



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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## Committee on the Rights of the Child

### Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Egypt\*

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Egypt<sup>1</sup> at its 2798th and 2799th meetings,<sup>2</sup> held on 13 and 14 May 2024, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 2816th meeting, held on 24 May 2024.

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of the State party and the written replies to the list of issues,<sup>3</sup> which allowed for a better understanding of the situation of children's rights in the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the constructive dialogue held with the high-level delegation of the State party.

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

3. The Committee welcomes the various legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State party to implement the Convention, including the Constitution of 2014, which incorporated many provisions of the Convention, Act No. 186 of 2023, amending the Children's Code, and Act No. 182 of 2023, consolidating the restructuring of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in line with the Constitution, as well as the Strategic Framework for Childhood and Motherhood 2018–2030 and the relevant national plan.

#### III. Main areas of concern and recommendations

4. The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: right to life, survival and development (para. 17), harmful practices (para. 26), torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (para. 28), children with disabilities (para. 33), asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children (para. 41) and administration of child justice (para. 47).

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-sixth session (6–24 May 2024).

<sup>1</sup> [CRC/C/EGY/5-6](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [CRC/C/SR.2798](#) and [CRC/C/SR.2799](#).

<sup>3</sup> [CRC/C/EGY/RQ/5-6](#).



5. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the realization of children's rights in accordance with the Convention, 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 throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It urges the State party to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the design and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as far as they concern children.

#### **A. General measures of implementation (arts. 1, 4, 42 and 44 (6))**

##### **Legislation**

6. While welcoming the 2023 amendments to the Children's Code, which, inter alia, increased penalties for neglecting or endangering a child and provided diversion measures for children in conflict with the law, and noting that the State party has established a Committee to prepare a personal status bill, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Repeal all discriminatory provisions in its legislation affecting children, particularly in the Criminal Code and the Personal Status Law;
- (b) Further harmonize its legislation, in particular the Criminal Code and laws related to personal status, with the provisions of the 2014 Constitution concerning the rights of children and the Convention.

##### **Comprehensive policy and strategy**

7. The Committee notes the State party's information indicating that it is evaluating the implementation to date of the Strategic Framework for Childhood and Motherhood 2018–2030 and has developed an action plan for its implementation for 2024–2030. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the action plan encompasses all areas covered by the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto and that the plan is supported by sufficient human, technical and financial resources.

##### **Coordination**

8. While noting that Act No. 182 of 2023 transfers the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood from the Ministry of Health and Population to the President, the Committee recommends that the State party further strengthen the coordinating role and capacities of the National Council to carry out all activities related to the implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto at the cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels. The State party should ensure that the National Council is provided with the human, technical and financial resources necessary for its effective operation.

##### **Allocation of resources**

9. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party concerning the allocation of resources for children in the "Budget transparency series" reports and the establishment of the Fiscal Transparency and Citizen Engagement Unit within the Ministry of Finance. Recalling its general comment No. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Further increase budgetary allocations for health, education, child protection and social housing, paying particular attention to children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations, including children in rural upper Egypt;
- (b) Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the adequacy, efficacy and equitability of the distribution of resources allocated to the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Take immediate measures to combat corruption and strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect, investigate and prosecute corruption affecting the budget allocated to children's rights.

#### Data collection

10. The Committee notes that the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child is responsible for gathering child-related information and data and also notes the establishment of the consolidated data-collection system for children at risk. Recalling its general comment No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention and its previous concluding observations,<sup>4</sup> the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Further enhance its system so as to enable the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child to carry out systematic collection and analysis of quality and complete data – disaggregated by age, sex, disability, ethnic and national origin, geographical location and socioeconomic background – on the implementation of children's rights;

(b) Ensure that statistical data and indicators on children's rights are 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;

(c) Make the database of the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child available and accessible to the public;

(d) Continue its technical cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), among other entities.

#### Access to justice and remedies

11. The Committee notes the helpline established by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that all children in all settings, including in public and private schools, foster care systems, alternative care settings and detention, have access to: (i) confidential, child-friendly and independent complaint mechanisms for reporting all forms of violence, abuse, discrimination and other violations of their rights, including within the National Council for Human Rights; and (ii) legal support and age-appropriate information on access to counselling and remedies, including compensation and rehabilitation;

(b) Raise awareness among children of their right to file a complaint under the existing mechanisms.

#### Cooperation with civil society

12. The Committee notes that Act No. 149 of 2019 regulating civil society activities and its implementing regulations restrict the registration and work of civil society organizations, including with regard to access to domestic and foreign funding sources. It also provides the authorities with extensive monitoring powers and broad discretion to regulate and dissolve organizations. A large numbers of activists and human rights defenders, including those working on children's rights, have reportedly been subjected to harassment, intimidation, criminal investigation and arbitrary detention for their peaceful activism or criticism. The Committee therefore urges the State party to review its legislation, in particular Act No. 149 and the 2021 implementing regulations, to ensure the freedom of association and the independent functioning of civil society organizations, including those working on children's rights.

<sup>4</sup> [CRC/C/EGY/CO/3-4](#), paras. 21 and 22.

### Children's rights and the business sector

13. Recalling its general comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Establish a clear regulatory framework for the businesses operating in or managed from the State party, including military-owned businesses and businesses in the informal sector, to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect human rights or endanger environmental, health, labour and other standards, especially those relating to children's rights;

(b) Require companies to undertake assessments, consultations and full public disclosure of the environmental, health-related and children's rights impacts of their business activities and their plans to address such impacts.

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

### Non-discrimination

14. While welcoming Act No. 219 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Act No. 77 of 1943, making it a crime to deprive someone of their inheritance, the National Plan to Promote Gender Equality and the Dawwie national initiative for the empowerment of girls, the Committee urges the State party to:

(a) Repeal all provisions in its legislation, particularly in the Criminal Code and the personal status legislation, that discriminate against women and girls, and eradicate discrimination, negative perceptions of and stereotypes on the role of girls and women in society;

(b) Further amend the inheritance law (Act No. 77 of 1943) to include equality in inheritance rights between male and female children and eliminate de facto discrimination against girls and women in terms of their rights to inheritance;

(c) Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law aimed at eradicating discrimination against, inter alia, children belonging to racial, religious and ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, children living in street situations, children living in poverty, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children.

### Best interests of the child

15. While noting the efforts of the State party to uphold the principle of the best interests of the child, including through the decisions of the Supreme Constitutional Court on individual cases, and recalling its general comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement article 80 of the Constitution and article 3 of the Children's Code, which provide for the implementation of the best interests of the child, and ensure that the right of children to have their best interests taken as a primary consideration is integrated into and consistently interpreted and applied in all decisions concerning children taken by courts, administrative authorities and legislative bodies;

(b) Develop procedures and criteria in order to ensure that the best interests of the child are properly assessed when a decision is made with regard to a child.

### Right to life, survival and development

16. While noting that article 111 of the Children's Code prohibits the death penalty for all persons under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, the Committee is seriously concerned about reports of children being sentenced to death in the context of mass trials as co-defendants with adults pursuant to article 122 of the Children's Code. It is equally concerned about a number of death sentences that were reportedly imposed on persons who

were children at the time of the offence and their detention for lengthy periods of time, while their cases are being appealed.

17. **The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To strictly implement the prohibition of the death penalty for all persons under the age of 18 at the time of the crime, as enshrined in article 111 of the Children's Code;**

(b) **To ensure that children have access to a prompt, effective and independent age determination process and ensure that the presumption of minority is applied to all persons if there are doubts about their age;**

(c) **To review all death penalty convictions to ensure that no child and no person below the age of 18 at the time of the offence is sentenced to the death penalty.**

**Respect for the views of the child**

18. **Recalling its general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, and noting articles 3 and 116 of the Children's Code, providing for the right of children to express their views, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take measures to ensure the effective implementation of the relevant provisions of the Children's Code in relevant legal proceedings, including by establishing systems and/or procedures for social workers and courts to comply with the principle;**

(b) **Further expand the Egyptian Children's Forum and the Children's Parliament and promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children within the family, communities and schools and include children in decision-making in all matters related to children.**

## **C. Civil and political rights (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)**

### **Birth registration and nationality**

19. **Noting the amendments to the Nationality Act in 2023 granting children of naturalized mothers the right to acquire Egyptian nationality on an equal footing with those born to naturalized fathers, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure universal birth registration for all children, irrespective of the place of birth or their parents' status, in particular, by removing the requirement for the father to be present or to submit a marriage certificate under the Civil Status Act for the registration of a child, which creates an obstacle to the registration of certain groups of children, such as abandoned children, children of single mothers, children of migrants, asylum-seekers or refugees and children born to unmarried parents, and facilitate the registration of children in remote areas of the country by providing mobile birth registration systems, as well as proactively facilitating late birth registration, including by raising the public's awareness about the importance of birth registration;**

(b) **Consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.**

**Freedom of thought, conscience and religion**

20. **Concerned that children of religious minorities, including Coptic Christians, Shia Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, and atheists continue to face varying forms of discrimination, and noting that the Constitution recognizes only Islam, Christianity and Judaism, excluding other religious or belief communities from official recognition, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Accord children of minority religious groups the freedom to manifest their religion;**

(b) **Provide children of religious minorities with places of worship.**

### Freedom of association and peaceful assembly

21. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigations into allegations of excessive use of force by State agents against children during protests and ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished appropriately and that the child victims receive full redress.

### Right to privacy and access to appropriate information

22. Recalling its general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Enforce article 3 (c) of the Children's Code concerning the right of the child to freedom of expression, including the freedom to receive, seek and impart information;

(b) Ensure that laws regulating access to information guarantee respect for children's right to privacy, protect children from harmful content, materials and risks in the digital environment, and provide for mechanisms to prosecute violations;

(c) Enhance the digital literacy and skills of children, teachers and families and finalize the development of a programme aimed at mitigating the risks to children of the digital environment;

(d) Develop safeguarding policies and regulations for the media to protect the privacy of children;

(e) Provide reparations in the 2022 case in which the data of more than 72,000 children involved in the Egyptian Scholastic Test were made accessible.

## D. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 35, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention, and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)

### Abuse, neglect and sexual abuse and exploitation

23. While remaining concerned about the high levels of violence against children, including domestic violence against girls, the Committee notes the State party's strategy to address and prevent all forms of violence against children and its pledge within the framework of the Human Rights 75 initiative to have zero tolerance for the misuse of technology to incite or to commit violence against women and girls by 1 January 2025. In the light of its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement the strategy to address and prevent all forms of violence against children and improve the child protection infrastructure at the local level to respond to violence against children, including abuse, neglect and domestic violence;

(b) Strengthen detection, reporting, investigation, protection and judicial interventions in all cases of violence against children, including sexual violence and online sexual violence;

(c) Put in place accessible, confidential and child-friendly mechanisms to facilitate and promote the reporting of violence against children;

(d) Ensure that all children who are victims or witnesses of violence have prompt access to child-friendly, multisectoral and comprehensive interventions, services and support, including forensic interviews and psychological therapy, with the aim of preventing the secondary victimization of those children, and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation and expansion of the one-stop shop and similar models;

(e) Consider making it a standard procedure to accept audiovisual recordings of child victims' testimony as evidence and conduct cross-examination without delay in child-friendly facilities;

(f) **Adopt comprehensive legislation to criminalize all forms of violence against children, especially girls, including domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, institutional violence and crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour”;**

(g) **Further strengthen and enforce penalties for neglect of children and for placing children at risk of harm;**

(h) **Enhance awareness of child sexual abuse and exploitation among both members of the public and professionals working with and for children and respond to all manifestations of child sexual exploitation and abuse, including in the digital environment;**

(i) **Strengthen the professional capacity and software tools to detect and investigate child sexual exploitation and abuse, promote training for parents and teachers about risks online and ensure and promote accessible, confidential, child-friendly and effective channels for reporting all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.**

#### **Corporal punishment**

24. **While noting that article 7 bis of the Children’s Code provides for the right of parents or caregivers to discipline their children using legitimate means, albeit prohibiting them from intentionally exposing a child to any illegitimate physical abuse or harmful practice, and recalling its general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To repeal article 7 bis of the Children’s Code and to explicitly prohibit by law corporal punishment in the home, alternative care settings, day care and schools;**

(b) **To promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline;**

(c) **To conduct awareness-raising campaigns for parents and professionals working with and for children to promote attitudinal change, within the family and the community, with regard to corporal punishment.**

#### **Harmful practices**

25. **The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to combat female genital mutilation, including the increase in penalties for that crime and the adoption of a national action plan to combat female genital mutilation. It also notes the strategy to reduce child marriages (2015–2020) and the draft law criminalizing child marriage. However, the Committee is deeply concerned that despite those efforts, the harmful practices of female genital mutilation and child marriage continue to persist. The Committee is particularly concerned about:**

(a) **The widespread practice of female genital mutilation in rural areas and in upper Egypt and the lack of awareness among the public of its harmful effects on the health and well-being of girls;**

(b) **Reports of increased medicalization of female genital mutilation, whereby large numbers of such mutilations are performed by medical professionals, despite the amendment to the Criminal Code in April 2021 introducing harsher sentences for perpetrators, including persons who request female genital mutilation and medical personnel who commit the violation;**

(c) **The high number of child marriages, including seasonal or temporary marriages of girls, especially in rural areas, who are forced to leave school and face physical, emotional and sexual abuse, notwithstanding the establishment in the Children’s Code and the Civil Status Code of the minimum age of marriage at 18 years;**

(d) Articles 237, 274 and 277 of the Criminal Code, which introduce leniency for crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour”, most of the victims of which are women and girls.

**26. Recalling joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To effectively implement its legislation, policies and plans to prohibit and prevent female genital mutilation, especially in rural areas and in upper Egypt, including by promoting the reporting of cases and effectively prosecuting perpetrators, in particular medical professionals, who carry out female genital mutilation;**

(b) **To effectively implement its legislation on the minimum age of marriage and to take measures to encourage reporting of cases of early marriage;**

(c) **To develop awareness-raising campaigns and programmes on the harmful effects of child marriage on the physical and mental health and well-being of girls, targeting households, local authorities and religious leaders;**

(d) **To establish protection schemes for victims and potential victims of harmful practices, in particular victims of female genital mutilation and child marriage who file a complaint;**

(e) **To repeal the discriminatory provisions in the Criminal Code, particularly articles 237, 274 and 277, which exempt the perpetrators of crimes committed in the name of so-called “honour” from punishment or reduce their sentences.**

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

27. While noting that torture is explicitly prohibited under article 52 of the Constitution and article 126 of the Criminal Code and that article 116 bis provides for harsher penalties if the victim of torture is a child, the Committee is deeply concerned at allegations of:

(a) Children being subjected to torture and ill-treatment by security officials, particularly during pretrial interrogations while held incommunicado and detained in solitary confinement;

(b) Unlawful arrests of children and enforced disappearances of children for extended periods of time, committed by the security forces;

(c) The lack of accountability for the police and security personnel who committed such crimes.

**28. Recalling its general comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Enforce the prohibition of torture and ensure that allegations of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of children are duly investigated, that perpetrators are punished in a manner commensurate with the gravity of their acts and that children who are victims receive adequate remedies;**

(b) **Immediately end the practice of solitary confinement of children in detention;**

(c) **Explicitly criminalize enforced disappearance and ensure that all alleged cases of enforced disappearance are investigated thoroughly and impartially, that those responsible are prosecuted and, if found guilty, receive punishment commensurate with the crime;**

(d) **Ensure that children have access to confidential, child-friendly complaint mechanisms for the reporting of violations of their rights while in detention;**

(e) **Take urgent measures to combat the impunity of security officials and the police for crimes committed against children.**



### Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

29. Recalling its 2019 guidelines on the implementation of the Optional Protocol<sup>5</sup> and its concluding observations on the report of the State party submitted under article 12 of the Optional Protocol,<sup>6</sup> the Committee urges the State party:

- (a) To further strengthen its efforts to prevent, detect and eliminate offences under the Optional Protocol;
- (b) To undertake comprehensive and multidisciplinary research among different socioeconomic and cultural groups on the nature and extent of the sale of children, of the sexual exploitation of children for prostitution and of child sexual abuse material and, on the basis of the findings, adopt a comprehensive and targeted approach to prevent and address offences under the Optional Protocol;
- (c) To strengthen efforts to implement its regulatory framework and to take all administrative, social and other measures necessary to prevent and eliminate sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism;
- (d) To revise and bring its Criminal Code and other relevant legislation into full compliance with articles 2 and 3 of the Optional Protocol, in particular concerning the sale of children, a crime which is similar, but not identical to the crime of trafficking in children;
- (e) To establish effective mechanisms and procedures for the early identification of child victims of the offences under the Optional Protocol.

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

#### Family environment

30. The Committee draws the State party's attention to its statement under article 5 of the Convention, and recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts:

- (a) To secure children's right to grow up in a family environment where both parents equally share the common responsibilities for their children in accordance with article 18 (1) of the Convention in all matters relating to marriage and family relations;
- (b) To amend the personal status laws to ensure that all provisions that discriminate against women and have a negative impact on their children, such as those that authorize polygamy and repudiation, are repealed;
- (c) To ensure that women and men have equal rights in divorce, including equal rights for legal guardianship and custody of children following dissolution of the marriage and the remarriage of women, based on the best interests of each child.

#### Children deprived of a family environment

31. While noting the adoption of the national alternative care strategy 2021–2030 and drawing the State party's attention to the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Finalize the adoption of the alternative care bill, implement the national alternative care strategy and accelerate the deinstitutionalization process of the childcare system, in particular for children with disabilities;
- (b) Ensure adequate safeguards and clear criteria, based on the needs and best interests of the child, for determining whether a child should be placed in alternative care, including placement with relatives and in foster care, the *kafala* system and institutions;

<sup>5</sup> CRC/C/156.

<sup>6</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/EGY/CO/1.

**(c) Establish quality standards for all alternative care settings, ensure periodic review of the placement of children in foster care and institutions and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children;**

**(d) Strengthen the capacity of professionals working with families and children, in particular judges, law enforcement personnel, social workers, members of child protection committees and service providers, to ensure family-based alternative care responses and to enhance their awareness of the rights and needs of children deprived of a family environment**

## **F. Children with disabilities (art. 23)**

32. The Committee welcomes the fact that part six of the Children's Code and the Persons with Disabilities Act (No. 10 of 2018) provide for the rights of children with disabilities. Nevertheless, it remains concerned about:

(a) The insufficient implementation of the legislation concerning children with disabilities;

(b) The lack of data on children with disabilities and the lack of a policy or strategy to provide for the rights of children with disabilities, including their rights to access services and education;

(c) The fact that rehabilitation services and the general health insurance do not cover children with disabilities who are outside the education system, which particularly affects children with intellectual, severe and multiple disabilities;

(d) Persistent discrimination against and stigmatization of children with disabilities.

33. **Recalling 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, to set up a comprehensive strategy for the inclusion of children with disabilities and:**

**(a) To implement its laws and to adopt a specific national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities, with particular focus on children;**

**(b) To ensure the systematic collection of data on children with disabilities and to develop an efficient and harmonized system for disability assessment in order to facilitate access for children with all types of disabilities to services, including social protection and support services;**

**(c) To take immediate measures to ensure that children with disabilities have access to health care, including early detection and intervention programmes;**

**(d) To conduct awareness-raising campaigns aimed at government officials, the public and families to combat the stigmatization of, and prejudice against, children with disabilities and to promote their positive image as rights holders.**

## **G. Health (arts. 6, 24 and 33)**

### **Health and health services**

34. While noting the Thousand Days of Life Programme, which includes measures to improve the nutrition of children, and recalling its general comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Improve the quality of and expand preventive interventions in primary health care, including nutrition interventions to address malnutrition and obesity among children, and train medical personnel, giving priority to rural areas and upper Egypt, where there are high levels of poverty;**

(b) Strengthen measures to reduce the neonatal mortality rate, including by improving the quality of and access to antenatal and postnatal services and facilities and the availability of trained neonatal specialists and birth attendants;

(c) Implement and apply the technical guidance on the application of a human rights-based approach to the implementation of policies and programmes to reduce and eliminate preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age<sup>7</sup> of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

(d) Seek financial and technical assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), among other entities, in this regard.

#### **Mental health**

35. The Committee recommends that the State party improve mental health services and increase the number of well-trained and qualified mental health professionals working with children.

#### **Adolescent health**

36. While noting that the draft bill on combating all forms of violence against women and girls proposes criminalizing abortion and recalling its general comments No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention and No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and provide them with access to sexual and reproductive health services, including access to abortion services;

(b) Decriminalize abortion in all circumstances and ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services for adolescent girls, making sure that their views are always heard and given due consideration as a part of the decision-making process;

(c) Ensure that sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, paying particular attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

(d) Ensure that all girls and boys, including those in rural areas and those living in poverty, receive confidential and child-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including access to contraceptives;

(e) Regularly assess the impact of the work of the Fund to Combat and Treat Addiction to address tobacco, alcohol and drug use by children, including through rehabilitation services and awareness-raising activities.

### **H. Standard of living (arts. 18 (3), 26 and 27 (1)–(3))**

37. While noting the high levels of poverty, especially in rural areas of upper Egypt and among Nubian, Sinai Bedouin and Amazigh communities, and the Takaful and Karama programme providing monthly cash transfers to families in need, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Guarantee an adequate and sustainable standard of living for all children within the territory of the State party, with particular focus on children in the most marginalized and disadvantaged situations;

<sup>7</sup> [A/HRC/27/31](#).

(b) Improve and expand social benefits and security schemes for families in difficult situations, including those with many children, and increase their social security pensions to the equivalent of the minimum wage;

(c) Focus anti-poverty programmes on rural areas in upper Egypt, targeting, among others, Nubian, Sinai Bedouin and Amazigh communities.

#### **I. Children's rights and the environment (arts. 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24 and 26–31)**

38. Recalling its general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change, and taking note of the environmental protection legislation and the national climate change strategy 2050, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Adopt legislative and administrative measures to address the adverse effects of environmental degradation and climate change on the enjoyment of children's rights;

(b) Ensure that national policies and programmes addressing environmental protection, climate change and disaster risk management, and the nationally determined contribution are developed and implemented with child rights impact assessments and taking into account the principles of the Convention and the needs and views of children;

(c) Incorporate rights-based environmental education in school curricula at all levels and in the training of teachers, and promote children's awareness of and preparedness for climate change and natural disasters.

#### **J. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)**

39. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that all children have equal access to free and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;

(b) Increase the enrolment and retention rates of children in secondary education, particularly in rural areas;

(c) Eliminate school violence, especially in poor urban areas, and increase resources for safety in schools;

(d) Increase and improve school infrastructure, including school capacity and the number of trained teachers, to respond to the growing number of school-age children in the country;

(e) Address disparities in educational participation and learning outcomes across regions and demographic groups, based on gender, poverty, geography (urban or rural) and disability, among other criteria, and ensure that all children, in particular those belonging to minority groups, those living in rural areas and children of migrant workers and asylum-seeking and refugee children, have access to free, compulsory and quality education;

(f) Ensure the availability and accessibility of inclusive education for children with disabilities in mainstream schools and ensure that schools are equipped with trained teachers, accessible infrastructure and teaching materials adapted to their needs;

(g) Provide asylum-seeking and refugee children of all nationalities with access to the public education system on an equal footing with Egyptian children;

(h) Allocate sufficient financial resources for the development and expansion of early childhood education, based on a comprehensive and holistic policy of early

childhood care and development, and increase the number of preschool establishments in rural areas of upper Egypt.

**K. Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40 of the Convention, and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict)**

**Asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children**

40. The Committee welcomes the fact that the State party hosts large numbers of refugees and notes the memorandums of understanding between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Ministry of Health and Population signed in 2014 and 2016, which grant refugees and asylum-seekers access to health care, and Prime Minister's Decision No. 909 of February 2018 on the health insurance programme for foreigners. Nevertheless, the Committee is seriously concerned at reports of:

(a) The detention of asylum-seeking or migrant children below the age of 18 years and families with children, for prolonged periods of time without access to the asylum procedure;

(b) The deportation of unaccompanied and separated children without assessing the risk of irreparable harm to their life or freedom;

(c) The limited access of asylum-seeking and migrant children to public health-care facilities and the health insurance system;

(d) The serious difficulties faced by children and their families fleeing from Gaza, including wounded and maimed children, in seeking asylum in the State party, including for medical purposes.

41. Noting the adoption of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection and Assistance of Child Asylum-Seekers, Refugees and Victims of Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons and recalling the joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2017) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To ensure that asylum-seeking or migrant children below the age of 18 years and families with children are not detained, by amending its legislation, considering alternatives to detention and ensuring the timely provision of safe and dignified accommodation, support and services;

(b) To uphold the principle of non-refoulement with regard to children seeking or in need of international protection, and to ensure that they are not expelled or returned to a country where there is a real risk of irreparable harm to their life or freedom;

(c) To provide all asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children, irrespective of their country of origin, with unimpeded access to public health-care facilities and the public health-care system;

(d) To facilitate the entry of Gazan children seeking international protection to the territory of the State party and to provide them with the support and care they need, seeking international cooperation in this regard.

**Children belonging to minority groups**

42. Recalling its general comment No. 11 (2009) on Indigenous children and their rights under the Convention, the Committee urges the State party to prevent any kind of discrimination against, and guarantee by law the economic, social and cultural rights of, children belonging to racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

**Economic exploitation, including child labour**

43. While noting the national plan to combat the worst forms of child labour and support the family (2018–2025) and the 2021 amendments to the Labour Code aimed at increasing penalties for the economic exploitation of children, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Implement the 2021 amendments to the Labour Code and strengthen monitoring mechanisms to guarantee the effective enforcement of labour, criminal and other laws as they apply to child labour, particularly in agriculture and quarries, enhancing the role of the child protection committees and labour inspectorates;

(b) Eliminate hazardous labour practices where children are exposed to environmental risk factors, promote safer alternatives and ensure the health and social rehabilitation of the children affected by such practices;

(c) Ensure that the National Observatory for the Rights of the Child collects data on the number of victims of child labour and carry out a comprehensive study on the root causes and the extent of the problem;

(d) Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization.

**Children in street situations**

44. Drawing attention to its general comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations, the Committee recalls its previous recommendation and calls upon the State party:

(a) To take appropriate measures to prevent children from ending up in street situations and to ensure protection and social assistance for those already on the street;

(b) To develop a strategy to effectively protect and ensure the social integration of children in street situations;

(c) To ensure that children in street situations have access to birth registration and identification documentation, education, health care, safe shelters and childcare centres for physical and psychological recovery and reintegration;

(d) To ensure that children in street situations are not subjected to arrests and detention and are provided with protection and assistance from social services rather than being dealt with in the framework of criminal justice;

(e) To assess the number of children living and/or working on the streets and to update studies on the root causes of their situations.

**Trafficking**

45. While noting the adoption of the Third National Strategy on Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Person (2022–2026), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Continue enforcing the national referral mechanism for victims of trafficking in persons and protect children, in particular girls, from transactional marriages and trafficking for the purposes of begging, forced labour, including domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and organ harvesting;

(b) Investigate all cases of trafficking of children and bring perpetrators to justice in a timely manner;

(c) Conduct awareness-raising activities in order to make the public, including parents and children, aware of the dangers of trafficking.

### Administration of child justice

46. While noting that the Children's Code provides for the establishment of the child justice system and the coordination committee for juvenile justice, as well as the increased use of diversion measures, the Committee remains concerned about:

- (a) The slow progress in the establishment of specialized child courts and specialized child prosecution offices, which have been established in only a few cities;
- (b) The high number of children aged between 12 and 18 years who are deprived of their liberty during investigation, irrespective of the provision in article 119 of the Children's Code that children below the age of 15 shall not be placed in custody;
- (c) The fact that children are sometimes detained together with adults;
- (d) The insufficient implementation of non-custodial measures, contrary to article 107 of the Children's Code;
- (e) The lack of data on children deprived of their liberty and the lack of regular monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty of children by independent monitors;
- (f) Children's insufficient access to fundamental legal safeguards, including legal assistance;
- (g) The low minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Criminal Code and the Children's Code.

47. **Recalling its general comment No. 24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system, the Committee urges the State party to bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant standards. In particular, the Committee urges the State party:**

- (a) To comprehensively review legislation relating to child offenders and to harmonize it with the Constitution, the Convention and other relevant international standards;**
- (b) To accelerate the establishment of specialized child courts and specialized child prosecution offices throughout the country with adequate human, technical and financial resources, to designate specialized judges for children and to ensure that the specialized judges receive appropriate training;**
- (c) To remove the exception which allows for children above the age of 15 whose co-defendants are adults to be tried in adult courts, contained in article 122, paragraph 2, of the Children's Code;**
- (d) To implement non-judicial measures, such as diversion and mediation, for children alleged to have or accused of having infringed criminal law and, wherever possible, the use of non-custodial sentences such as probation or community service for children convicted of having committed a crime, as provided in article 107 of the Children's Code;**
- (e) To provide children below the age of 18 years alleged to have, accused of having or recognized as having infringed criminal law with fundamental legal safeguards, including access to specialized legal assistance at an early stage of the procedure and throughout the legal proceedings;**
- (f) To raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years, in line with the Committee's general comment No. 24 (2019);**
- (g) To ensure that deprivation of liberty of children is used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time and, in the few situations where deprivation of liberty is justified as a measure of last resort, to ensure that the children are not detained together with adults and that their detention conditions are in line with international standards, including with regard to access to education and health services;**

(h) To ensure that children in contact with law enforcement officials or children deprived of their liberty have access to effective, independent, confidential and accessible complaint mechanisms and are protected from any risk of reprisals.

**Children in armed conflict, including the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict**

48. While seriously concerned at reports of the use of schools by the military, attacks on schools, and recruitment and use of children by non-State armed groups in North Sinai, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To prevent the recruitment and use of children in hostilities by non-State armed groups and to detect and eradicate the persistently reported recruitment and use of children in hostilities in North Sinai, to ensure the prompt release, disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of recruitment and to reunite them with their families;

(b) To prohibit children below the age of 18 years from joining the armed forces and to consider raising the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces to 18 years;

(c) To ensure that schools in North Sinai are not used as military bases and to uphold the rights of children in North Sinai, including the right to education, by repairing and rebuilding schools damaged or destroyed during the armed violence and to consider endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration;

(d) To provide monitoring institutions, including international organizations, with access to the territory of North Sinai and to carry out investigations into and prosecutions of reports of recruitment and use of children and into allegations of torture and enforced disappearance of children in North Sinai.

**L. Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure**

49. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on a communications procedure.

**M. Ratification of international human rights instruments**

50. The Committee recommends that the State party, in order to further strengthen the fulfilment of children's rights, consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

**N. Cooperation with regional bodies**

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

**IV. Implementation and reporting**

**A. Follow-up and dissemination**

52. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure that the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations are fully implemented and that a child-friendly version is disseminated to, and made widely accessible for, children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. The Committee also recommends that the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports, the



written replies to the list of issues and the present concluding observations be made widely available in the languages of the country.

## **B. Next report**

53. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the State party in due course, in line with the envisaged predictable reporting calendar based on an eight-year review cycle, and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The report should be in compliance with the Committee's harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines<sup>8</sup> and should not exceed 21,200 words.<sup>9</sup> In the event that a report exceeding the established word limit is submitted, the State party will be asked to shorten the report. If the State party is not in a position to review and resubmit the report, translation thereof for the purposes of consideration by the Committee cannot be guaranteed.

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<sup>8</sup> [CRC/C/58/Rev.3](#).

<sup>9</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/268, para. 16.