 2007 on "Resources for the Rights of the Child- Responsibility of States" and with emphasis on articles 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Substantially increase its budget allocations to adequate levels in the areas of social spending for children and their families;**

**(b) Establish a budgeting process, which includes a child rights perspective and sets out clear allocations for children in the relevant sectors and agencies, including specific indicators and a tracking, monitoring and evaluation system for the allocations and their use;**

**(c) Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the adequacy, efficacy and equitability of the distribution of resources allocated for the implementation of the Convention; and**

**(d) Strengthen measures to combat corruption and strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute corruption.**

**Data collection**

18. The Committee welcomes efforts to improve availability of data, including the Health Demographic Survey 2011, the Survey on Congolese Households, and the data collection system available for the education sector. Despite noting information on the creation of a national system of information on social action (SNIAS) and an observatory for children and society, the Committee regrets the absence of a comprehensive system for data collection in the State party. The Committee notes with concern that reliable, disaggregated data in important areas of the Convention are not available and that there is insufficient coordination and collaboration among government agencies regarding data collection.

19. **In light of its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee recalls its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 17) and strongly recommends that the State party expeditiously improve its data collection system. The data should cover all areas of the Convention and should be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnic and national origin and socioeconomic background in order to facilitate analysis on the situation of all children, particularly those in situations of vulnerability. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the data and indicators be shared among the ministries concerned and used for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects for the effective implementation of the Convention. In this context, the Committee also recommends that the State party continue its technical cooperation with, among others, UNICEF and regional mechanisms.**

**Independent monitoring**

20. The Committee notes that the State party envisages broadening the mandate of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), as per its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 13). Nevertheless, it notes with concern that no action has been taken in this regard and regrets information by the State party about the lack of operational capacity of both the National Human Rights Commission and the Ombudsman to carry out the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention or to receive individual complaints from children.

21. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation for the State party (CRC/COG/CO/1, para. 12). Taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent human rights institutions, the Committee urges the State party to establish, either within or outside the National Human Rights Commission, a specific mechanism for monitoring children's rights with the capacity to receive, investigate and address complaints by children in a child-sensitive manner, ensure the privacy and protection of victims, and undertake monitoring, follow-up and verification activities for victims. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the independence of such a monitoring mechanism, including with regard to its funding, mandate and immunities, in full compliance with the Paris Principles. It also recalls its recommendation that the State party seek technical cooperation from, among others, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNICEF.**

**Dissemination and awareness-raising**

22. The Committee takes note of the various efforts undertaken by the State party to disseminate information on the Convention and undertake training. However, it notes with concern that the principles and provisions of the Convention are not systematically

disseminated at all levels of society, notably in rural areas and among children. It also notes with concern that training on the Convention is not permanent and remains insufficient.

**23. The Committee encourages the State party to further carry out awareness raising programmes, including campaigns to disseminate the Convention, and to incorporate human rights education in the curricula of both primary and secondary schools. It also recommends that the State party continue its efforts to provide adequate and systematic training and/or sensitization on children's rights to professional groups working with and for children, such as judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials, civil servants, local government officials, teachers, social workers, health personnel and, especially, children themselves.**

#### **Cooperation with civil society**

24. The Committee notes with appreciation the contribution of civil society organizations to the implementation of activities related to the rights of the child. While welcoming the overall provision of services for children by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Committee is concerned that the State party appears to delegate the provision of services to NGOs, as contractors or in its place. The Committee also expresses its concern that in spite of serving the public interest, many civil society organizations face challenges, as they are not recognized as State-approved organizations.

**25. The Committee calls on the State party to systematically involve communities and civil society actors, including non-governmental and children's organizations, in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes related to children's rights. It also recommends that the State party remove any obstacles to State recognition of those NGOs that serve the rights of the child and the public interest.**

#### **Children's rights and the business sector**

26. The Committee notes with satisfaction information provided by the State party delegation related to the existence of contract clauses for oil extraction and forest concessions providing for the adoption of measures to protect the rights to health and education of children living in the areas of industrial activities. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that according to national law, it is not mandatory to carry out environmental and social impact assessments prior to the approval of investment projects likely to impact children's rights, particularly as a consequence of forced displacement and expropriations, pollution, and damage and/or injury to cultural assets and traditions.

**27. Drawing the State party's attention to its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State party establish and implement regulations to ensure that the business sector complies with international and national human rights, labour, environment and other standards, particularly with regard to children's rights, and in the light of Human Rights Council resolutions 8/7 of 18 June 2008 (para. 4 (d)) and 17/4 of 16 June 2011 (para. 6 (f)). In particular, it recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Establish a clear regulatory framework for the industries operating in the State party to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect human rights or endanger environmental and other standards, especially those relating to children's and women's rights;**

**(b) Ensure effective implementation by companies, especially industrial companies, of international and national environmental and health standards, effective monitoring of implementation of these standards and appropriately**

sanctioning and providing remedies when violations occur, as well as ensure that appropriate international certification is sought;

(c) Consider the possibility of including in the regulatory framework the obligation to carry out environmental and social impact assessments prior to the approval of investment projects, in particular with regard to its impacts on the rights of the child;

(d) Carry out prior consultations with populations, including children, whose rights are likely to be affected by investment projects, especially in cases of relocation and/or damage and/or injury to cultural assets and traditions;

(e) Require companies to undertake full public disclosure of the environmental, health-related and human rights impacts of their business activities and their plans to address such impacts;

(f) Be guided by the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework, accepted unanimously in 2008 by the Human Rights Council, while implementing these recommendations.

## **B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)**

### **Non-discrimination**

28. The Committee welcomes measures by the State party to strengthen national legislation guaranteeing the principle of non-discrimination, including the law on the promotion and protection of rights of indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned by the slow implementation of such legislation and regrets that the Constitution is yet to be amended to prohibit discrimination on any grounds covered by the Convention (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 26). The Committee reiterates its strong concern about the lack of systematic efforts to combat and change discriminatory attitudes and practices, and is particularly concerned about:

(a) the widespread ethnic-based discrimination against children belonging to indigenous groups, who are often the target of insults, physical violence and bullying;

(b) discrimination of children living in isolated, rural areas in the enjoyment of their rights, in particular regarding access to health services, food, water, schooling, and identity;

(c) discrimination against children in street situations and refugee children, in particular from Rwanda;

(d) multiple forms of discrimination and prejudice against children with albinism; and

(e) the multiple gender-based discrimination against girls.

29. Recalling its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 27), the Committee recommends that the principle of non-discrimination, as provided for under article 2 of the Convention, be fully and vigorously applied by the State party and integrated into the implementation of all other articles to guarantee, without discrimination, the rights set out in the Convention. The Committee also recommends that the State party take systematic, adequate, and effective efforts to address persistent discrimination in the family, schools and other settings, and in particular concerning indigenous children, children from rural areas, children with albinism, children in street situations, refugee children and girls, in particular. It further recommends that the State party include information in its next periodic report on

measures and programmes relevant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child undertaken by the State party in follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, as well as the outcome document adopted at the 2009 Durban Review Conference.

#### **Best interests of the child**

30. The Committee is concerned about the lack of information on the State party's efforts to ensure the right of the child to have his/her best interests taken into account as a primary consideration in all actions concerning children and to apply it in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings, as well as in policies and programmes relating to children.

31. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration and recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to ensure that this right is appropriately integrated and consistently applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings as well as 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 for determining the best interests of the child in every area and for giving them due weight as a primary consideration. Such procedures and criteria should be disseminated to the public, including traditional leaders, public and private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities and legislative bodies.

#### **Respect for the views of the child**

32. The Committee reiterates its concern that the general principle of respect for the views of the child is not fully respected and applied (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 30). It notes with concern the lack of progress in adopting the law on the inclusion of the Parliament of the Congolese Child in the parliamentary process.

33. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, and recommends that it take measures to strengthen the respect for the views of the child in accordance with article 12 of the Convention. To that effect, it recalls its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1 par. 31) and urges the State party to:

(a) Ensure the implementation of the right of the child to have his/her views taken into account. In this connection, particular emphasis should be placed on the right of every child to express his/her views freely in the family, at school, within other institutions and bodies, and in the community and society at large, with special attention paid to vulnerable and minority groups. This should also be reflected in all laws, judicial and administrative decisions;

(b) Take measures to ensure the effective implementation of legislation recognizing the right of the child to be heard in relevant legal proceedings;

(c) Conduct research to identify the issues that are most important to children, to hear their views on those issues, to find out how well their voices are heard in family decisions affecting their lives and the channels through which they currently and potentially have the most influence on national and local decision-making;

(d) Conduct programmes and awareness-raising activities to promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, community and schools, including within student council bodies, with particular attention to girls and children in vulnerable situations;

(e). Institutionalize the Parliament of the Congolese Child as a regular event and ensure that it is provided with a meaningful mandate and adequate human, technical and financial resources, in order to facilitate children's effective engagement with national legislative processes on issues that affect them.

#### **Right to life and survival**

34. While taking note of the measures adopted by the State party for the protection of children with albinism, the Committee remains seriously concerned that children with albinism are still often exposed to life threatening situations.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and implement awareness raising campaigns against superstitious beliefs concerning children (and adults) with albinism, as well as investigate, prosecute, and, where appropriate, punish perpetrators of acts of homicide targeting children with albinism.

### **C. Civil rights and freedom (arts.7, 8, 13-17, 19 and 37 (a) of the Convention)**

#### **Birth registration**

36. The Committee notes with appreciation the Birth Registration Strategic Plan 2009–2013 and the abolishment of fees for late birth registration as mentioned by the State party delegation during the dialogue. Nevertheless, the Committee remains concerned about the large number of children that are still not registered, the existence of unofficial payments attached to late birth registration, the insufficient number of civil registry offices in remote areas and the insufficient awareness of the importance of registration. It also notes with concern that the one-month limit for families to register births increases difficulties and costs for families.

37. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 34) and urges the State party to establish an efficient and accessible birth registration system covering its entire territory, including through empowering chiefs of villages in remote areas to register civil status, so that all children are registered immediately after birth. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that undue payments are not imposed. It also reiterates its recommendation that the State party:

(a) promote awareness and appreciation of the importance of birth registration among parents and administrative authorities through mass and regular campaigns providing information on the procedure of birth registration, including the rights and entitlements derived from the registration;

(b) take appropriate measures to register those who have not been registered at birth, including indigenous children and refugee children; and

(c) seek technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) among others, for the implementation of these recommendations.



### **Access to appropriate information**

38. While welcoming information on library and reading projects, the Committee regrets the absence of a comprehensive policy on the promotion of children's access to adequate information. The Committee notes with interest that the Ministry of Social Affairs launched a study on children's access to video clubs and its effects on the development and well-being of the child but regrets considerable delays in the study due to lack of funding.

39. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 36) to develop a comprehensive policy on the promotion of children's access to adequate information and to ensure that children are protected from harmful information, including from unsupervised access to the Internet. It calls on the State party to adequately fund studies aiming to better understand children's access to information and material, including at video clubs, and their effects on the development and wellbeing of the child. The Committee reiterates that the State party should also ensure that all children in the State party have access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources that are age-appropriate and respectful of the child's spiritual and moral well-being.**

## **D. Violence against children (articles 19, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)**

### **Corporal punishment**

40. While welcoming the prohibition of corporal punishment to discipline a child, as provided in Law 4-2010 on the protection of the child, the Committee remains concerned that children still suffer violent corporal punishment at home and at school.

41. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 38) and calls on the State party to:**

(a) **Ensure the full implementation of Law 4-2010 prohibiting corporal punishment and ensure that all cases of corporal punishment are effectively investigated and prosecuted;**

(b) **Continue to raise awareness among the general public, including children, about the unlawfulness and the negative consequences of corporal punishment and other forms of violence on the development and well-being of the child;**

(c) **Promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment; and**

(d) **Provide children with child-sensitive mechanisms to lodge complaints in case they are victims of violence, including corporal punishment.**

### **Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment**

42. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Law 4-2010 on the protection of the child explicitly prohibits and sanctions torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. While noting current efforts to refit penitentiary centres to meet international standards, the Committee recalls its concern about the lack of information on the allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including rape, to which children are subject by the military and the police. The Committee is also concerned by the absence of a child-sensitive mechanism to receive complaints against law enforcement officers.

43. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 41) and calls on the State party to take effective measures to protect children**

from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. It also urges the State party to:

- (a) investigate all reported cases and prosecute military personnel, law enforcement officials or any person acting in an official capacity responsible for such acts and ensure that perpetrators are provided with penalties commensurate to their crimes;
- (b) ensure that all children victims of torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are provided access to physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration as well as compensation, giving due consideration to the obligations enshrined in articles 38 and 39 of the Convention;
- (c) establish a child-sensitive mechanism to receive complaints from children who may have been victims of torture, or cruel inhuman or degrading treatment by law enforcement officials; and
- (d) Systematically train police officers, prison staff and other authorities on human rights of children.

#### **Abuse and neglect**

44. The Committee notes the ongoing preparation of a draft law on sexual violence. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses its concern about the widespread violence against children, in particular girls, and that according to the State party's own evaluation, perpetrators of child abuse and neglect enjoy a high degree of impunity. It is also concerned about the lack of information on the measures, mechanisms and resources to prevent and combat domestic violence, abuse of children at school, and neglect of children as well as on the institution in charge of providing support and recovery services to child victims.

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Expedite the adoption of the draft law on sexual violence and ensure that the national legal framework for the protection of the child is systematically applied and that perpetrators of violence against children are brought to justice;
- (b) Further strengthen awareness-raising and public educational programmes, including campaigns, with the involvement of children, in order to formulate a comprehensive strategy for preventing and combating child abuse;
- (c) Designate a national institution to implement long-term programmes for addressing the root causes of violence and abuse and ensure it receives adequate human, technical and financial resources;
- (d) Establish a national database on all cases of domestic violence, abuse and neglect against children, and undertake a comprehensive assessment of the extent, causes and nature of such violence; and
- (e) Encourage community-based programmes aimed at preventing and tackling domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, including by involving former victims, volunteers and community members, and providing training support to them.

#### **Sexual exploitation and abuse**

46. The Committee remains gravely concerned that:

- (a) exploitation of and sexual violence affecting mostly children, and in particular girls under 13 years of age, still continue;

(b) cases of exploitation and sexual violence are not systematically investigated and perpetrators are not prosecuted;

(c) assistance to victims is not available throughout the State party.

47. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 82) and particularly calls on the State party to:**

(a) **Take effective measures to enforce domestic laws that protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation, and to provide intensive training to police personnel, judiciary and professionals working with and for children on the related laws;**

(b) **Investigate cases of abuse, prosecute such crimes, and impose adequate sentences; and**

(c) **Ensure the development of programmes and policies for the prevention, recovery and social reintegration of child victims, in accordance with the outcome documents adopted at the 1996, 2001 and 2008 World Congresses against Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm, Yokohama and Rio de Janeiro, respectively.**

#### **Freedom of the child from all forms of violence**

48. Despite the adoption of a national gender policy and action plan, the Committee is concerned that:

(a) violence against women and children has increased in the past 10 years;

(b) there is no comprehensive national strategy to prevent and address all forms of violence against children;

(c) the State budget allocated to recovery and reintegration programmes for children in situations of vulnerability, including victims of violence (2006-2010), is highly insufficient;

(d) Children in situations of vulnerability, such as indigenous children, children with albinism, children with disabilities, children living and working in the streets and children living in poverty or from rural areas, in particular, are more targeted to violence than others.

49. **Recalling the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children of 2006 (A/61/299), the Committee urges the State party to prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children. Drawing the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee also 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 coordinating framework to address all forms of violence against children;**

(c) **Implement the national gender policy and action plan and 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; and**

(e) Ensure an adequate allocation of resources for the implementation of policies and programmes for the prevention, recovery and reintegration of child victims.

**E. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 18 (paras. 1-2), 9-11, 19-21, 25, 27 (para. 4) and 39 of the Convention)**

**Family environment**

50. The Committee is concerned about inequality of parental responsibilities between the mother and the father, engrained in law and in practice. The Committee remains concerned about the delays on the part of the State party in repealing legal provisions not in accordance with the Convention and which discriminate against women and girls. It reiterates its concern that insufficient measures have been taken to change the prevalent gender stereotypes concerning the roles of women and girls, especially in the family. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that social and other family support services in general are inadequate.

51. **The Committee urges the State party to accelerate its efforts to revise the Family Code and ensure that all provisions that discriminate against women and negatively impact on their children, be repealed. In particular it calls on the State party to ensure that the Family Code provision that recognizes the father to be the head of the family is repealed, and that mothers and fathers equally share the legal responsibility for their children, in accordance with article 18, paragraph 1, of the Convention. The Committee also recommends that the State party provide the necessary support to families to enable them to fulfil their obligation towards their children and to ensure their well-being and development.**

**Children deprived of a family environment**

52. While noting the establishment of regulations and norms relating to private foster care structures and child shelters, the Committee expresses concern that unofficial family placement of children is carried out without State registration or supervision. It is further concerned by the lack of information on children in care institutions, on periodic review of placements by the authorities, and on the availability of alternative child care options. While welcoming Law No. 10-2012 instituting the regime for families and children facing difficulties, the Committee notes with concern the continued abandonment of children by parents mainly for economic reasons.

53. **Recalling the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children contained in General Assembly resolution 64/142 adopted on 18 December 2009, the Committee urges the State party to:**

(a) ensure that all care institutions and children's shelters are adequately registered and conform to existing norms and standards of practice for the protection and well-being of children deprived of a family environment;

(b) increase alternative family based care options for children currently in children's shelters and care institutions with a view to abolishing the use of institutions for the care of children deprived of a family environment;

(c) provide minimum standards and professional protocols for the establishment and operation of alternative services;

(d) thoroughly and periodically review placements of children in institutions and, where in the best interests of the child, ensure and encourage on-going

relationships between the child and her/his biological family and support reunification;

(e) establish a comprehensive and clear policy and structure on family support with a view to increasing the provision of universal basic preventive and early intervention services to address the out of family placement of children, the situation of children working in the streets, and abandonment of children by parents solely for economic reasons; and

(f) Increase the number of social workers and assistants as well as their opportunities for high quality training and on-the-job support.

#### **Adoption**

54. While noting that the State party envisages developing an adoption policy and ratifying the Hague Adoption Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption, the Committee reiterates its concern about the absence of a central control mechanism and of procedures regarding domestic and intercountry adoptions. The Committee also expresses its concern about the lack of information about the “informal adoption” of children cared for by their extended families, including of children who are AIDS orphans, which is widely practiced but not monitored.

55. **The Committee reiterates its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 49), in full, and calls on the State party to:**

(a) Ensure the compliance of legislation and administrative procedures on adoption with article 21 of the Convention;

(b) Establish a comprehensive national policy and guidelines governing adoption and a central control mechanism to ensure that domestic and intercountry adoptions are performed in full compliance with the best interests of the child and the appropriate legal guarantees in accordance with the Convention; and

(c) Expedite the ratification and implementation of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption.

### **F. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (para. 3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (paras. 1-3) of the Convention)**

#### **Children with disabilities**

56. The Committee notes with interest the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (2009) and the Strategic Framework on schooling and re-schooling of children with disabilities (2007) but is concerned by their slow implementation. It also notes with concern that in spite of Law. No. 009/92 on the promotion and protection of disabled persons (1992), no application decrees have been finalized. It also expresses concern that many children with disabilities, especially in rural areas, remain at home and receive no schooling due to the lack of concrete measures to ensure that the national education system has the necessary capacities to facilitate access to and to integrate them into the education system.

57. **In light of article 23 of the Convention and of its general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities, the Committee urges the State party to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability and specifically reiterates its previous recommendations (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 57) that it:**

- (a) **Implement the existing National Action Plan and Strategic Framework through dissemination and ensuring adequate resources;**
- (b) **Finalise decrees for the implementation of Law. No. 009/92;**
- (c) **Carry out concrete measures to encourage the inclusion of children with disabilities into the mainstream educational system and their inclusion into society;**
- (d) **Strengthen special training for teachers and make the physical environment, including schools and all other public areas, accessible for children with disabilities; and**
- (e) **Improve and strengthen early detection and treatment services through health and education sectors.**

#### **Health and health services**

58. The Committee welcomes the strategies adopted by the State party to reduce the high maternal and child mortality, to manage childhood illness, improve the treatment of malnutrition and to reduce malaria (2008–2012). The Committee also notes with appreciation the role of civil society organizations and the media in the national strategy for empowering households and communities for the promotion of good nutritional and health practices. Nevertheless, the Committee expresses its concern that the strategies face a number of important constraints to their implementation and that preventable and treatable diseases, including diarrhoea, continue to be among the main causes of infant and child mortality. The Committee is also concerned by the limited geographical coverage of health services, including the insufficient number of socio-health facilities, staff, and drugs.

59. **The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. It recalls its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 60) to the State party to overcome the constraints preventing the implementation of existing strategies including, inter alia, by:**

- (a) **Ensuring the provision of primary health care services for all pregnant women and children, focusing on the development of accessible health care services with trained health care providers, interventions to reduce preventable and other diseases, particularly diarrhoeas, acute respiratory infections, and undernutrition. Health services should include access to sanitation and clean drinking water;**
- (b) **Strengthen and expand access to preventive health care, and therapeutic services for all pregnant women and children, particularly infants and children under five years old. These should include universal immunization services, oral rehydration therapy, treatment for acute respiratory infections, promotion of infant and young child feeding practices, particularly breast milk and infant food based on local foods, and prevention of malaria through use of impregnated bed nets. This must also include the effective implementation of the WHO/UNICEF International Code on the Marketing and Distribution of Artificial Infant Formula and a monitoring system to ensure the enforcement of regulations;**
- (c) **Increasing efforts to implement the strategies seeking to reduce maternal mortality throughout the country, including for trained care at home, in maternal and child health clinics, and emergency obstetric care;**
- (d) **Reviewing existing policies and practices, and ensuring that health care is provided free of charge and without discrimination or unequal treatment to all children, especially indigenous children and children of families unable to afford the payment fees;**

(e) Continuing the dissemination of health information and promotion of health education, particularly on the use of latrines and hand washing to all segments of the society, and provide safe water to all segments of society;

(f) Increasing the quality and coverage of training to staff at socio-health units and ensuring that these units are adequately staffed and have the essential facilities, including obstetric supplies and emergency medicines for children and pregnant women;

(g). Increasing participation of indigenous communities in the development of health policy and delivery of services, and seek financial and technical assistance from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), among others, in this regard.

#### **HIV/AIDS**

60. The Committee notes with appreciation the multi-sectorial institutional framework adopted by the State party to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and to eliminate HIV transmission from mother to child, and increased access to HIV/AIDS care services provided for in Decree No. 2008-128 establishing free access to treatments for people living with HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned by the absence of information about a national HIV/AIDS prevention strategy among adolescents as well as the lack of a national strategy to deal with adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. The Committee is also concerned that:

(a) HIV/AIDS is one of the main causes of death, leaving thousands of orphaned children who may be infected;

(b) Some mothers and children may not have been tested to determine their HIV status;

(c) Some HIV-infected children do not receive proper medical and psychological care;

(d) Use and access of condoms by adolescents and young people is low, reflecting insufficient awareness of, among others, the consequences of unprotected sexual activity; and

(e) The *Ligne Jaune* helpline for free HIV/AIDS information and advice is not available throughout the State party.

61. In light of its general comment No. 3 (2003) on HIV/AIDS and the rights of the child, the Committee recommends that the State party develop a roadmap to ensure the implementation of effective HIV/AIDS preventive measures, including focused interventions to respond to adolescents. It calls on the State party to:

(a) Sustain the measures in place to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Moreover, the State party should scale up education and care services;

(b) Improve follow-up treatment for HIV/AIDS-infected mothers and their infants to ensure early diagnosis and immediate initiation of treatment;

(c) Improve access to quality, age-appropriate HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health services, particularly to adolescents;

(d) Achieve national coverage for the *Ligne Jaune* helpline; and

(e) Seek technical assistance from, inter alia, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and UNICEF.

**Harmful practices**

62. The Committee remains concerned that female genital mutilation is still practised among some West African communities living in the State party. The Committee also expresses its concern that early and forced marriages continue to be practiced in the State party.

63. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 65) that the State party adopt legislation prohibiting such harmful practices and take well targeted measures to ensure the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM) in all communities living on its territory, including through criminalization of FGM and widespread awareness-raising campaigns. It calls on the State party to encourage children to report these practices to health professionals and competent authorities. It also recommends that the State party take active and concrete measures to enforce the legal prohibition of early and forced marriage.**

**Standard of living**

64. The Committee recognises the challenge posed by poverty in the State party. While noting with interest the adoption of the National Development Plan (2012-2016), the Committee is concerned about the high levels of deprivation with regard to access to water and sanitation, education, health services and housing which affect children the most, especially children living in poverty.

65. **The Committee urges the State party to implement its previous recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 67) to take adequate measures to reduce poverty and deprivation levels so that children in the State party can enjoy an adequate standard of living, in particular with respect to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, housing, and education. It encourages the State party to develop public policies, of universal and permanent character, in these areas, away from project-based initiatives and calls on the State party to:**

- (a) **guarantee access to health services and schools free of charge for all children;**
- (b) **hold targeted consultations with families, children and children's rights civil society organizations on the issue of child poverty, with a view to strengthening the strategies and measures for fulfilling children's rights in the National Development Plan.**

**F. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29 and 31 of the Convention)****Education, including vocational training and guidance**

66. The Committee welcomes Ministerial decree No. 278/MFB/METP/MEPSA putting into effect the constitutional provisions on free primary and secondary education and notes the National Plan and the strategy for education. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the absence of information regarding any evaluation of the implementation and impact of these measures. The Committee remains concerned that:

- (a) Parents continue having to pay the retention of registration fees for examinations, lesson notes from some teachers, and other unofficial charges;
- (b) Vulnerable groups of children continue to face difficulties enjoying access to education, particularly indigenous and poor children, girls and children with disabilities;



(c) There is no information on the provision of holistic early childhood development for all children in the State party;

(d) The quality of education is low, primary school dropout rates are high, vocational training for children, in particular those who drop out of school, is lacking;

(e) Schools for indigenous children set up with support from religious and international groups as a response to the discrimination faced by indigenous children at school are not yet part of the public system and, as they are dependent on external funding, unsustainable in the long run;

(f) There are disparities in terms of access, affecting in particular children in remote and poor areas, and reflected in shortages of teachers, low level of teachers' skills and knowledge, as well as poor facilities.

**67. Taking into account its general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Guarantee the right to free mandatory education, without direct or hidden costs; take the necessary measures to ensure that all children are enrolled in school, and improve accessibility to education, paying particular attention to disparities in access to schools based on sex, socio economic, ethnic and regional grounds;**

**(b) Adopt a holistic early childhood development (ECD) strategy and invest in the training of ECD teachers and provision of integrated formal and community-based programmes involving parents and covering healthcare, nutrition and breastfeeding, early stimulation and early learning for children from birth to the first year of school;**

**(c) Undertake additional efforts to improve the quality of education and training for teachers, develop and promote quality informal education and vocational training to enhance the skills of children and young people, especially those who drop out;**

**(d) Provide additional school facilities, particularly in rural areas, and incorporate schools for indigenous children in the national budget, to increase access to education to all children; and**

**(e) Review and update school curricula at all levels with a view to incorporating human rights education with a focus on child rights, as well as peace education.**

#### **Rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities**

68. The Committee notes the promotion of reading and access to culture in the capital city and main departments but reiterates its concern about the limited opportunities available for children throughout the country to engage in cultural and recreational activities and programmes (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 72). It also notes with concern the lack of playgrounds and sport grounds for children throughout the country.

**69. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its general comment No 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts and recalls its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 73) for the State party to undertake measures to increase children's access to, and improve the quality of play and sports facilities, cultural, leisure as well as other educational and recreational activities.**

**G. Other special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 38, 39, 40, 37 (b)-(d), 32-36 of the Convention)**

**Asylum-seeking and refugee children**

70. While noting with interest the Refugee Bill, the Committee is concerned that the current lack of a comprehensive refugee and asylum law affects children in particular, as children often experience difficulties accessing the asylum system or are negatively impacted by long delays in processing their claims. The Committee commends the cooperative approach of the State party towards refugees, including many children, however, is concerned about:

- (a) the hardship of refugees and asylum seekers' living conditions, especially those of refugee and asylum seeking children;
- (b) incidents of sexual and gender-based abuse and degrading treatment against children, mostly girls; and
- (c) High school drop-out rates among refugee children, in particular girls.

71. **The Committee calls on the State party to finalize and adopt the Refugee Bill ensuring a child rights-based approach to asylum and refugee determination. It encourages the State party to subsequently take all measures to guarantee the full implementation of the national law, in line with international human rights and refugee law and refers the State party to its general comment No. 6 (2005) on the treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin. The Committee urges the State party to protect children, especially girls, against sexual abuse and other related incidents, to investigate cases of abuse fully, and prosecute and sentence the perpetrators of these crimes. It recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to improve the living conditions of asylum seeking and refugee children. It also encourages the State party to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.**

**Children belonging to minority or indigenous groups**

72. While welcoming Law No. 5-2011 on the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples, the Committee is concerned that its implementing decree has not been finalized and that the law remains widely unknown. It also welcomes the introduction of the principle of affirmative measures for indigenous peoples and the National Action Plan (2009-2013), but reiterates its concern about the situation of indigenous children, the de facto discrimination that they face and the absence of information on the implementation of any affirmative measures and overall implementation. The Committee is concerned that indigenous children continue to experience exclusion, violence, and discriminatory practices in access to their rights, including birth registration, education, access to justice and a life free from labour exploitation. The Committee also notes with concern that indigenous girls are at greater risk of abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

73. **The Committee urges the State party to implement its recommendation (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 89) and:**

- (a) Take measures to widely disseminate law No. 5-2011, adopt its implementing decree, and ensure that it is correctly applied;
- (b) Seek technical cooperation from, among others, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), other United Nations agencies and development partners to develop and undertake a comprehensive

**national sensitization campaign to address deep-rooted discrimination aimed at Congolese society as a whole;**

- (c) Strengthen efforts to secure the physical integrity of indigenous children;**
- (d) Implement affirmative measures and develop a new national action plan to ensure that indigenous children gain de facto enjoyment of their rights, in particular in the areas of birth registration, health, and education; and**
- (e) Take into account the Committee's general comment No.11 (2009) on indigenous children and their rights under the Convention.**

#### **Economic exploitation, including child labour**

74. Despite legal instruments prohibiting child labour, particularly in its worst forms, the Committee is concerned that the law enforcement mechanisms are rarely implemented. The Committee notes with regret that a comprehensive plan of action to prevent and combat child labour has not yet been developed (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 80) and that child labour and economic exploitation are widespread occurrences in the State party, especially in large cities. The Committee regrets the lack of information on the implementation of the Committee's previous observations (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, para. 79). The Committee is also extremely concerned that some forms of slavery and trafficking persist and affect mainly indigenous children.

**75. The Committee urges the State party to take immediate and effective measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and recommends that it:**

- (a) Implement existing legal instruments to eliminate child labour;**
- (b) Carry out a survey to determine the extent of the problem, root causes and pattern of labour and, based on its results, adopt and implement a comprehensive plan of action to prevent and combat child labour;**
- (c) Take all necessary measures to eradicate slavery and trafficking within the State party,**
- (d) Consider ratifying ILO Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers; and**
- (e) Continue to seek technical assistance from the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Office in this regard.**

#### **Children in street situations**

76. The Committee is concerned about the situation of children working and living on the street in major urban centers. The Committee notes with concern the lack of data on these children and the fact that many of them have limited enjoyment of their rights and are susceptible to abuse.

**77. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) Undertake a comprehensive study to assess the situation of children in street situations and its causes;**
- (b) Develop a national strategy aimed at preventing children from living and/or working in the streets, as well as at supporting children in street situations and ensuring that children in street situations are provided with a suitable programme of assistance, with adequate nutrition, clothing, housing, health care and educational opportunities, including vocational and life-skills training, in order to support their full development;**

(c) **Take measures to eradicate discrimination against children in street situations; and**

(d) **Develop a national strategy aimed at prevention of children from living and working on the street.**

**Sale, trafficking and abduction**

78. The Committee notes with interest the draft law on human trafficking and the 2012-2015 plan of action for combatting human trafficking but reiterates its concern over the absence of a law against trafficking or a national programme of action to eliminate child trafficking (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par. 83). Despite welcoming the local plan of action against trafficking in Pointe-Noire, the Committee notes with concern the persistence of cross-border trafficking of children for forced labour and sexual exploitation, internal “fostering”, as well as international adoption not in compliance with international standards. It is also concerned at the insufficient information provided by the State party on the assistance and reintegration services available to child victims of trafficking. The Committee also expresses its concern over allegations of complicity of some authorities in activities related to trafficking and the fact that successful prosecutions remain low. It notes with concern that the State party has not yet ratified anti-trafficking instruments, namely, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the Abuja Agreement.

79. **The Committee encourages the State party to adopt the draft law on human trafficking, its implementation guidelines and to designate a national committee for combatting human trafficking of children as foreseen by the draft law with the adequate resources. It urges the State party to further strengthen its efforts to identify, prevent and combat trafficking in children for sexual and other exploitative purposes, and specifically to:**

(a) **Tackle the root causes and improve the situation of children at risk, especially girls, through economic reintegration and rehabilitation of victims;**

(b) **Strengthen mechanisms to prevent and monitor human trafficking and exploitation of children, including at the local level, and, at the same time, undertake preventive actions to improve living conditions and economic opportunities, in particular in high-risk, border zones paying particular attention to economically disadvantaged families;**

(c) **Strengthen training programs addressing law enforcement officers and border guards as well as public awareness-raising programs targeting, in particular, children, parents and other caregivers, and sensitize officials working with and for victims of trafficking;**

(d) **Continue to pursue efforts for transnational collaboration on combating human trafficking of children and the establishment and implementation of agreements between neighbouring countries;**

(e) **Provide, in partnership with stakeholders, adequate programmes of assistance, psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration for sexually exploited and/or trafficked children;**

(f) **Ensure the investigation, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of child trafficking in accordance with national legislation; and**

(g) **Consider ratifying all international instruments related to combating human trafficking.**

### **Administration of juvenile justice**

80. The Committee welcomes information concerning improvements to the juvenile observation center and its decree of remit and functioning, the availability of children's judges and the recent use of daytime socio-cultural reintegration centers for some children in detention. Nevertheless, the Committee reiterates its concern that children face difficulties accessing legal aid, that children's judges are not always available, and the fact that children are placed in detention with adults (CRC/C/COG/CO/1, par 86), often in very difficult conditions. While noting that the State party envisages revising its Code of penal procedures, the Committee expresses concern that:

- (a) There is no minimum age of criminal responsibility, and judges decide on a case by case basis, whether the child incurs a criminal penalty or not;
- (b) the detention of children in conflict with the law, even of young children, is preferred to developing alternative measures;
- (c) statistical data on the number and characteristics of children currently in prison is not available;

81. **The Committee urges the State party to bring its juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40, and with other relevant standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines), the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules), the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, and the Committee's general comment No. 10 (CRC/C/GC/10, 2007). In particular, the Committee urges the State party:**

- (a) **Expediently reform its Code of penal procedures, establishing an internationally accepted minimum age of criminal responsibility;**
- (b) **establish specialized juvenile court facilities and procedures with adequate human, technical and financial resources, as well as ensure that specialized judges for children are available throughout the State party and that all public officers dealing with juvenile justice receive appropriate education and training and are aware of the Convention and Law 4-2010 on the protection of the child;**
- (c) **Ensure the provision of qualified and impartial legal aid to children in conflict with the law at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings;**
- (d) **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; and**
- (e) **In cases where detention is unavoidable, ensure that the children are not detained together with adults and that detention conditions are compliant with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services.**

82. **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 (UNODC), UNICEF, OHCHR and NGOs, and seek technical assistance in the area of juvenile justice from members of the Panel.**

## **H. 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 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture and other cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and members of Their Families, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 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 involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the reports of which are both overdue.

## **I. Cooperation with regional and international bodies**

85. The Committee recommends that the State party cooperate with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children of the African Union towards the implementation of the Convention and other human rights instruments, both in the State party and in other African Union member States.

## **J. Follow-up and dissemination**

86. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the present recommendations are fully implemented by, inter alia, transmitting them to the President, Parliament, relevant ministries, the Supreme Court and local authorities for appropriate consideration and further action.

87. The Committee further recommends that the combined second and third periodic reports and the written replies by the State party and the related recommendations (concluding observations) be made widely available in the languages of the country, including (but not exclusively) through the Internet, to the public at large, civil society organizations, media, youth groups, professional groups and children, in order to generate debate and awareness of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and of their implementation and monitoring.

## **K. Next report**

88. The Committee invites the State party to submit its next combined fifth and sixth periodic report by 12 November 2019 and to include in it information on the implementation of the present concluding observations. The Committee draws attention to its harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 1 October 2010 (CRC/C/58/Rev.2 and Corr. 1) and reminds the State party that future reports should be in compliance with the guidelines and not exceed 60 pages. The Committee urges the State party to submit its report in accordance with the guidelines. In

accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/167 of 20 December 2012, in the event a report exceeding the page limitations is submitted, the State party will be asked to review and resubmit the report in accordance with the above-mentioned guidelines. The Committee reminds the State party that if it is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation of the report for purposes of examination of the treaty body cannot be guaranteed.

89. The Committee also invites the State party to submit an updated core document in accordance with the requirements of the common core document in the harmonized guidelines on reporting, approved at the fifth Inter-Committee Meeting of the human rights treaty bodies in June 2006 (HRI/MC/2006/3).

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