



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
6 November 2013

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 17 October 2013, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria)
later: Mr. von Haff (Vice-Chair). (Angola)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 27: Social development (*continued*)

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*)
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*)
- (c) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.15: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Tuiloma** (Fiji), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text took into account the outcome of the General Assembly special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, held in September 2013, and the preparations for the post-2015 development agenda.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.13: Cooperatives in social development

2. **Ms. Ulziibayar** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the observance of the International Year of Cooperatives, in 2012, had confirmed that cooperatives contributed to poverty eradication, inclusive growth, employment generation and social protection. A number of revisions had been made, to the text, which would be reissued as document [A/C.3/68/L.13/Rev.1](#). A new preambular paragraph had been added, welcoming the efforts being made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as a new paragraph 7, encouraging Governments to promote access to information and communication technologies. Paragraphs 3 and 4 had been updated and paragraph 11 had been revised to reflect the need for the Secretary-General to render support to Member States within existing resources.

3. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Burkina Faso, Germany, Guatemala,

Indonesia, Mali, Malta, Panama, Romania, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.16: Preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

4. **Mr. Tuiloma** (Fiji), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text provided for one plenary meeting devoted to the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with the aim of discussing the role of family-oriented policies in the post-2015 development agenda. The draft resolution emphasized the need for action-oriented follow-up to the Year and for more attention to be paid poverty eradication, social exclusion, work-family balance and intergenerational issues.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.14: Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

5. **Mr. Tuiloma** (Fiji), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text encouraged Governments to ensure that the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their rights formed an integral part of the development agenda at the national and global levels. It invited Member States to adopt age-fair and old-age-enabling policies and to eliminate discriminatory practices and regulations.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.11: Promoting social integration through social inclusion

6. **Ms. Peña** (Peru), introducing the draft resolution, said that social inclusion was not merely an end in itself but was essential to development and in particular to progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. The draft resolution took into account the report of the Secretary-General on promoting social integration through social inclusion ([A/68/169](#)) and relevant work by the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme.

7. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Guatemala and Mongolia had joined the sponsors.

Agenda item 108: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.17: Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons

8. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus), introducing the draft resolution, said that the text welcomed the outcome of the high-level meeting of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly to appraise progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, held in May 2013, and provided for another such review at the seventy-first session. It invited the Inter-agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons to present measures for implementing the Plan at the sixty-ninth session, since individual States could not deal with the problem alone. It also invited the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to convene regular meetings of representatives of national coordinating mechanisms on combating trafficking in persons, and encouraged Member States to provide data to UNODC on trafficking for the purpose of removal of organs, tissues and cells.

9. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Peru had joined the sponsors.

10. **The Chair** drew attention to draft resolutions [A/C.3/68/L.2](#) and L.4-L.8, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.2: Follow-up to the Twelfth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

11. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications of the draft resolution, said that, because the resources required to implement the draft resolution would be reviewed in the context of the budget for the biennium 2014-2015, its adoption would not entail any additional appropriation under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

12. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.2 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.3: Strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice responses to protect cultural property, especially with regard to its trafficking

13. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the translation of the guidelines on cultural property mentioned in paragraph 12 into the six official languages of the United Nations would require \$196,500 in extrabudgetary resources. With regard to paragraph 13, extrabudgetary resources of \$138,200 would be required to hold a two-day expert group meeting to review the model treaty for the prevention of crimes that infringed on the cultural heritage of peoples in the form of movable property, including the travel of 20 participants, two months of consultancy services, and documents for the expert group meeting, in English only. The report requested in paragraph 15 would be part of another document to be prepared pursuant to existing reporting obligations and would not therefore entail additional resources. The activities would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided.

14. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.3 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.4: Technical assistance for implementing the international conventions and protocols related to counter-terrorism

15. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the adoption of paragraphs 1 to 12 of the draft resolution would require additional extrabudgetary resources for the provision of technical assistance in implementing the international conventions and protocols related to terrorism. The full implementation of the activities would be subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. A relatively small element of the activities would be carried out drawing on the regular budget allocations proposed under subprogramme 3 of section 13 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015. The report requested in paragraph 15 would be part of another document to be prepared pursuant to existing reporting obligations and would not therefore require additional resources.

16. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.4 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.5: The rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015

17. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the request contained in paragraph 8 would entail \$134,100 in additional budgetary resources for mission travel. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 12, additional extrabudgetary resources of \$50,700 would be required for staff and travel costs not covered by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. The request contained in paragraph 15 would entail \$50,500 in additional extrabudgetary resources. The activities would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided.

18. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.5 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.6: Model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice

19. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the request contained in paragraph 6 would entail \$718,900 in additional extrabudgetary resources. With regard to the request in paragraph 7, additional extrabudgetary resources of \$34,700 would be required for the coordination of activities. The requests contained in paragraphs 8 and 11 would entail additional extrabudgetary resources of \$713,400. The activities would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.6 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.7: Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

21. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the requests contained in paragraphs 6, 8 and 9 would entail additional extrabudgetary resources of \$721,700 for one meeting of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The Secretariat working paper mentioned in paragraph 9 would serve as the pre-session document for the meeting; the Expert Group's report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, mentioned in paragraph 6, would

serve as the meeting's post-session document. The request contained in paragraph 14 would entail additional extrabudgetary resources of \$845,600. The activities would not take place if the additional extrabudgetary resources were not provided.

22. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.7 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.8: Taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls

23. **Mr. Gustafik** (Secretary of the Committee), presenting a statement of programme budget implications, said that the requests contained in paragraphs 9 and 12 would require additional voluntary contributions of \$718,900. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 11, additional voluntary contributions of \$523,600 would be required. The request contained in paragraph 13 would entail no additional resources since the report would be presented as a conference room paper. With regard to the request contained in paragraph 14, additional voluntary contributions of \$466,200 would be required to convene one intergovernmental expert group meeting in Bangkok. Extrabudgetary resources of \$50,500 would be required for the production of the report requested in paragraph 17. The activities would not take place if the additional resources were not provided.

24. *Draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.8 was adopted.*

Agenda item 109: International drug control *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.9: United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development

25. **The Chair** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.9, which had been recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council. The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

26. *Draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.9 was adopted.*

Agenda item 65: Promotion and protection of the rights of children *(continued)*

- (a) **Promotion and protection of the rights of children** *(continued)* (A/68/253, A/68/257, A/68/263, A/68/267, A/68/274, A/68/275 and A/68/487)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/68/269)

27. **Mr. Banze** (Mozambique) said that Mozambique had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had acceded to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. His Government's poverty reduction action plan, which was designed to help the most vulnerable Mozambicans, had brought about a significant improvement in access to health and sanitation, primary education and child nutrition, and social protection for the most vulnerable children had been enhanced. Its national plan of action for the child (2013-2019) and action plan for orphaned children promoted improved multisectoral planning through stronger partnerships with civil society, development partners, the private sector and children themselves. His Government had launched a sexual and reproductive health initiative and had also established a children's parliament which was helping to make children aware of their rights and responsibilities, contributing to national unity by bringing together children from different backgrounds, and allowing children to engage with the Government on issues related to their rights. His delegation welcomed the recommendations made in the reports before the Committee regarding national capacity-building, combating HIV/AIDS and malaria, ensuring funding of programmes which impacted children, strengthening national, regional and international partnerships, eradicating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

28. **Mr. Thórsson** (Iceland) said that Iceland had become one of the first States to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into its domestic law, in February 2013. It was regrettable that only 34 States had laws prohibiting corporal punishment of children. Violence against children and child abuse could never be tolerated. Since 1998, his Government had operated a "Children's House", in which protective, health, law enforcement and prosecution services worked together to investigate cases of suspected sexual abuse and other violence against children. As a result, the juvenile justice system had become more accessible and effective. Iceland was willing to share its experience with interested Member States.

29. Children in conflict situations were at greater risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking and forced military recruitment. In the Syrian Arab

Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, millions of children had been forced to flee their homes; Palestinian children living under occupation could not fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The international community should do more to help those children. It should focus on the rights and empowerment of girls, especially through universal education.

30. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that the Third Global Conference on Child Labour, hosted by his Government in Brasilia in October 2013, had considered ways to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2016, focusing on law enforcement, social inclusion, quality education, child health and decent work for adults. His Government had reduced the number of child workers by over half between 1992 and 2011, in particular through cash transfers for families to enable their children to go to school instead of working. It had established a telephone hotline and launched a public awareness campaign to help the victims of child exploitation and collect information for criminal investigations. It had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure in 2012. In that same year, it had introduced the national system for socio-educational assistance, which provided support to juvenile offenders, promoted individualized penalties for offences and ensured young people's rights to education and vocational training. A federal programme benefiting 2 million low-income families with young children had been launched, increasing the number of day-care centres, improving the coverage of national health programmes and distributing medicines to treat asthma and vitamin A deficiency.

31. He called on Member States to review the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children with a view to enhancing efforts in the care and protection of children, especially those deprived of parental care, within the post-2015 development framework. The Third World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2008, had fostered commitments against child pornography on the Internet and trafficking of children and adolescents for sexual exploitation, while the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) strategy against sexual exploitation, Niñ@Sur, was being implemented in more than 15 border towns. His Government would

host the Twenty-Second Pan-American Child Congress in December 2014.

32. *Mr. von Haff (Angola), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

33. **Mr. Khammoungkhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that there had been uneven progress in the world in terms of improvement of child well-being. Children were the most affected by major world challenges such as poverty, hunger, high mortality rates, conflicts and exploitation; there was therefore an increased need for the international community to effectively deal with those fundamental challenges, bearing in mind the outcome document, "A World Fit for Children", of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children and globally agreed commitments including the Millennium Development Goals.

34. His Government had adopted or amended laws on education, health and hygiene, sanitation and labour and had adopted a national plan of action for children and a national strategy and plan of action on education. Boys and girls received free and compulsory primary education, and a 98 per cent enrolment ratio had been achieved. Enrolment at the secondary and higher levels had gradually increased. Under its national strategy and plan of action on health, his Government aimed to reduce maternal and child mortality by means of annual vaccination campaigns, nutrition strategies for mothers and young children, control of mother-to-child HIV/AIDS infection, and early intervention and free medical treatment for pregnant women and children under age five. At the regional level, his Government had actively contributed to the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Commitments for Children and Plan of Action on Children.

35. Despite the measures undertaken, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as a least developed and landlocked country, continued to face challenges such as high child mortality rates, particularly in remote rural areas, disparities in boys' and girls' enrolment in higher education, and a lack of quality teachers and educational materials. Those challenges required continued support and cooperation from the international community.

36. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that despite almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children worldwide still faced various forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. Their vulnerability became particularly acute when

aggravated by extreme poverty, armed conflict and foreign occupation.

37. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/267), child casualties in the course of military operations by drones had multiplied over the past decade; drone strikes directly affected the psychological well-being of children and their families, as well as their economic situation and educational opportunities. The use of armed drones in the border areas of Pakistan was a continued violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and of international humanitarian and human rights law. It alienated the affected population, fuelled disaffection and spurred reprisals against civilians. The Prime Minister of Pakistan had called for the cessation of drone strikes in his address to the General Assembly at the current session.

38. Pakistan had been one of the earliest signatories of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; his Government had also ratified the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and signed the Optional Protocol on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. It was also party to all International Labour Organization core conventions and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

39. His Government had taken a number of legislative and administrative measures to enhance children's access to education and health facilities and to protect them from various forms of abuse. It had made progress in reducing infant mortality rates and raising school enrolment rates, and was making comprehensive efforts to eliminate child labour. Members of civil society were also working for the rights of the child; he paid tribute to Malala Yousafzai for her strong advocacy of education for children worldwide.

40. His Government had established children complaint desks at the federal and provincial levels and a child protection management information system; it had also introduced social protection schemes for children with disabilities, focusing on formal and informal education, vocational training and skills development; many of those projects were being carried out in partnership with United Nations agencies and civil society. His Government was determined to

make Pakistan a polio-free country and was harnessing all social, financial and technical means to eradicate the disease.

41. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia) said that poverty, which stemmed from structural inequality, posed the greatest threat to the safety and well-being of children. Gaps and inequities in legal and regulatory frameworks must be addressed. His Government recognized the importance of providing social protection for vulnerable groups in order to break the cycle of poverty. It had taken steps to strengthen policy formulation, monitoring, evaluation and coordination at the national level and had introduced a number of laws and policies to promote implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2012, it had ratified the first two optional protocols to the Convention. It had established a 12-year compulsory education programme and was implementing a programme to provide scholarships to prevent school drop outs. It had developed a national programme for Indonesian children up to 2015 designed to protect children from discrimination, exploitation and violence.

42. His delegation stressed the importance of strengthening the role of the family in the post-2015 development agenda. Moreover, participation by the full range of stakeholders, at all levels, was imperative to complement the work done by Governments in the protection of the rights of children. The United Nations must ensure a child-sensitive approach in its system, in accordance with its mandate.

43. **Mr. Al-Himali** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government's commitment to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols was based not only on its membership in the Convention but also on its obligations vis-à-vis the precepts of Islamic law concerning children. It had adopted measures to punish those responsible for abuses against children and to provide victims with shelter and social, psychological and health care. Cases of abuse were reported immediately and on a confidential basis, and the identity of the person reporting the crime was not disclosed. His Government had also put in place a system to combat trafficking in persons, a crime which was punishable by up to 15 years in prison, and even stiffer penalties if children were targeted.

44. His Government had contributed US \$47,860,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) over a 10-year period for humanitarian work in other countries, and \$500,000 in support of child-protection programmes, including a programme to train teachers in the early detection of abuse. It sought to guarantee children's rights in all areas, in particular in situations of armed conflict; that issue should be a priority in the work of the United Nations and its child-related bodies, and the States responsible for violations must be held to account. His Government condemned both the violence committed by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian children living in refugee camps, and the violence committed by the Syrian authorities against over 1 million children, including immigrant and internally displaced children. It urged the international community to shoulder its responsibility to put an end to that aggression and bring the perpetrators to justice.

45. **Ms. Sabja** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her delegation reaffirmed the vital role of parents and the family in the care and protection of children. Her Government had been the eighth State to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the first Latin American country to ratify the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.

46. Because the right to education was essential to personal development, lack of access to education, or inadequate education, were certain to seriously affect a child's chances at having a better life. Under her Government's inclusive education policy and a recently developed curriculum, 14,000 children with various disabilities were studying both in special education centres and at regular schools. The current Constitution incorporated the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and included 120 articles that referred to the topic of human rights. Under a national development plan adopted in 2006, a considerable reduction in infant and maternal mortality had been achieved. In 2007 a programme had been launched to combat malnutrition, resulting in decreased numbers of children suffering from chronic malnutrition and anaemia.

47. Increased child labour impacted formal education and health and impeded personal development. Parental unemployment, poverty and lack of education, as well as the breakdown of the family, were some of the principal reasons why children began to work at an early age. By providing grants to encourage children to continue their education through secondary school, her

Government had managed to reduce the school dropout rate from 6 per cent to 1.8 per cent throughout the country. As a result, the mean years of schooling had increased to 9.2 years.

48. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar) said that Qatar's Constitution accorded great importance to children and mothers and emphasized the role of the family as the nucleus of society. A number of governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with the protection of children and the implementation of all relevant international conventions to which Qatar was a party had been established, including a supreme council of family affairs, a cultural centre for children, and a centre for children with special needs.

49. Since education was vital to the protection and empowerment of children, and the realization of their potential, the right of children to education was of crucial importance. The non-governmental organization Education Above All had been established to protect the right to education in areas threatened by conflict, and the Teach A Child initiative provided high quality primary education to the over 61 million children worldwide who were deprived of their basic right to education.

50. Her Government was deeply concerned about violations committed against children in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The flagrant violations committed by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people and vulnerable groups could not be ignored. Children were being subjected to heinous violence and were being killed, mutilated, tortured, and subject to arbitrary detention, abuse and sexual violence. Her Government called for continued efforts to prevent all violence against children and for those responsible for such violence to be brought to international justice.

51. **Ms. Changtrakul** (Thailand) said that her Government had a long-standing commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols, and was the first country to have ratified the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure. Thailand's national economic and social development plan prioritized human development, using a variety of indicators as guidelines for the effective protection of children's rights. National policies and strategic plans had been introduced, with input from children and from non-governmental organizations.

52. At the regional level, her Government was actively engaged with the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in implementing its 2012-2016 work plan. Thailand was pleased that draft resolution [A/C.3/68/L.6](#) on model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice had been adopted. As a member of the Executive Board, her Government sought to enhance cooperation between UNICEF and all Member States in various areas, particularly universal access to affordable health care for children, strengthened delivery of services in humanitarian and disaster situations, and enhanced child protection services.

53. **Ms. Cid Carreño** (Chile) said her country had modernized its legislative framework with a view to guaranteeing the full exercise and enjoyment of the rights enumerated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three optional protocols. The right to life was guaranteed under the Constitution.

54. A number of public policies benefiting children had been developed in recent years, with the aim of fostering child development, especially for children in at-risk and vulnerable situations, while providing support to families and communities; promoting exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life; and reintegrating young offenders into society and protecting children and adolescents whose rights had been violated, especially if they were separated from their families. A national health programme for children and adolescents was also being implemented. Efforts to assist children with disabilities focused on early intervention and the integrated development of special needs children. Protection was being provided to indigenous children, while respecting cultural identity. There was a special programme to ensure the right of adopted children to learn of their origins, once they reached the age of majority, while respecting the privacy of biological families. Efforts were being made to combat childhood obesity, and a law concerning the nutritional composition of food was currently under consideration.

55. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Qatar had been funding terrorist crimes in the Syrian Arab Republic since the start of the crisis, creating an industry of death. Armed groups had killed, kidnapped and mutilated children, trafficked their organs, forced them

into terrorist activity, denied girls access to education and pushed them into early marriages. Despite those challenges, her Government had persisted in its efforts to protect children, establishing national children's health programmes, vaccinating 2 million children in the third phase of its campaign against polio and measles, and passing a law on the rights of the child in accordance with the Syrian Arab Republic's international obligations. In May 2013 it had criminalized the recruitment of child soldiers and imposed the death penalty for the rape of girls under the age of 15.

56. During the crisis, many Syrian citizens had fled from the crimes of mercenaries, the destruction of infrastructure and the illegal economic sanctions targeting Syrian children, imposed by the United States and European countries. Her Government had established centres for internally displaced Syrians, in particular children, and had spent \$150 million on repairing hospitals, schools and homes. In conjunction with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, it was implementing a \$1 million project to repair 20 schools in 2014. It was committed to protecting its citizens from violence and called for international pressure on those funding armed terrorist groups in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the Saudi and Qatari regimes, whose crimes had been condemned by the United Nations, documented in international reports and reported in the media. The international community could not remain silent before such shameful support for terrorism.

57. The Israeli authorities in the Golan Heights had no interest in protecting Syrian children's rights. An environment in which children were safe from violence in the occupied Arab territories would be impossible if Israel was allowed to continue its violations with impunity.

58. **Ms. Liusa** (Maldives) said that an interministerial committee established in April 2013 had conducted a review of existing child protection mechanisms in the Maldives and her Government was in the process of filling existing gaps and strengthening the child protection system. Her Government had been working towards bringing domestic legislation in line with the Convention and its first two optional protocols and was drafting a bill on child rights, child care and child protection. It had been one of the lead negotiators of the third optional protocol to the Convention and one of the first signatories, and its ratification process was

underway. It had achieved near universality of primary education and had made access to education for children with special needs mandatory under a disability act. It had made great strides in improving child health, with estimates suggesting an average decrease of 11 per cent per year in infant and child mortality rates.

59. Greater efforts were needed to reduce the growing number of children who were being exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation in the world, end child trafficking and forced marriage, and eliminate the use of children in armed conflicts. Particular attention should be placed on empowerment of the girl child, as girls would be key actors in achieving gender equality and national progress. Child protection systems must be strengthened, and national, regional and international policies must take into account the principle of the best interests of the child. In the Maldives, that principle was upheld in the regulations on child fostering and State custody and in other legislation. Her Government also believed that children should be included in decision-making on matters that affected them directly.

60. **Ms. Unal** (Turkey) said that her Government was a party to the Convention and its first two optional protocols, and was in the process of ratifying the third optional protocol; it was also a party to regional conventions on the rights of the child. Recent constitutional amendments protected children against all forms of violence and abuse, and legislation had been amended in line with the provisions of the Convention. Positive discrimination had been codified for children and included in all pertinent laws.

61. Her Government had launched several projects to respond to the concerns of children; in cooperation with international partners, it was focusing on issues ranging from child protection and juvenile justice systems to protecting children from abuse and neglect and issues involving children with disabilities. A website had been launched through which children were able to convey their problems directly to parliamentarians, a committee on monitoring and evaluating children's rights had been established, an ombudsperson for women and children had been appointed, and child monitoring centres had been established in several provinces to prevent and respond to cases of child abuse.

62. Her Government placed special emphasis on the education of the girl child, and the constitutional, legal and institutional framework had been strengthened to protect the rights of children, in particular girls. As a result of the many campaigns launched in recent decades to close the gender gap in education, primary school attendance for girls had reached 99 per cent, and grassroots initiatives were providing equal education opportunities to many disadvantaged girls.

63. **Mr. Marzooq** (Iraq) said that his Government accorded high priority to children because under the previous regime their rights had not been respected, leading to the deterioration of their education and health. Terrorism had prevented many children from attending school. His Government, however, had ratified the first two optional protocols to the Convention in 2008, and was in process of ratifying the Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam, adopted in Sana'a in June 2005. It was supporting the children of minority groups and had introduced programmes to teach them their own languages. It had criminalized the recruitment of children to armed groups and, in 2012, had passed a law against the trafficking of women and children. It had established a committee on women and children in parliament and provincial councils. In December 2012 it had introduced a strategy designed to increase school attendance to 98 per cent by 2015. The 2009-2013 strategic plan of the Ministry of Health focused on reducing child mortality by half, combating communicable diseases, hepatitis C and malnutrition, and expanding programmes for children with disabilities. His Government had submitted reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the first two optional protocols to the Convention.

64. **Mr. Manly** (Burkina Faso) said that over 46 per cent of his country's population was under 15 years of age, a statistic which had led his Government to attach great importance to the rights of the child. It had submitted its third and fourth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a periodic report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2013 and had adopted a three-year plan of action for 2013-2015. It had established a training centre for juvenile offenders, a children's parliament; shelters for vulnerable children and a central authority that handled issues of adoption and international kidnapping of children. New legislation was under development, including a law to combat the sale and

prostitution of children and child pornography and a general code on child protection that would address issues such as early marriage and genital mutilation. His Government had signed agreements with neighbouring countries, in particular Mali and Côte d'Ivoire, with a view to combating child trafficking, and had recently raised the minimum age for recruitment to the armed forces to 20 years. All action at the national level was coordinated by the national council for child survival, protection and development.

65. The daily reality for millions of children still presented a stark contrast with the commitments made and the objectives that had been set. Burkina Faso faced many challenges in its efforts to protect and promote the rights of the child, including insufficient financial resources and a lack of appropriate structures to care for children in difficult circumstances. His Government was redoubling its efforts, with the involvement of all stakeholders, but stressed that United Nations field interventions played an essential role in child development in all areas, in particular health, nutrition and education.

66. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Malaysia) said that, under the tenth national plan for 2011-2015, special attention was given to the childcare sector and children's education. The development of education and training had consistently been given the biggest allocation in the national budget ever since the nation's independence. To provide children with a quality education, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, his Government provided free primary and secondary education for all nationals.

67. Malaysia had acceded to the Convention and the first two optional protocols, and its child act of 2001 was based on the principles set forth in the Convention. In an effort to address the issue of violence against children, it had implemented several laws to protect children from abuse and exploitation and had established child protection teams and activity centres at state and district levels to mobilize community participation in supporting the implementation of relevant programmes.

68. On the issue of children in armed conflict, Malaysia agreed with the Special Representative's call for the mainstreaming of child protection concerns through the inclusion of specific child protection expertise in mediation teams and believed that it was important to ensure that all relevant mandates of

United Nations peacekeeping missions, as well as political and peacebuilding missions, continued to include specific provisions for the protection of children. In September 2013, Malaysia, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, had hosted a regional workshop on child protection at the Malaysian peacekeeping training centre in Port Dickson, Malaysia.

69. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, deplored the flawed wording used by the representative of the United States of America with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic. Her delegation refused to make the same political, legal, diplomatic and protocol-related errors as the representative of the United States of America. The United States representative, apparently unaware of world events, in particular those occurring in the Syrian Arab Republic, seemed not to have listened to statements that had been made by the United States Secretary of State commending the recent performance of the Syrian Government. The United States representative should have refrained from speaking about her country's senseless resolution relating to the Syrian Arab Republic, particularly with regard to the threat to attack the Syrian people, in support of Al-Qaida. Such an attack would have created an entire generation of victims among Syrian children. Instead, that representative should concentrate on her own country's affairs, which were perceived as scandalous the world over, especially in respect of the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

70. Her Government had never denied the existence of a humanitarian crisis in its country. However, it should be acknowledged that a great deal of the suffering experienced by Syrian children was the result of support provided by the United States Government to armed terrorist groups with connections to Al-Qaida. The United States representative's mention of Malala Yousafzai was ironic, given that it was generally known that the United States Government's wrongful involvement in other countries had resulted in the creation of the Taliban movement and Al-Qaida. It would have been preferable for the \$250 million which had been sent to support armed terrorist groups and extremists active in the Syrian Arab Republic to be used to provide assistance to Syrian children, bearing in mind that that sum would have been sufficient to bring an end to the suffering of millions of them.

71. **Ms. Bar-Sadeh** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed surprise at the Syrian representative's decision to lecture other nations on the protection of children, in particular as Israeli hospitals had been treating Syrian children wounded by the Syrian regime. She noted that in Israel, Palestinians and non-governmental organizations wishing to do so could file appeals with the High Court of Justice; that was an example of true adherence to the rule of law.

72. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the blatant lies of the occupying Power could not go unanswered. The Israeli representative had neglected to mention that Zionist children were taught to kill Palestinian children by having them fire at effigies during celebrations. The Syrian Arab Republic was responsible for protecting its people, and would do what was possible, within the scope of its legislation and its international commitments, to rescue the Syrian people from terrorism financed from abroad, including that perpetrated by Israel. Israeli leaders were cooperating with armed terrorist groups in the area of separation in the Golan, transporting wounded terrorists over the line of separation to Israeli hospitals and covering up abduction of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force peacekeepers.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.